

Laurie L. Menzies
LAURIE MENZIES, Esq.

MEDIA KIT



“I believe every life story deserves a happy ending.”

Laurie L. Menzies, Esq.

Longevity Planner. Elder Law Attorney. Author. Advocate. Daughter.

Planning For the Rest of Your Life

Most of us know the importance of saving for retirement. And good estate planning can ensure that assets are transferred correctly at death. However, many fail to plan for the “bonus years” — typically between the ages of 80 and 95 — when our bodies begin to slow down and questions begin to arise such as: “Who will care for me?” “Where will I live?” and “How will it be paid for?”

Longevity planner Laurie Menzies is one of the region’s foremost experts on issues related to estate planning and elder law. Her personal and professional insight guides clients through the aging process by coordinating legal, financial, social, and medical issues. She is passionate about helping families create Longevity Plans that go beyond creating legal documents. These plans help families preserve assets, while providing for the wishes and care needs of her clients.


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About Laurie L. Menzies, Esq.

Having served as her parents' primary caregiver well into their nineties, longevity planner and attorney Laurie Menzies is personally acquainted with the struggles seniors and their loved ones face as they age and may need care. In her role as an elder law attorney, Laurie has worked with hundreds of families as they try to navigate a fragmented, confusing system that often leaves them overwhelmed.

Laurie offers an innovative approach by introducing the concept of longevity planning as a way of moving forward holistically and with clarity.

Laurie addresses the critical need for planning for our later years in her book, *Embracing Elderhood*, with a thoughtful, practical and spiritual approach. She has drawn on her experience as Senior Partner at **Pfalzgraf, Beinhauer & Menzies**, (PBM Elder Law), the only Western New York law firm dedicated exclusively to Elder Law and Estate Planning, as well as her experience taking care of her own parents prior to their passing. In addition to the book, she is a leader on issues related to seniors and their families.

She also provides comprehensive planning services related to the financial, legal, and long-term care needs of seniors through LaurieMenzies.com.

Laurie is one of the region's foremost experts and a frequent speaker on issues related to estate planning and elder law, guiding seniors and their families through the aging process by coordinating legal, financial, and medical issues. She is passionate about helping families create a plan for aging that goes beyond creating legal documents. These plans help families preserve assets while providing for the wishes and care of her clients.

She is a graduate of Vassar College and University of Buffalo Law School, and is also well-versed in financial issues, having worked in the investment and trust administration field. Laurie is actively engaged with organizations that serve the elderly, including serving on the Executive Committee of the New York State Bar Association's Elder Law Section, the Trust and Estate Section and with the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA). She also works closely with the Alzheimer's Association, and sits on the boards of Network in Aging of Western New York, Canterbury Woods Continuing Care Community, and the Town Square for Aging. Laurie has been recognized in Business First of Buffalo's Who's Who in Law in 2007 and 2011.



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Presentation Topics

For Families and Caregivers

- **Five Reasons You Need a Longevity Plan**

Most of us know the importance of saving for retirement. Furthermore, good estate planning can ensure that assets are transferred correctly at death. However, many fail to plan for the “bonus years” — typically between the ages of 80 and 95 — when our bodies begin to slow down and questions begin to arise such as: “Who will care for me?” “Where will I live?” and “How will it be paid for?”

- **All In the Family: Legally Prepared vs. Reality Prepared**

Many people have signed their wills and completed a Power of Attorney document. When asked, those families would say they are legally prepared for the future. However, successful aging requires financial and family preparation as well. Has anyone considered which assets should be used to pay for long-term care? What happens to the family cottage? Which child will help arrange for transportation or home assistance when Mom can't drive? The reality of living longer is that it requires more discussion than just who gets what when you die.

For Professionals

- **Longevity Planning — End Life on a High Note**

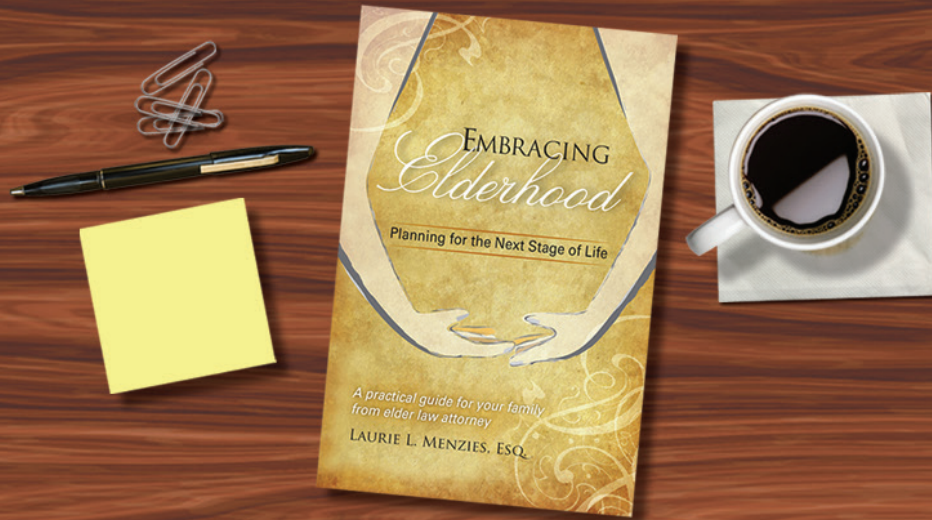
As their trusted advisor, financial consultants guide their clients and families through life's challenges so that they can look forward to a better future. How many advisers are prepared to really help their clients negotiate the confusing and costly possibility of needing long-term care? It's not just about having insurance or enough money, it's about ending a life well-lived with dignity and in the way they choose. You can help make sure your clients' life stories have a happy ending.

- **Why is the Long-Term Care System So Confusing?**

Most financial professionals are very good at helping clients prepare for retirement. However, evaluating a portfolio in light of the increasing potential that clients may need to pay for long-term care can be complicated. Medicaid rules are constantly changing and home care paid for by Medicaid is an under-explored potential for many families — even those with significant resources. For example, there is currently no five-year look-back to qualify for Medicaid home care. Learn how to counsel your clients from someone who has worked specifically with the long-term care system for twenty years.

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Speaker's Fee

- One hour presentation
- Q & A
- \$1,500

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- ([f](https://www.facebook.com/EmbracingElderhood)) [Facebook.com/EmbracingElderhood](https://www.facebook.com/EmbracingElderhood)



Attachments

- Presentation Takeaway (PDF)
- *Embracing Elderhood* by Laurie L. Menzies (chapter 1). Available in Paperback and EPUB — [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



LAURIE MENZIES, Esq.

Smart Longevity

- Advice currently exists in silos ...

CFP / CPA

Lawyer

Social Worker / Doctor

Family

- Retirement Plan + *Longevity Plan* + Estate Plan

1. Legal Longevity

- Last Will and Testament is false sense of security
- Planning should be done regarding longer life, not just death
- Plan to qualify for future benefits—most professionals don't know financial requirements and available programs
- Irrevocable Income Only Trust — Plan Ahead
- Gift/Note Strategy — Emergency Plan

2. Financial Longevity

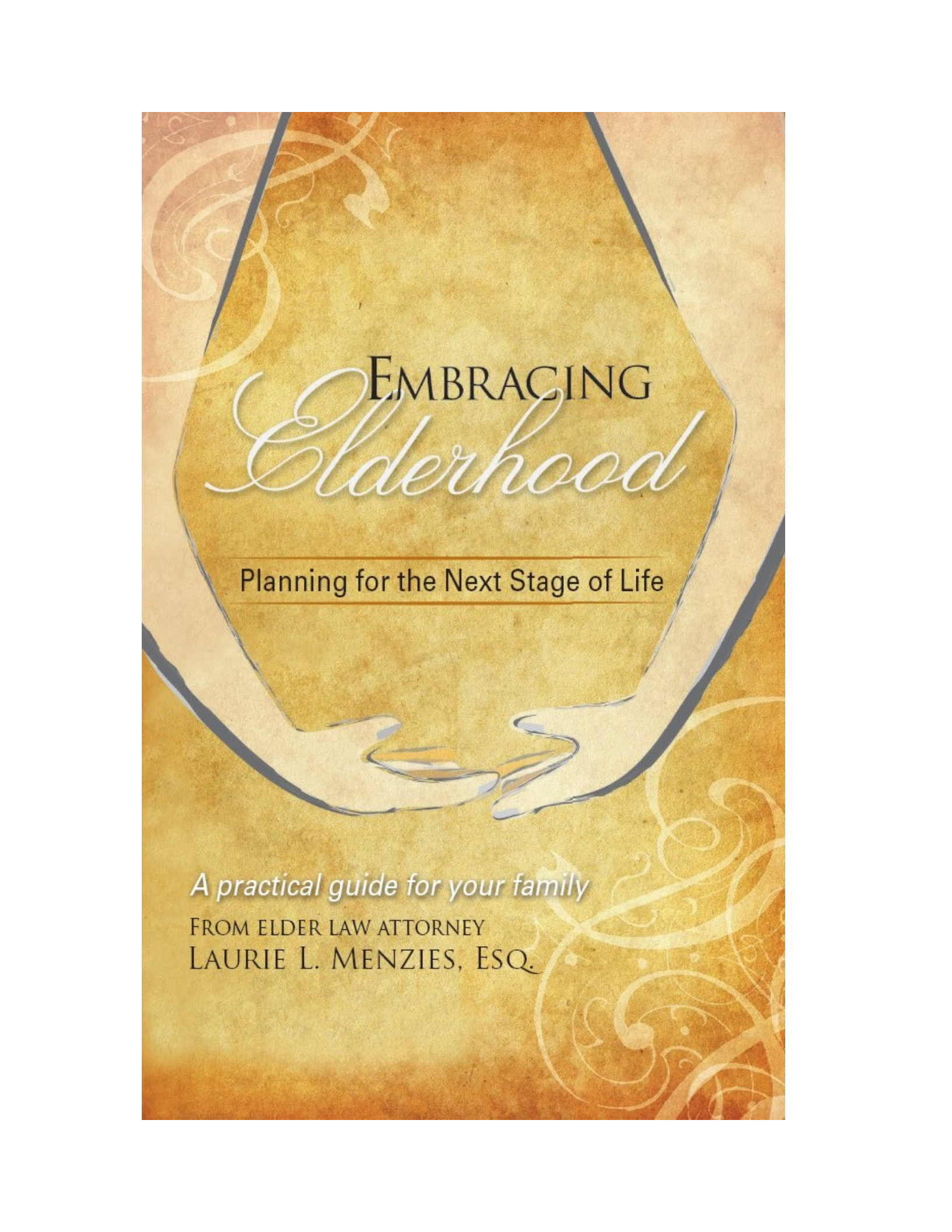
- Comprehensive Inventory
- Consolidation of accounts
- Find key advisor
- It's OK for assets to deplete by age 90 (leaving money to 65 year-old "kids"?)
- Life insurance review
 - Older policies — purpose? — still paying premiums?
 - Cash values counted as sources fro Medicaid
 - Payment to elderly spouse (unknown timing)
- Beneficiary designations/coordination with estate plan (eliminate need for probate)
- LTC insurance
- CCRC
- Power of Attorney issues:
 - Complicated statutory form/no SGR
 - Uninformed agents

3. Social/Family Plan for Longevity

- Huge cost of LTC — not covered by Medicare
- Lack of education about LTC system/Levels of care
- Determine advocate/coordinate family if possible
- Home care—MLTC or NHTD paid for by Medicaid

4. Health/Medical Plan for Longevity

- Determine wishes/plans of individual so others don't take over
- LTC System is confusing — guidance usually rushed
- Discharge Planning/potential long-term decisions are made in emergency situation
- Nursing home quality — remember it's an institution
- Don't end a good life by default



EMBRACING
Elderhood

Planning for the Next Stage of Life

A practical guide for your family

FROM ELDER LAW ATTORNEY
LAURIE L. MENZIES, ESQ.

EMBRACING
Elderhood

Planning for the Next Stage of Life

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Embracing Elderhood: *Planning for the Next Stage of Life*

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For My Mom and Dad

While he was in his nineties, my dad wrote in a book to me, called *A Father's Legacy*. In it, there was a question, "What word best describes your life?" His answer: "Happy. We were happy to be together."

That simple truth from my father is one of my greatest blessings. It is also the reason I can write this book with so much passion and love.

I hope everyone can feel that way someday.

CONTENTS

Copyright

Foreword

Preface

- 1** Embracing Elderhood
- 2** What Is Estate Planning?
- 3** Basic Documents of an Estate Plan
- 4** All in the Family
- 5** There Are Many Levels of Care
- 6** Who Will Pay for All of This?
- 7** How Can You Plan for Long-Term Care?
- 8** It Takes a Team
- 9** Planning Is the Key
- 10** Maybe We Can Look at This in a Different Way

Glossary

Acknowledgments

FOREWORD

*F*ACED WITH THE OVERWHELMING and formidable task of living three full-time roles—caregiver for her aging and rapidly declining parents, spouse to her new husband, and partner in a growing elder law practice—Laurie Menzies experienced, firsthand, the issues on which she had been lecturing and counseling thousands of clients during her entire legal career. With the help of her husband, David, many friends, and her Higher Power, Laurie met the challenge. She successfully managed all three roles while maintaining an inner peace that filled her with joy in the most difficult and demanding stops in her journey with her mom and dad to heaven’s gate.

Embracing Elderhood is the natural outgrowth of Laurie’s personal experiences. She shares her journey of shepherding her mom and dad through their “elderhood,” first by struggling on her own and then with the assistance of some of the many government benefits available to families faced with the dilemma of 24/7 care, limited resources, and limited time. This assistance came from local, state, and national programs designed to address the rapidly growing problems associated with aging.

Embracing Elderhood does not provide answers to the crisis of aging—instead, it offers options that are available both to the families with the foresight to plan, as well as to those who made no plans. Laurie shows that it is never too late to plan when it comes to elderhood and aging. Her legal, practical, and spiritual approach must not be missed.

In this book, Laurie shares her experience, strength, and hope with every family that finds itself faced with the challenges of aging in America. It is our hope that Laurie’s story, told in layman’s terms, will simplify your strategy and enable you to devote more time to loving your spouse, mom, or dad, and discover the beauty of this stage of life. This book can show you the way. We hope you find it helpful and useful as your journey begins.

— Charles W. Beinhauer, Esq.
Partner at Pfalzgraf, Beinhauer & Menzies
October 2014

PREFACE

ACCORDING TO STATISTICS and the evidence all around us, we are going to live longer than we plan. Unfortunately, the longer we live, the more likely it is that some long-term care support will be needed. In its current state, the long-term care system is confusing, complex, and uncoordinated. Accessing services offered by the system often makes the difficult process of caring for aging loved ones harder than it should be.

A comprehensive approach is necessary to develop a plan for “elderhood.” Some people call it *elder planning* or *long-term care planning* or even *estate planning*. Whatever we call it, the plan must consider the legal, financial, and care-management needs of an individual through the end of his or her life. Most seniors and their caregivers do not have a clear picture of how their finances will be managed when they need to pay for long-term care. Furthermore, they do not have a clear understanding of the progression of care, or where and how it can be accessed.

As the most recent commission tasked to report on the status of long-term care said:

... the network of providers [that] deliver support is complex, multifaceted, specialized, isolated from other service providers, and confusing to the average consumer.... Currently, there is no comprehensive approach to care coordination for these individuals and caregivers ...

Furthermore:

Few providers ... evaluate a person's overall situation in order to arrange for the right combination of services based on one's actual needs. Instead, access to services is often organized in relationship to their funding streams, governed by a mix of federal, state, and local rules and procedures. Separate agencies may have unique eligibility rules, intake and assessment processes.

— **Commission on Long-Term Care,**
Report to the Congress, September 30, 2013

Every day I encounter families that are underinformed and underserved by the current long-term care system. Housing and health-care options for older individuals are determined, in large part, by finances. Unfortunately, many seniors receive inadequate long-term care because of misinformation regarding their money and the resources that could be available to them.

Coordinated advice can help families through the process of finding and paying for appropriate care for their loved ones. For example, a financial consultant would review and perhaps consolidate financial resources. Knowing what monies are available, a geriatric-care manager could then develop a care plan. Then, an elder law attorney could create a plan to reorganize the assets. This may enable the family to access government programs immediately or when they may be needed.

Long-term care plans involve many moving parts and require communication among the advisers and caregivers. Today most professionals do not engage in this type of coordinated planning. The system is not set up for professionals to get paid to work together. They still seem to be stuck in their silos, discussing only their particular products or services.

Today's system for long-term care is complicated, confusing, and disjointed. However, with help, we can make it work. We have to—for our families and ourselves. This book is written as honestly and clearly as possible, to serve as a starting point to help you understand how the pieces fit together.

Embracing Elderhood takes you through the same process I use when a client comes to me for advice. First, we have to know what the planning process is about. What is estate planning? How does it relate to long-term care issues? How much money are you bringing to the table? What do you expect to do with it? What will the care system look like when you have to access it? What are the various sources of payment available when care is needed? These are the questions that will be answered in the pages of this book.

As an elder law attorney who has been practicing in this area for 15 years, I have to admit that I was not prepared for the time, commitment, and advocacy required to effectively manage my parents' care through the end of their lives. Having successfully made it to the "other side," I am able to share some of the challenges we faced and mistakes we made along the way. The problem with being an exhausted child of aging parents is that, as much as you may want your old life back, it will never come. When you are finally finished with the job of caregiving for your loved ones, they are gone. You may forever rethink whether you did it right or what you could have done differently, but if you did it with

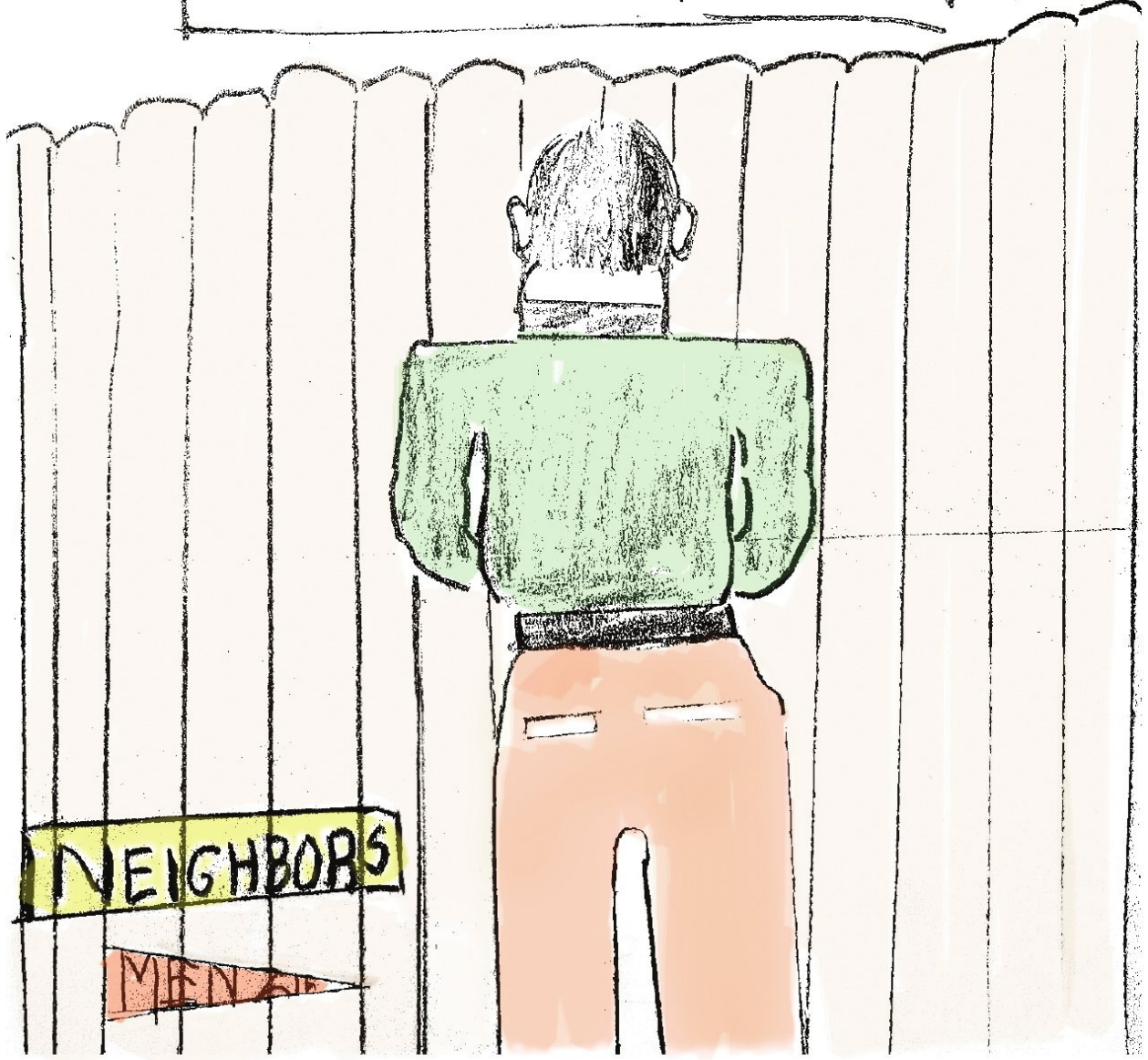
challenges we faced and mistakes we made along the way. The problem with being an exhausted child of aging parents is that, as much as you may want your old life back, it will never come. When you are finally finished with the job of caregiving for your loved ones, they are gone. You may forever rethink whether you did it right or what you could have done differently, but if you did it with love and with as much help and advice as you could get, you should have no regrets. I will always consider the time I spent helping my parents through their last years to be one of my greatest blessings.

I hope you find some new and useful information. I hope this book encourages you to work with a professional who has a caring and comprehensive approach. Finally, I hope you are excited to make a plan and enjoy elderhood—yours or that of your loved ones—together.

— Laurie Menzies
October 2014

I have used some of my father's cartoons throughout this book. When he could no longer walk independently and was home with my mom and his aides, he would sit at the table in the afternoon and write a comic strip. Starting at the age of 93, he created a comic every day for about a year and a half. While he always shared his great sense of humor, my father was a postal worker and volunteer fireman, not a cartoonist. When others may have focused on their disabilities, he found a hidden talent and used it to make other people happy. I have created a book of his drawings, called Young at Heart.

"THEY SAY MY WIFE IS OUTSPOKEN,
I WANT TO KNOW, BY WHOM?"





1

EMBRACING ELDERHOOD

*M*Y PARENTS ENJOYED their elderhood without running out of money. We pulled it off mostly because they didn't need help until my dad was 93. He lived 33 years longer than his dad. My mom lived 15 years longer than her mom. They were blessed to spend most of those extra years together, living independently and in good health.

As we enjoyed this time together, I didn't know there was a term for those extra years that I was able to enjoy with them. Now I realize that a lot of families

are going to experience the same thing. In most cases, advances in health care and personal wellness have extended the life expectancies of most Americans well beyond the years for which they have planned. Most people know they should plan for retirement. Everyone knows they have to plan for what will happen when they die. But now we find ourselves with a “longevity bonus”—the years between ages 80 and 95 (or older)—that we will refer to as “elderhood.”

When Mom and Dad needed me, I responded, and I saw myself in them. I see myself in the older people with whom I work. They tell me their fears and I realize they are the same as mine. In these moments of recognition, we remember that we are not alone. We are all in this thing called life together. When we help each other, we somehow know we are also helping ourselves.

Is it possible to embrace something that most of us don’t even want to look at?

“Elderhood” is the term I have chosen to describe the stage of life that comes after adulthood. Current demographics indicate there are more of us experiencing elderhood than ever before. Given the constant advancements in medicine and technology, this trend will continue well beyond the foreseeable future.

The years we spend in our eighties and nineties can be either something to look forward to or something to fear. Unfortunately, most of us would rather not think about it. As a result, most people don’t sufficiently plan for these years (and in many cases, don’t plan at all). They experience them by default. This forces their children or the long-term care system to make decisions for them. It is no way to finish an otherwise good life. My heart breaks every time I pass a lonely face lined up against the wall in a nursing facility. How is it that he or she arrived at this point? I do not believe we have to accept this fate as inevitable.

ELDERHOOD		
Active Retirement 65 to 80	Longevity Bonus 80 to 95+	<i>Estate Plan</i> (implemented at death)

If the current system wasn’t so expensive, complicated, and impersonal, we might not have so much fear. From my own life experience, fear is spawned from an absence of love.

Perhaps we can find a way to embrace this portion of our life’s journey and make it better for those experiencing their elderhood. This will also help those of

us who will be there sooner than we care to admit. If everyone involved with the long-term care system put enough love and practical effort into it, I know there would be a different outcome.

By definition, “embracing” something implies that we are accepting it or even welcoming it. To say that our society currently embraces elderhood would be a stretch. However, if we understand that the passage of time is inevitable, we can then accept that the odds favor the majority of us participating in this stage of life. This understanding paves the way for us to change the way we see elderhood and ultimately encourages us to plan for it.

I will be the first to admit that our current long-term care system is profoundly flawed. That is why I have written this book.

We must first become educated in the workings of our system as it currently exists. This book will lead you through everything you need to know to plan for a successful elderhood. Then, by working together, we can make better plans for the way we would like ourselves and our families to experience this precious time of life. By understanding our own particular financial and social situations, we can plan for the best experience possible.

Some people are thrown into the long-term care system quickly and violently—usually as the result of a sudden, catastrophic physical event, like a stroke or a broken hip. One bad fall for an older person can bring about a swift and dramatic change in his entire life situation. No wonder we fear growing old. It shows up uninvited. There are no social rituals or signposts announcing your arrival at elderhood. One day you are just there.

One bad fall for an older person can bring about a swift and dramatic change in his entire life situation.

Furthermore, there aren’t many guidebooks available to help us plan for the experience of living past our 80th year, especially if we need assistance. The long-term care system is large, unwieldy, and impersonal. However, with knowledge and guidance, we can make the best of what it has to offer. If we would recognize that this is our future as well, we can work together to make it better. We have a stake in making it something we can all embrace.

We all fear the unknown. Most of the fear we have about aging is related to the reality that getting old often includes social, mental, and physical decline. But there is an upside to growing old. For one thing, it is better than the alternative. However, there is also the wisdom from our experience of the life that came

beforehand. We can use this as a rubric for how we would like to finish the journey.

I believe that, through planning, we can alleviate many of the fears that surround our shared future. I would like to think that I can help change the way we understand and help each other through our old age. We can work together to create an elderhood that looks like something each of us will happily embrace in our own unique way.