

My Story

By Jane Cole

While I was in high school my mother was diagnosed with colon cancer. She fought a brave battle for two years, but she died when I was 17 years old. I had just begun my senior year.

Five years later, while in my senior year at the University of Central Florida, my father was diagnosed with a cancerous tumor in his upper intestines. I spent many hours driving back and forth from school to my home in St. Petersburg to help my aunt take care of my dad. Six weeks after I graduated, Dad passed away from the cancer that had spread to his liver. This was when I find out that I was the executrix of my father's estate.

The attorney and accountant asked me to gather my father's documents and paperwork to assist with settling his estate. I was 22 years old and had no clue what I was looking for! All this financial stuff was new to me, some of it I had never heard of before. I remember looking at my father's desk in the Florida Room that was piled high with papers. I began to cry and went to find the largest box I could find. Before long I had put every bit of the disorganized papers into the box and carted it off to the accountant. "Here you go," I said. "This is the way I found it. I hope you can find what you need."

I was angry at my father for leaving the mess of papers for me to deal with. I know now he didn't do it on purpose, he just didn't have the skills to get it organized. From that day forward I vowed that my paperwork would be in order when something happens to me. This is why I am doing what I do now, working as a professional organizer and being an advocate for having your affairs in order.

During challenging times it is often hard to concentrate and follow through on important tasks. Having your affairs organized and readily accessible will provide your loved ones with the one thing they need most; confidence and assurance.

Give your loved ones a very special gift by getting your affairs in order.