

**GEORGE J. PETTRONE**

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May 29, 2014

Ms. Irene McLaughlin  
8908 Upland Terrace  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Dear Irene:

Enclosed are templates for the inheritance tax return and the Petition to Distribute a Small Estate which would be necessary to process the transfer of a vacant lot or a house to a new owner.

The process can become complicated by:

- 1) a search for next of kin,
- 2) dealing with next of kin,
- 3) a medical assistance lien,
- 4) federal tax lien,
- 5) the need to serve known creditors even if they will never receive anything,
- 6) mortgage, home equity or reverse mortgage liens, and
- 7) nursing home or other medical related Class 3 liens.

Most claimants will receive nothing because the funeral bill, Court costs, legal fees and property taxes have priority. However, there is a need to serve all known claimants.

Also, please note that the costs of estate ads and an appraisal should have been listed on the attorney's bill.

Very truly yours,

  
George J. Pettrone

GJP/ksa

Enclosures

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April 1, 2015

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
AND REGULAR, FIRST CLASS U.S. MAIL

John E. Cake

Geraldine Mander

RE: Estate of Patricia T. Cake

Dear Next of Kin to Patricia T. Cake,

I am the attorney for the \_\_\_\_\_, an agency/organization which has an interest in rehabilitating blighted properties and vacant lots to recreate usable real estate and to increase the property tax payments to municipalities. Toward that goal, I often administer estates in which a blighted property or vacant lot has been abandoned by the next of kin.

The purpose of this letter is to give you notice of the presentation date of the enclosed Petition to Distribute the Small Estate of your relative, \_\_\_\_\_.

You will not be asked to contribute any money toward the estate's expenses and because the estate has more expenses and debts than assets, you will also not receive any inheritance from the estate.

The proposed Order of Court attached to the Petition requests distribution of your relative's real estate to \_\_\_\_\_ in return for a payment of \_\_\_\_\_ which will pay the estate's administration expenses and Court costs. The remaining probate assets, if any, will pay any additional expenses or unpaid claimants who have priority under Pennsylvania law.

If you agree with the purpose of the enclosed Petition and if the proposed Order of Court is acceptable, please sign and return the enclosed Consent and Joinder form in the envelope provided.

If you have objections to the Petition or dispute the alleged facts, please consult an attorney of your choice and decide whether to file a written Answer or written Objections with the Orphans' Court.

If you can provide me with additional information about additional next of kin or additional assets or debts, please call me at the telephone number listed above.

I will await your reply.

Very truly yours,

George J. Pettrone

**ESTIMATED EXPENSES RE: ESTATE ADMINISTRATION  
OF ABANDONED PROPERTIES**

**Usual Estate Administration Expenses**

Petition for Citation to Appoint Administrator	\$ 60.00
Petition for Probate to Open Estate (approximately)	\$200.00
Estate Newspaper Ads	\$205.00
Inventory filing fee (approximately)	\$150.00 - \$250.00
Family Agreement filing fee	\$ 75.00
Final Account filing fee (if no agreement reached)	<u>\$150.00 - \$250.00</u>
Total	\$840.00 - \$1,040.00

**Search Agency Fees**

- a) for insolvent estates - \$350.00 per person if found
- b) for solvent estates - \$350.00 per person if found plus agency will receive 33 ⅓% of any net distribution to each beneficiary found.

**Title Search Fees** (to determine mortgages, taxes and other liens)

- \$200.00 or more per person

**Appraisal Fees**

- \$200.00 - \$300.00 per house

**Inheritance Tax**

- only due on solvent estates where the asset values exceed the debts, taxes and administration expenses.

**COUNSEL FEES EARNED ON OPENED ESTATES (2013-2014)**

- A) Simon Estate - \$2,450.00 paid on a claim of approximately \$3,000.00 (although the heirs were a pain, a sale to a neighbor made this estate relatively smooth)
- B) Bankert Estate - \$2,673.00 (14.85 hours @ \$180.00 per hour) plus \$1,334.00 in costs (includes a title search) plus an estimated \$500.00 to motivate 4 heirs to sign a Family Agreement on an insolvent estate. An offer is expected soon.
- C) Scheible Estate – opened on behalf of a nursing home with a claim against the deceased.  
Total Fees (current and estimated to close) \$6,194.00  
Total Costs (includes title searches and a surety bond premium) \$2,513.00
- D) Gunning Estate – 5/30/13 – 3/24/14  
An Estate has been opened with the consent of the heirs but no offer has been received and either a tax sale or a contested Petition to Vacate a Mortgage will be necessary to move forward. An offer is expected soon.  
Unbilled fees to date – 15.1 hours x \$180.00 per hour \$2,718.00  
Unbilled costs to date \$ 884.00