

MAY 2026

Piece Of Mind

*In order for you to have peace of mind,
we are giving you our piece of mind.*

PRESTON
ESTATE PLANNING
A PROFESSIONAL LAW CORPORATION

800.698.6918

PrestonEstatePlanning.com

Jury Duty, Community, and Why Due Process Still Matters

I'll be honest: Getting a jury duty summons was not on my list of things I had time for.

It meant rescheduling appointments, rearranging an already packed calendar, and showing up early for something I fully expected to be inconvenient. I walked in annoyed. I sat down irritated. I glanced at the clock more than once.

And then something unexpected happened.

As I sat in a large room filled with people who were clearly in the same boat (parents, retirees, professionals, students, people from every background), it hit me that I wasn't alone. None of us *wanted* to be there. But every one of us showed up anyway. We reported. We complied. We fulfilled a civic duty that exists not for convenience, but for protection.



That room was a cross-section of our community. These were the people who could one day decide whether someone is found guilty or not guilty. Whether the government has met its burden. Whether the rules were followed. Whether justice was actually done.

It was a quiet but powerful reminder of why our system matters.

The right to a jury trial, the right to representation, and the right to due process are not abstract ideals; they are living safeguards. They are checks on power. They are how we ensure that decisions aren't made in isolation, behind closed doors, or by unchecked authority. They are how ordinary people participate in justice.

In a world where systems can feel impersonal or overwhelming, jury duty reminded me that our legal system is, at its core, human. It depends on people showing up, listening, and taking responsibility for one another.

I no longer practice criminal law, and estate planning is my true passion because I love helping people have peace of mind and know that their final act of love will not be "leaving a mess." But sitting in that jury room reminded me of what first drew me to the law: a deep respect for our constitutional system and the rights it guarantees every one of us. The checks and balances. The insistence on fairness. The belief that no one's liberty, or legacy, should ever be decided without process, protection, and care.

In the end, I was excused without ever sitting on a jury (I never seem to be chosen). I walked out relieved, but also grateful for a system that insists on fairness, checks and balances, and a process that values community judgment over unilateral power.

It was inconvenient. It disrupted my day. And it was absolutely worth it.

Because due process isn't just a legal concept; it's a promise, one written into our Constitution, preserved by participation, and worth honoring every time we're called to show up.

-Jennifer Knight

THE TERRI SCHIAVO CASE

A Tragic Lesson in the Importance of Estate Planning

During my recent jury service, I spent the day sitting in a jury room, never placed on a jury, but present for the waiting that comes with the process. While there, I was reading "Silent Witness: The Untold Story of Terri Schiavo's Death."

Reading the story of Terri Schiavo in that setting was quietly sobering. Her case required courts to make profoundly personal decisions without ever hearing her wishes directly. That absence of clear, written guidance is what turned a private medical tragedy into a 15-year legal ordeal.

By all accounts, Terri was a kind, vibrant young woman with her whole life ahead of her. In 1990, at just 26 years old, she suffered a sudden cardiac arrest that caused severe and irreversible brain damage due to a lack of oxygen. She was left in a persistent vegetative state, unable to communicate or make decisions for herself.

Terri's husband, Michael Schiavo, was appointed as her legal guardian. After years of medical evaluations, he concluded that Terri would not have wanted artificial life support continued indefinitely and sought to have her feeding tube removed. Terri's parents disagreed, believing she could improve and that she would want to be kept alive. Without written instructions from Terri (no Advance Health Care Directive and no clear designation of her wishes), the courts were left to decide.

What followed was a prolonged and painful legal battle that lasted more than 15 years. The case moved through multiple courts and drew involvement from lawmakers at the state and federal levels. What should have remained a private family matter instead became a public conflict, deeply affecting everyone involved.

At the heart of the Schiavo case was not disagreement about Terri's dignity or worth — there was none. The issue was that no one knew, with legal certainty, what Terri herself wanted.



This is where estate planning matters most.

An Advance Health Care Directive allows you to put your wishes in writing while you are healthy and able to do so. It names the person you trust to make medical decisions if you cannot and provides guidance on life-sustaining treatment, pain management, and end-of-life care. When these wishes are documented, families are spared uncertainty, and courts are never asked to fill in the gaps.

Our clients have already taken this important step by completing an Advance Health Care Directive as part of their estate plan. That document ensures your voice, not a court's interpretation, guides your medical care if you are ever unable to speak for yourself.

However, this protection does not automatically extend to your children once they turn 18.

At 18, children become legal adults. Without proper documents in place, parents no longer have the legal authority to access medical information or make health care decisions for them, even in an emergency. This is often overlooked because young adults rarely believe they need estate planning documents, especially those as young as Terri was at the time of her cardiac arrest. We encourage our clients to talk with their adult children about advance planning.

Terri Schiavo's story is not about controversy. It is a reminder that silence can leave families without guidance, and that putting your wishes in writing is one of the most meaningful gifts you can give to the people you love.

-Jennifer Knight





Power Pairings on Your Plate

WHEN HEALTHY FOODS WORK TOGETHER

Have you ever looked at a “superfood” list and felt like you needed to overhaul your entire pantry? In reality, most of us already eat a decent mix of food. The trick isn’t always what you eat, but what you put side by side on the plate.

Your body runs on familiar basics like protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water. Those are the nutrients you learned about in school. Plants also carry extra helpers called phytonutrients. They live in the colors and flavors of fruits, vegetables, herbs, tea, and even coffee.

These nutrients are useful on their own, but the real magic happens when they team up. Nutrition researchers sometimes call this “nutrient synergy,” which is just a fancy way of saying certain foods do more for you together than they do alone. A simple example is pairing vitamin C with plant-based iron. Your body absorbs iron from beans, lentils, spinach, and oats more easily when something rich in vitamin C is in the same meal.

Other everyday food pairings work the same way. Think about a fresh tomato salad drizzled with olive oil. With that pairing, the fat in olive oil helps your body absorb more lycopene from the tomatoes. Raw carrots with a scoop of hummus or greens with a few slices of avocado do something similar for vitamin A. The snack tastes better, and your body gets a little nutrition boost.

Spices can work together, too. Turmeric on its own is fine, but when you add a pinch of black pepper, your body absorbs much more of the curcumin it contains. That’s why some drinks and seasoning blends put them side by side.

You don’t need a long list of rules for all this. Just try to eat a variety of healthy foods. If your plate has more than one color, a source of protein, and a bit of healthy fat, you are already building the kind of small combinations that help your food do more for you.

		1	3	6				2
	5	2				6	7	
								1
	1				9			3
		8				1		
9			4				8	
5								
	6	3				2	9	
4				1	6	5		

4	8	9	2	1	6	5	3	7
1	6	3	7	5	8	2	9	4
5	2	7	9	4	3	8	1	6
9	3	6	4	2	1	7	8	5
2	4	8	5	3	7	1	6	9
7	1	5	6	8	9	4	2	3
6	9	4	8	7	2	3	5	1
3	5	2	1	9	4	6	7	8
8	7	1	3	6	5	9	4	2

TAKE A BREAK!

SIZZLING CHINESE PEPPER STEAK WITH ONIONS

Ingredients

Steak

- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp oyster sauce
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 lb beef strips (sirloin or rib eye)
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil, separated
- 1 large onion, sliced

- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Steamed rice or noodles

Sauce

- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp hoisin sauce
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp cornstarch

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together soy sauce, oyster sauce, ginger, garlic, and sesame oil.
2. Toss beef strips in marinade; let sit 10–15 minutes.
3. In a skillet over medium heat, heat 1 tbsp vegetable oil, then add sliced onions.
4. Sauté until soft, slightly caramelized; season with salt and pepper, remove from pan, and set aside.
5. In the same skillet, heat 2 tbsp vegetable oil over high heat.
6. Add marinated beef strips; stir-fry for 2–3 minutes until browned.
7. In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, hoisin sauce, rice vinegar, and cornstarch.
8. Pour sauce over beef and simmer until thickened.
9. Add sautéed onions back into pan; stir to combine.
10. Serve hot over steamed rice or noodles.

Inspired by CookTune.com

Inside

- 1 I Walked Into Jury Duty Annoyed.
I Walked Out Grateful
- 2 The Terri Schiavo Case and the
Questions It Left Behind
- 3 Smart Food Combos for Better Nutrition

Sizzling Chinese Pepper Steak With
Onions
- 4 High Peaks, Deep History: Discover the
Magic of the Dolomites

The information provided in this newsletter does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all content contained herein is for general informational purposes only.

The Dolomites: Italy's Otherworldly Alps

Where History and Hiking Meet

Italy has much to offer visitors, from the art and architecture of Rome to the vineyards of Tuscany. Tucked away in the country's northeast corner, however, is a unique cultural and geological wonder that many tourists miss.

The Dolomites, a section of the Italian Alps known as "the pale mountains" for their light-colored rock, have much to offer. The region is home to three cultures, three languages, a melange of culinary traditions, and some of the world's best hiking trails. When naming the mountains a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2009, officials called them "some of the most beautiful mountain landscapes anywhere, with vertical walls, sheer cliffs, and a high density of narrow, deep, and long valleys."

A popular setting for winter sports events, the region encompasses three native cultures and a variety of ethnic cuisines. A traditional favorite among visitors is *canederli*, hearty bread dumplings served with a variety of meats and tomato, mushroom, or spinach sauces. *Speck* is a dry-cured, lightly smoked ham made in the area, and hearty mountain breads from local bakeries can sustain a hiker for a day.

The Dolomites are rich in cultural contrasts. The three languages spoken in the region have coequal status: Italian, German, and Ladin, an ancient form of Latin. Signs are written in both Italian and German. Visitors should also be prepared to adhere to strict mealtime and bus schedules, unlike the relaxed, more easygoing pace of southern Italy.

Traditional dress resembles Swiss, Austrian, or German styles, reflecting the region's history. For 550 years, a large part of the Dolomites was under Austro-Hungarian rule. During World War I, high-altitude "iron roads," or *via ferrata*, were built to help soldiers cross the rugged terrain. The entire region became part of Italy after World War I, but today, rusty remnants of the *via ferrata* remain, serving as ladders and guides for hikers traversing the high country.

The best hiking season in the region runs from June to October. And if you love awe-inspiring floral displays, arrive in July, the Dolomites' peak wildflower season.