

## Creating a Different Kind of Legacy: The Family History

Wealth comes in many forms. Most people would say the most valuable thing in their life is family. If that's the case, a family's history is pretty important, its lifeblood. But few people get around to preserving that history, and it often gets diluted or lost as time goes by.

If you're one of the prescient few who has already recorded your family's history, or the life stories of your parents or grandparents, congratulations. You've created an heirloom that will be treasured for generations to come.

But if you haven't yet begun this project, it makes good sense to start now. Memories have a way of fading as we get older, and, hard as it is to think about, elderly relatives will someday be gone.

If the family patriarch or matriarch finds writing a chore, another alternative is to recruit an interested family member to help. They can make audio or video recordings of interviews. It's a great way for a grandchild, say, to bond with a grandparent. At least then you'd have the basics.

With or without that start, you might consider hiring a professional biographer. That way, it may be more likely that the project gets a more finished touch, and is

easier on your family.

A writer we have known for many years who performs this service is Scott McCredie. He's a neighbor of ours here in Seattle, a journalist, and an author. Among other things, he's written feature stories for Smithsonian Magazine, the Seattle Times, and the Washington Post. He also writes personal and family histories.

Scott says some people have a hard time convincing themselves that they deserve a biography, "They don't think their lives are important enough to justify one ... I've found, after writing several biographies, that even people who say their lives are ordinary are full of dramatic, funny, and insightful stories that future generations will want to know."

If you're interested in learning more about the process of commissioning a biography or family history, check out Scott's website [www.biographycrafters.wordpress.com](http://www.biographycrafters.wordpress.com). Or just give him a call at 206-782-0982.

Consider creating this investment in your family's future "wealth" today. Don't put it off until it's too late.

###

The information in this article is not intended to provide personalized tax, legal, or financial advice. Please contact your tax, legal, and financial advisor for information relevant to your particular situation and needs. Although we believe this information to be accurate, because of the possibility of human or mechanical error we cannot guarantee the accuracy, adequacy, completeness, or availability of information in these articles. In no event will we accept liability for any indirect, special or consequential damages in connection with use of the content.

June 2011—This column is produced by Goodfunds Wealth Management. It is provided by Eric A. Smith, CFP®, AIF®, a local member of FPA. Mr. Smith is registered with KMS Financial Services, Inc. of Seattle and manages branch office Goodfunds Wealth Management. For contact, disclosure, and disclaimer information: [www.goodfunds.com](http://www.goodfunds.com).