

Robert M. Freedman

Counsel

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Robert Freedman is a retired counsel in the Firm's Trusts & Estates Practice. The representation of individuals with special needs and their families was a cornerstone of Robert's practice.

He assisted families in qualifying for and securing government benefits like Medicaid. Robert also counseled families on a multi-generational level to ensure that special needs beneficiaries were appropriately provided for in the family's estate plan. Beyond the intricacies of the legal issues that arose, he understood the sensitive circumstances that persons with special needs and their families face. Robert is nationally recognized for advising clients on planning for individuals with disabilities and their families, especially Autism and other developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, mental illness, and physical disabilities.

Robert has wide-ranging experience in addressing the legal and financial issues of the elderly population and focuses much of his work on elderly clients with dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, and other debilitating illnesses. He is a founder of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) and was elected as one of its first fellows. He also founded the Elder Law section of the New York State Bar Association, served as its chair, and was honored with its Lifetime Achievement Award. Robert's clients come to learn that elder law is "more than just Medicaid" and is appropriate and necessary for individuals in all socioeconomic situations.

In 1985, Robert founded one of the first firms specializing in the field of elder law. Robert began working in elder law as a law student and then as a staff attorney at the Institute on Law and Rights of Older Adults of the Brookdale Center on Aging in 1978. He was a staff attorney at Legal Services for the Elderly until he left to assist in starting the Bet Tzedek Legal Clinic at the Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, which provides legal services to indigent elderly and disabled clients.

Representative Experience

Related Services

- Trusts & Estates
- Elder Law
- Special Needs

- Represented a couple with an 18-year-old child on the autism spectrum. The parents became the child's guardian for his person and property. Robert then took the steps necessary to qualify the child for programs and residences, which require Medicaid eligibility, and assisted in locating those programs. Robert also did the estate planning for the parents, as well as other family members, to assure that the child with the disability would be financially provided for but maintain eligibility for Medicaid.
- Represented a couple with a 50-year-old disabled son who had \$1 million in accounts in his name funded by his parents when he was a child. Qualified the son for Medicaid, which was required for placement in the best community residence. Prepared an estate plan for the parents that provided for them for the rest of their lives, and for their disabled son and other children. The planning documents were drafted to provide for their son without jeopardizing his government benefits and ensuring he would be cared for even after their deaths.
- Drafted a prenuptial agreement for a client who wanted to protect her assets for the benefit of her disabled sibling. Worked with her matrimonial attorney and her financial advisers to be sure that the team protected her assets.

Education

- Tufts University (B.A.)
- New York University School of Law (J.D.)
 - Fiorello LaGuardia Award for Distinction in Urban Law

Professional Affiliations

- National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Inc. (NAELA), Founder and Fellow
- New York State Bar Association
 - Elder Law Section: Founder, Past Chair, Executive Committee and Recipient of Lifetime Achievement Award
 - Trusts and Estates Section: Executive Committee

Awards & Honors

- *New York Super Lawyers*, 2006-2025
- *Best Lawyers in America*, 2026, Elder Law, 2006-2025. Lawyer of the Year, 2013, 2017, 2019
- New York State Bar Association Elder Law Section Lifetime Achievement Award, 2016
- Elder Law Attorney of the Year, Selfhelp Community Services, Inc., Evelyn Frank Legal Resources Program, 2013
- Trustee Award, Council of Senior Centers and Services, 2010
- Advocacy Award, Council of Senior Centers and Services, 1999

Community Involvement

- Alzheimer's Association, Board of Directors for 12 year
- Calvary Hospice Services, Professional Advisory Committee
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), Advisor and frequent presenter

- Carter Burden Network for the Aging, Board of Directors

Insights

December 21, 2020

Our Top 10 Legal Alerts from 2020

August 26, 2020

TIPS for Parents and College Students: Add Health Care Advance Directives to Your School Packing List

June 17, 2020

Law Brief: Robert Freedman and Rich Schoenstein Discuss Future Care Planning for Special Needs Children

May 24, 2020

Getting your Life and Estate Planning Documents in Order during a Health Crisis

May 4, 2020

Getting your Life and Estate Planning Documents in Order during a Health Crisis

January 15, 2020

Our Top 10 Legal Alerts from 2019

December 24, 2019

How The SECURE Act Will Affect Your Retirement Accounts