

LOST HEIRS, GLOBAL ESTATES

A GUIDE FOR YOUR RESEARCH



HELLO, WE ARE FRASER AND FRASER

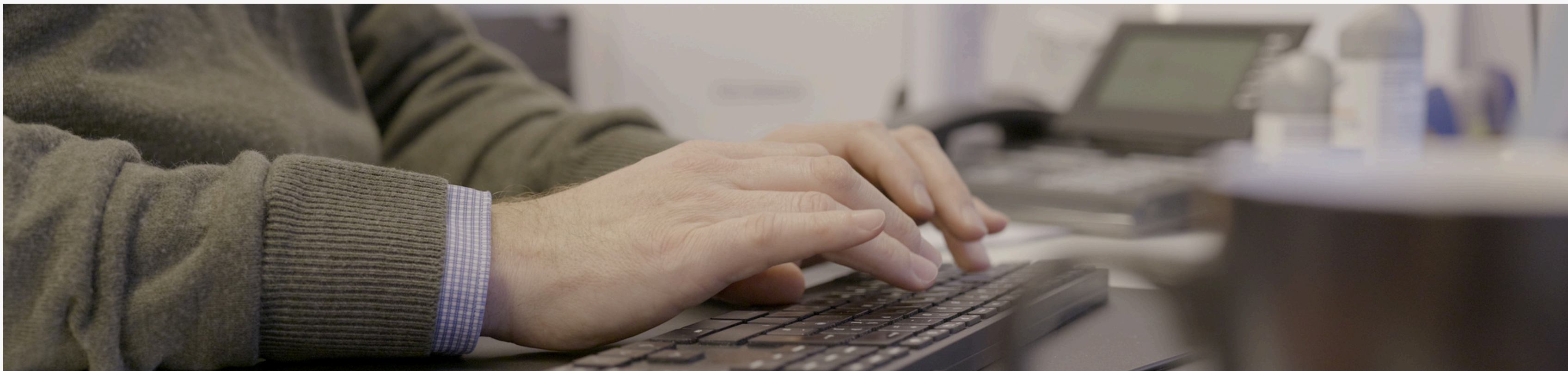
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As one of the world's largest firms of professional probate researchers, we've been locating heirs and supporting the legal profession for over 50 years.

At Fraser and Fraser, you will find a team of efficient, dedicated and experienced probate researchers who offer the best service for you and your clients worldwide.



LOST HEIRS, GLOBAL ESTATES



READY TO LEVEL UP YOUR RESEARCH?

A guide to assist in your research

In this webinar we will provide you with tips and tricks for your research.

Allow us to be your helping hand...



LOST HEIRS, GLOBAL ESTATES

A QUICK RECAP

INTESTACY LAWS

CALIFORNIA

Chart One

Decedent was
Single or Divorced

Chart Two

Decedent was Widowed

Chart Three

Decedent died leaving a
Surviving Spouse /
Registered Domestic Partner



CHART ONE

Intestate Succession Generally (No Surviving Spouse)

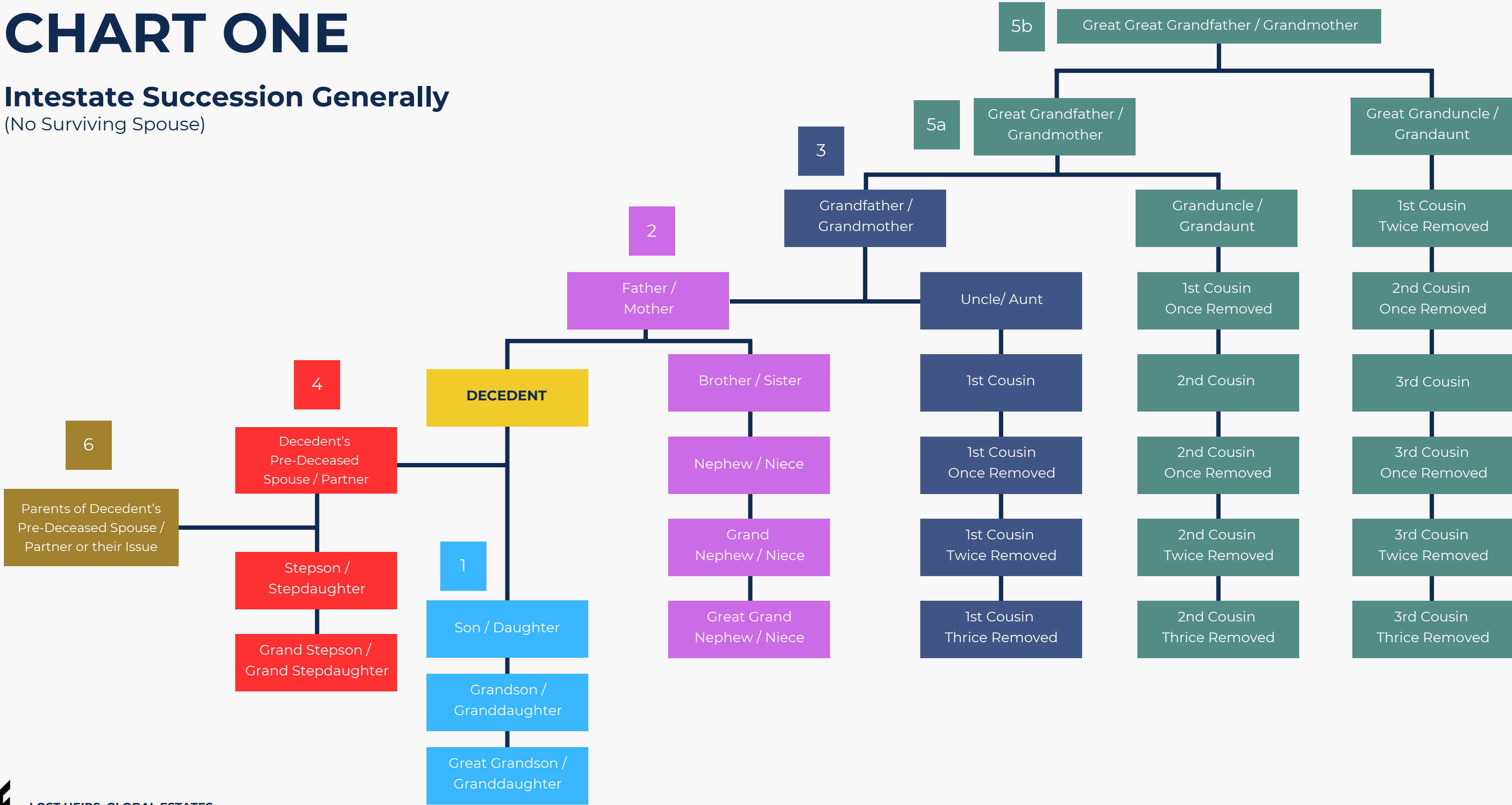
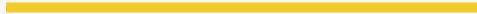


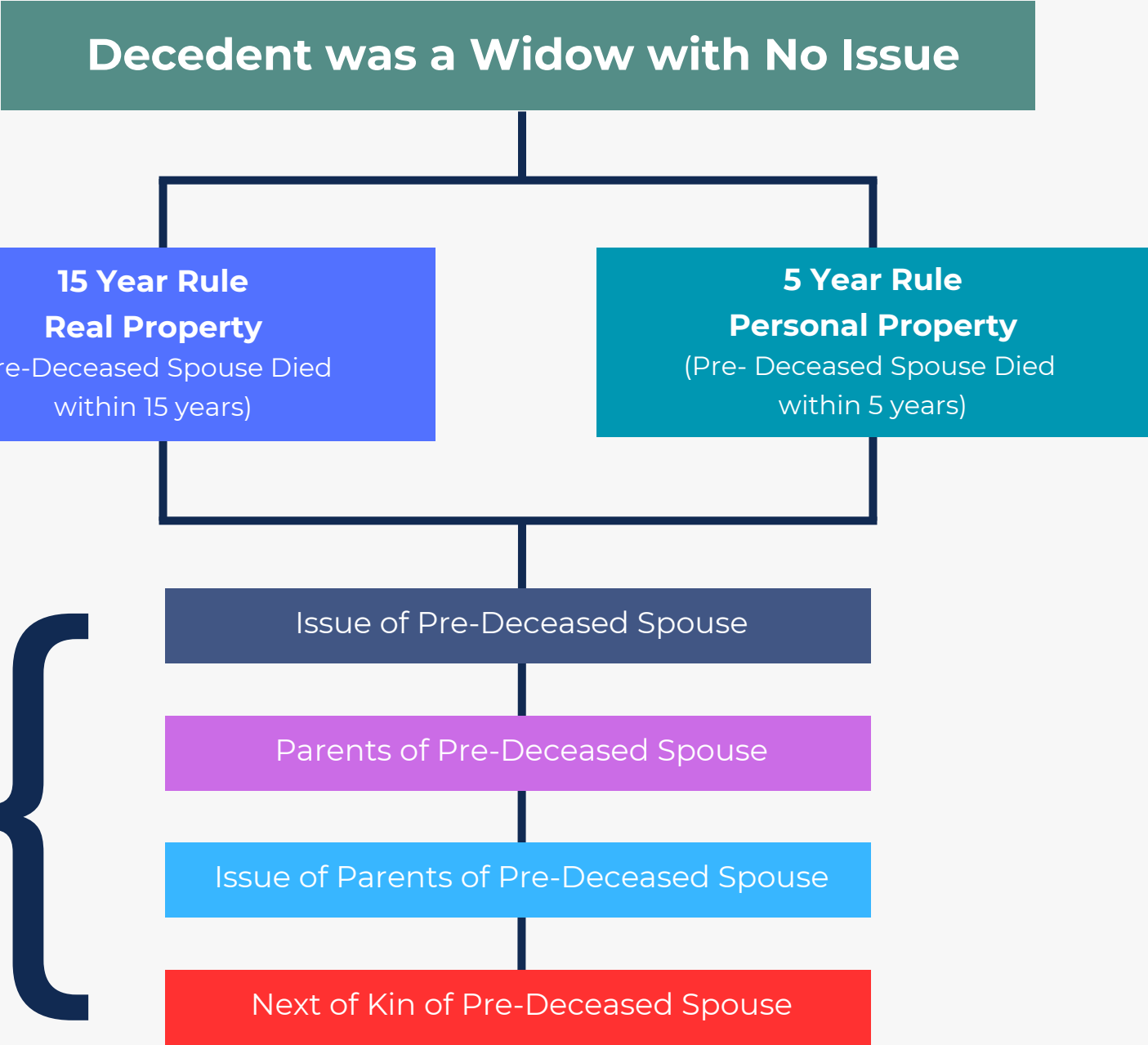
CHART TWO

Pre-Deceased Spouse Rule



In order of priority.

If none in one category, then
down to the next category.

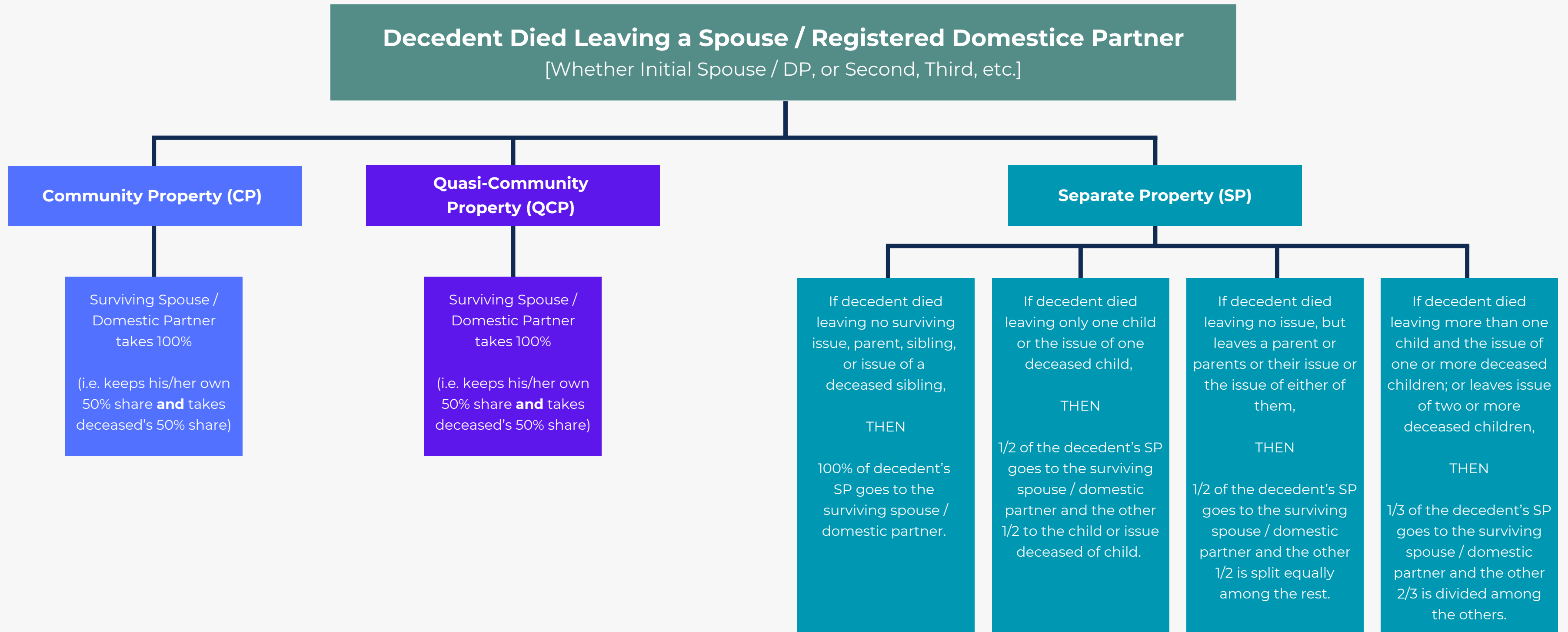


NB. Does not apply if decedent died
before January 1, 1985.



CHART THREE

Surviving Spouse



A GUIDE...

Every investigation tells a story. This guide will help you uncover it.

From initial research to locating heirs, we'll cover the core principles of an effective investigation and how we can help along the way.

- ✕ The initial search & enquiries
- ✕ Compile your findings
- ✕ Create your family tree



THE INITIAL SEARCH & ENQUIRIES

In our experience, it is always best to familiarise yourself with the case

Interviews



Conduct interviews with the proposed conservatee, their known caregivers, friends, relatives, any payee, fiduciary, or trustee, and other relevant contacts.

Visit the property



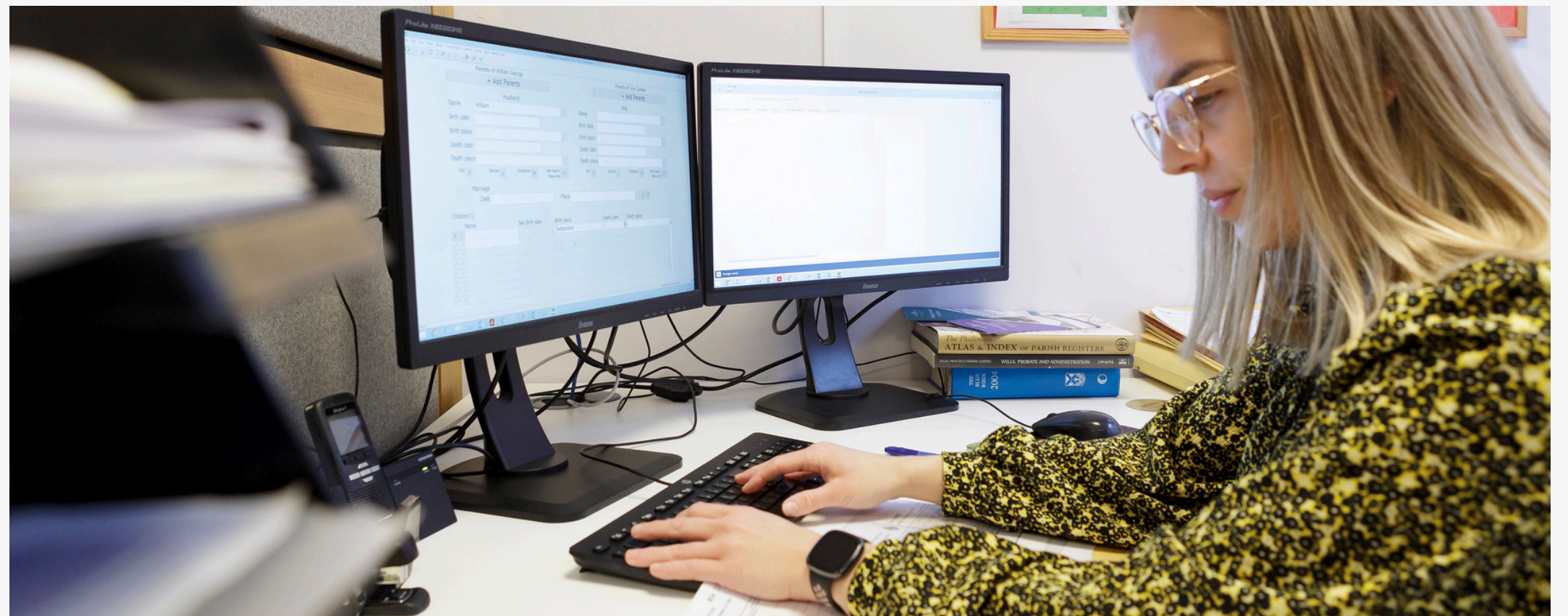
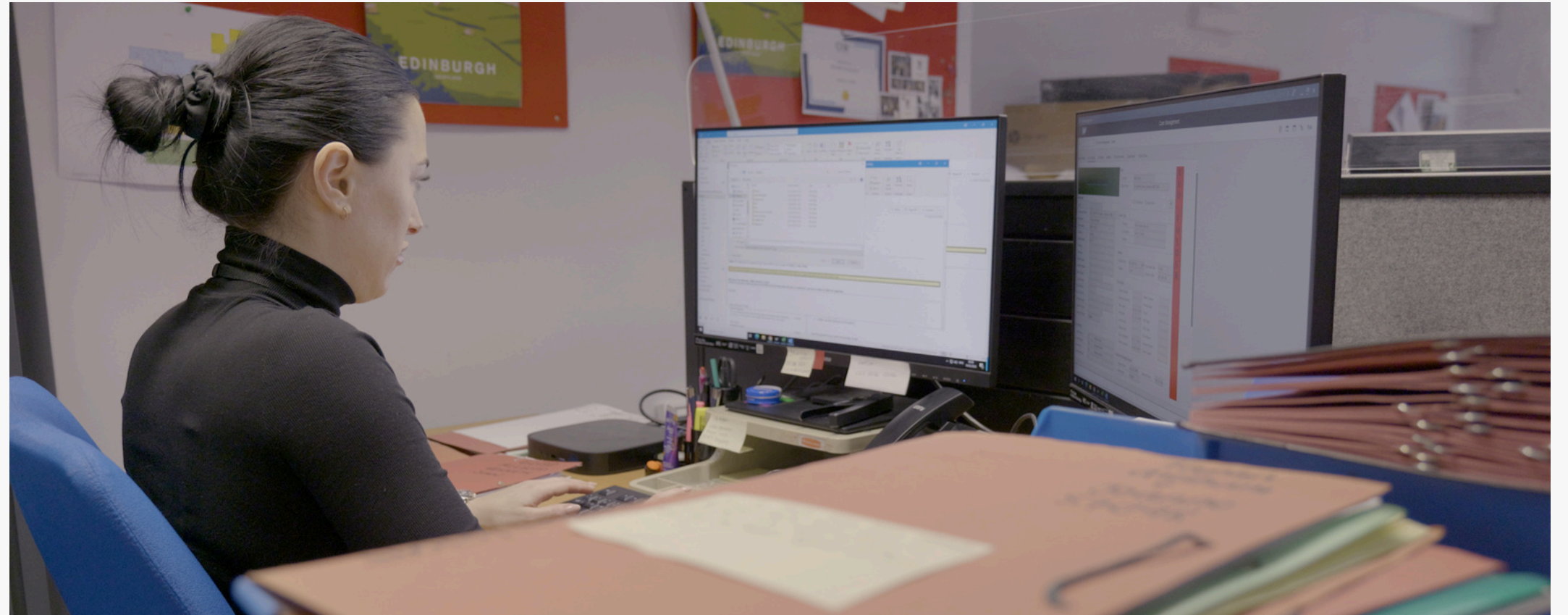
Go through personal documents like mail, address books, and family Bibles.

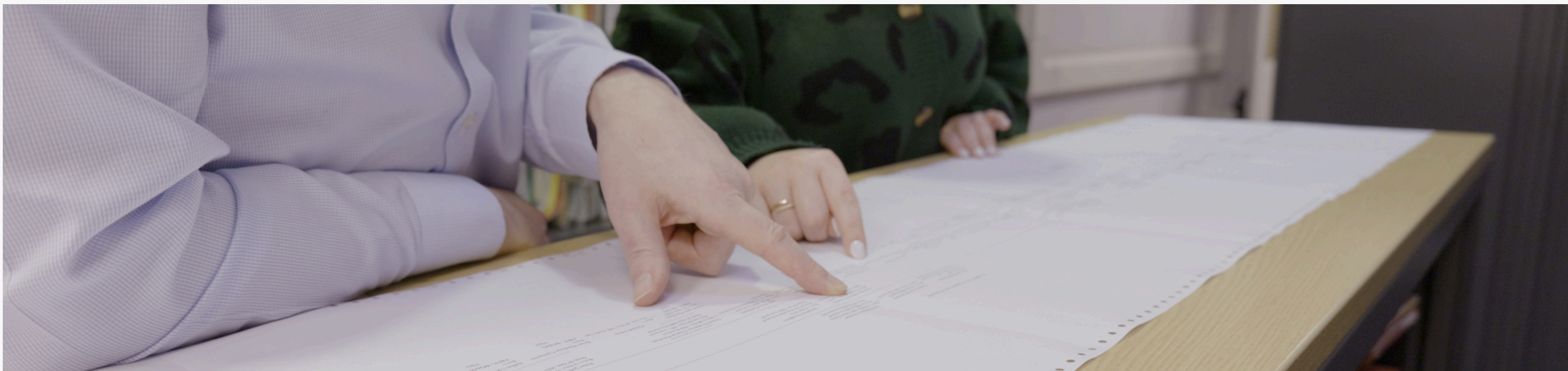


COMPILE YOUR FINDINGS

Compiling findings in a next-of-kin investigation requires meticulous organisation and clear presentation.

The process is more than just gathering information; it's about constructing a coherent narrative that establishes familial relationships and adheres to legal standards.





CREATING YOUR FAMILY TREE

- ✕ Keep the tree neat
- ✕ Add all notes that you believe are relevant, including any notes from interviews that could help you in your research.
- ✕ Make a clear distinction between maternal and paternal sides, when searching for next-of-kin.
- ✕ Ensure all dates and references are correct before placing on tree.

REMEMBER

Don't hesitate to seek help!

Consider professional assistance
when facing challenging
research or investigations.

**This can save you valuable time
and expenses.**



LOST HEIRS, GLOBAL ESTATES



TOP TIPS

WHEN DRAWING A FAMILY TREE

1

Start with the Decedent

Place the deceased (or the primary subject) at the center then expand upwards and outwards.

2

Organise Generations Clearly

Keep each generation on a distinct horizontal level to make relationships visually obvious.

3

Use Standard Symbols

Use squares for males, circles for females, and lines to represent relationships. (may seem irrelevant until you start looking at overseas names)

4

Keep the Tree Orderly

Males on the Left. Females on the Right.

Keep siblings in age order: Eldest on the Left, Youngest on the Right.

5

Maintain Consistent Spacing

Keep a uniform spacing between people and generations to improve readability and neatness.

6

Include Relevant Information

Add birth and death dates, marriage dates, or places of birth if known, but avoid clutter.





TOP TIPS

WHEN DRAWING A FAMILY TREE

7

Clearly Define Relationships

Use horizontal lines for marriage/partnerships and vertical lines to show parent-child connections.

8

Choose Orientation Carefully

Decide if your tree grows vertically (ancestors above, descendants below) or horizontally (ancestors to the left, descendants to the right). Can be easier to use vertical if the only option is to draw it in Word however using a spreadsheet may be the better option.

9

Limit Complexity

Only research what is needed.

10

Label Clearly

Write legibly, and use clear, consistent labeling or numbering to identify family members easily.

11

Use Color Coding or Shading

Use colour coding or shading to help distinguish family groups.



SYMBOLS FOR EFFECTIVE PROBATE RESEARCH

Gender Symbols

Male: Represented by a **square** 

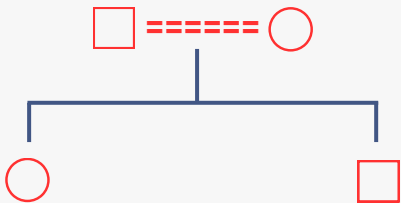
Female: Represented by a **circle** 

Relationship Lines

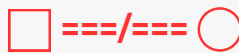
Marriage or Union: Represented by a **=====** connecting two individuals:



Parent-Child Relationship: Represented by vertical lines extending downward from a horizontal relationship line:



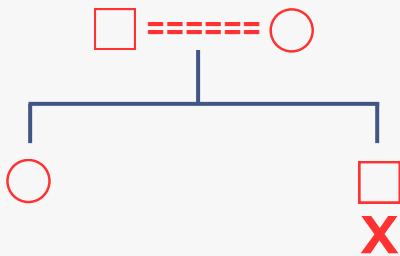
Divorce or Separation: Represented by two slashes through the relationship line:



Multiple Marriage: Clearly indicated by multiple horizontal lines: (the only time the male is not on the left side)



The Deceased Person: Represented by placing an "X" under the person:



CHOOSING THE RIGHT SEARCH ENGINES

Ancestry

Bureau of Land Management

CAGen Web

California State Archives

California State Library

Family Search

Find a Grave

Find My Past

Fold3

Forces War Records

Geni

Google

Linkpendium

My Heritage

National Archives

Newspapers.com

Trellis Legal Intelligence

UniCourt

VitalChek



CASE STUDY

(Near Kin)

James Dominic Gavan

Born: April 24, 1934 in England, United Kingdom

Deceased: January 20, 2020 in Contra Costa, CA

Parents were believed to be **Arthur Dominic Gavan** and **Doris Annie Careless** born, and died in the UK.

Initial Information

- ✗ Died **without** a will
- ✗ Left **real property** in a value of \$110,000
- ✗ Knowledge that there is a **Domestic Partner** but unsure if it is a *Registered* Domestic Partnership
- ✗ Research may lead to Near Kin

Our Research Found...

- ✗ Parents were correct
- ✗ The deceased had two siblings, both born in the UK
- ✗ One passed away as a minor, without issue
- ✗ Their other sibling, a sister, who passed away in 2018, leaving six children. All entitled to a share



RESOURCES

Investigation Checklist

Information about the **Deceased**

- ☐ Full Name
- ☐ Date and Place of Birth
- ☐ Date and Place of Marriage (if applicable)
- ☐ Date and Place of Death

Information about the **Parents**

- ☐ Full Names
- ☐ Date and Place of Births
- ☐ Date and Place of Marriage(s) (if applicable)
- ☐ Date and Place of Deaths

Further Information

- ☐ Obituaries for Parents
- ☐ Seek confirmation of siblings or other kin

Documentation to Assist in your Research

- ☐ Death Certificate
- ☐ ID Documentation for the DCD
- ☐ Property Deeds
- ☐ Other Assets, insurance, safe...
- ☐ Personal Effects
- ☐ Notes from various interviews

Next Step

- ✕ Review personal effects, wallets, bible, letter of the deceased for possible relatives' references.
- ✕ Conduct an internet search based on the information available to locate heirs.
- ✕ When building your tree make sure to label it with the type '**Paternal**,' '**Maternal**' or '**Near Kin**'
- ✕ Date the trees to keep a track of the most updated version
- ✕ All handwritten notes transferred to computer when necessary and crossed through
- ✕ All dates and places added to the tree (even speculative ones)
- ✕ Mark all the heirs on the tree for clarity

Links

Ancestry - www.ancestry.com

Bureau of Land Management - www.blm.gov

CAGen Web - www.cagenweb.org

California State Archives - www.sos.ca.gov/archives

California State Library - www.library.ca.gov

Family Search - www.familysearch.org

FamilySearch Wiki - www.familysearch.org/wiki

Find A Grave - www.findagrave.com

Find My Past - www.findmypast.com

Fold3 - www.fold3.com

Forces War Records - www.forceswarrecords.com

Geni - www.geni.com

Linkpendium - www.linkpendium.com

MyHeritage - www.myheritage.com

National Archives - www.archives.gov

Newspapers.com - www.newspapers.com

Trellis Legal Intelligence - www.trellis.law

UniCourt - www.unicourt.com

VitalChek - www.vitalchek.com



HOW WE CAN HELP

Our experience is vital in ensuring that the research is completed thoroughly and accurately, with the documentation we obtain meeting the standards required.

**Identifying relatives /
next-of-kin**



**Obtaining
Documentation**



**Provide Declarations
or Affidavits**



**Support and keep
relatives informed**



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

We offer comprehensive support for a range of scenarios, including;

- ✕ Research Worldwide
- ✕ Complex Case Management
- ✕ High-Volume Processing
- ✕ Expedited Search Services
- ✕ Contingency basis / Time Spent Basis / Hourly Basis

Let us be your extension, not just a service. We invite you to **contact us** to discuss your specific requirements.

info@fraserandfraser.co.uk

www.fraserandfraser.com

+44 (0) 207 832 1400

**Our team we'll be at CA PA | PG | PC
Come speak with us!**

Krzysztof Barski



Polish Case Manager

Nick Beetham



Business Development Manager



THANK YOU

WE LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING YOU AT THE

CONFERENCE OF THE
CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF PA | PG | PC

