**On death and retirement….**

Last weekend my family and I drove to Buffalo, NY for a funeral of our close friend, Paul. He was 59. He had just visited us in Waconia in July and had recently relocated from Seattle to Columbus, OH to help move his mother into a memory care facility. He had his own wealth management business. He was single. He was riding his bike, seemingly very healthy and active, but had a heart “episode.” His death was a shock to us and to his other friends and family. At the intimate ceremony in the chapel at the cemetery, there were speeches from his friends and family, as well as violin pieces played by his cousin. Paul was also an accomplished violin player. His death was not planned.

Last night I attended a retirement party for Bill Blazer, a key player in the creation of the Grow Minnesota program and the Waste Wise Energy Smart program for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce… not to mention a guru on policy and an excellent lobbyist. He was also interim president of the Chamber when David Olson passed away. His family flew in from various places, as did colleagues he had worked with for the past 26 years. There were speeches and pictures and toasts… this retirement was planned.

My emotions are heightened now as I said good-bye with finality to Paul, but with “Happy Retirement!” to Bill Blazer. I will miss working with Bill – one of the smartest people I know. Many of you attended the luncheon at ELKAY where he talked about the need for Immigration to help with our workforce and the economic vitality in Minnesota.

Workforce – one of the hottest topics in America right now – certainly in Waconia and Minnesota! Do you have a succession plan in place for your ownership? Management? Key employees? I am certainly not an expert in this field, but there are experts out there that can help you. Here’s a power point that I felt had some helpful advice: [FGP International](https://masc.sc/SiteCollectionDocuments/Human%20Resources/Succession%20Planning.pdf) If your business offers help and solutions to others, please let me know so I can promote YOUR business on this topic.

Back to death and retirement… do you have a will? If you died, is there someone who will take care of your matters? Does that person know? Can your business continue to function without you? Does your company have a succession plan? In the words of Shellie Haroski, SPHR from FGP International,

“*When a succession plan is needed… it’s too late to start one…”*