

Estate duties

I HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY A CLOSE FRIEND that she has made me the executor of her estate. I would like to know to what extent I can handle this myself or whether I have to get professional assistance. Kindly explain what has to be done in winding up an estate and what legal requirements there are to be followed. Can I be an executor if I am also a beneficiary of an estate?

Your advice would be greatly appreciated.

G Kosch

Aaron Roup, secretary of the Fiduciary Institute of South Africa, replies: An executor of an estate is not precluded from being appointed as such, even if he or she is a beneficiary in the estate. One must, however, note that someone who is to benefit from an estate may not act as a witness to the signing of the will by the testator or testatrix.

■ For details on what is involved in carrying out the duties of an executor, see the article "10 things you should know about choosing an executor" on **page 34**. Also see the book review on *Where There is a Will ...* on **page 31**.