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BOOKS



THE MYTH OF THE MILLION-DOLLAR DISHRAG

Now that we have your attention with this unusual title, read on to see why it is important. "The Myth of the Million-Dollar Dishrag" is the most recent book by Susan Eisen, and the reason it is so important can be found in the sub-title "An Effective and Powerful Plan to Avoid a Family Inheritance Battle After You Die." Originally intended for her customers, the book is also being purchased by jewellers who see it as a way to help their own clients.

By Barbara Wheat

As a jewellery retailer in El Paso, Texas, Eisen has heard just about everything related to family issues and crises over inheritance issues. "Most of the stories have happy endings, but some do not," she says. "By far, the one thing that has affected me most in my life as a jeweller is how the jewellery and treasures my clients own have the power to change the future of their families. Hearing these stories compelled me to take this information and share it." The problems she describes are not always about valuable items. Many have to do with sentimental or emotional items that have no other tangible value. These examples are summed up in the first chapter of her book about a family who had done all the appropriate and necessary planning and had even made a "With Love List"™ (an itemized listing of their most valuable and sentimental belongings) along with the loved one who was to inherit them. When the parents passed away and the four children settled the estate, clearly planned out ahead of time, all went well until they noticed the old faded dishrag that their mother had always used to wash the dishes. To them, it symbolized their mother and her love for them, and each child wanted it. No one was willing to give in. The arguments turned to anger, then to attorneys, and finally to lawsuits over the previously appraised "valuable" items. Two years later, the four children had collectively spent a million dollars fighting over the dishrag. The "million-dollar dishrag" had not only cost a fortune, it had destroyed a family, a family that would never be resurrected. "Thankfully, this story is fiction," says Eisen, "but it is a cautionary tale for any family, and is based on a compilation of actual family tales that I have heard from my clients over the years." "Everyday, clients tell me stories of heartbreak and sadness, envy and jealousy," Eisen continues. "For example, just the other day, a woman came in with a ring, saying it was from her mother but then snidely added that her 'sister got the big diamond.' There are other cases of second marriages where the husband gave the new wife his deceased wife's jewellery, when the daughters thought they should have it." But a treasured item is not always jewellery or artwork. Treasures can be purely sentimental. "A diary, an inexpensive watch that a

parent always wore, or even an ice cream scoop, can hold tremendous sentimental value for someone," adds Eisen. This is why she created the "With Love List"™, which guides the reader through a step-by-step process to determine items of financial value as well as emotional value, even if they might not seem like it at the time.

Most sales of the book have gone to customers who want it not only for themselves but to give to their parents. The book's "how-to" approach is simple and concise. Eisen draws not only on her experience as a trained appraiser and gemologist—her expertise has been accepted by courts of law in cases dealing with the valuation of jewellery for bankruptcy, divorce, fraud, and most recently as an expert witness for jewellery patent infringement issues—but presents examples in an easy-to-read and understandable manner, with a "plan" that can be used to divide jewellery, art, and other heirlooms in family collections. Her approach to settling family inheritance issues enables parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren to make wise decisions.

"The things you inherit are the only things that remind you of the person who dies other than the memories," Eisen muses. "Why take a chance of having those things turn negative? People have the ability when alive to make things work out for their heirs. I believe that the most important thing people can do after raising children is dealing with the inheritance issue before they die." And, reading and acting upon the valuable information given in "The Myth of the Million Dollar Dishrag" can ease the problems in dealing with inheritance.

About Susan Eisen

Born and raised in El Paso, Texas, Susan Eisen was determined from a young age to pursue her dream to major in art. Her love for design and working with metals and gemstones led her to fall in love with the art of jewellery making. In 1980, she opened her first retail jewellery store and art gallery "Tiara" in El Paso's downtown art district where she spent her days dreaming, designing, and making her own pieces.

Eisen's enthusiasm for designing jewellery and running a business inspired her to write her first book, "Crazy About Jewelry – The Expert Guide to Buying, Selling, and Caring for Your Jewelry," which was published in 2007. She wrote about the highlights of being a jewellery designer, and talked about interesting and humorous situations, as well as the practical topics of cleaning, storing, travelling with, insuring, and redesigning your jewellery.

Over the past 32 years, Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry and Watches has gone from a small, one-person jewellery and art gallery to a major player in the industry. She has been recognized as Woman Retailer of the Year by the Women's Jewelry Association, and is one of the top 31 jewellers named as "America's Best Jewellers" by *National Jeweler* magazine. She has also earned the "Best Jeweler in El Paso" title for many years.

Since launching her retail jewellery store and design studio in 1980, Susan Eisen has become a sought-after advisor for attorneys, CPAs, bankers, private collectors, and consumers for the valuation and distribution of family valuables. She has worked with hundreds of clients on their collections of jewellery, gemstones, silver, artwork, coins, and other precious treasures and has helped thousands of clients celebrate the milestones of their lives, from the birth of a child to a golden anniversary, with precious jewellery and other fine gifts.

An Effective and Powerful Plan to Avoid a Family Inheritance Battle After You Die



The Myth of the Million-Dollar Dishrag

Susan Eisen, GG, ASA, MGA, CGA
Author of "Crazy About Jewelry: The Expert Guide to Buying, Selling and Caring for Your Jewelry"

