

conservator

n. a guardian and protector appointed by a judge to protect and manage the financial affairs and/or the person's daily life due to physical or mental limitations or old age. The conservator may be only of the "estate" (meaning financial affairs). The process is that a relative or friend petitions the appropriate local court for appointment of a specific conservator, with written notice served on the potential conservatee. The object of this concern is interviewed by a court-appointed investigator to determine need, desire and understanding of the potential conservatee as well as the suitability of the proposed conservator. An open hearing is held before the appointment is made. The conservator is required to make regular accountings which must be approved by the court. The conservator may be removed by order of the court if no longer needed, upon the petition of the conservatee or relatives, or for failure to perform his/her duties.

Teresa Colombo-Heavey has handled many conservatorship proceedings and has served as a court-appointed conservator.

Reasons for a conservatorship might be:

- (a) That a person is severely mentally ill or gravely disabled;
- (b) Elderly individuals with Dementia or Alzheimer's Disease; or
- (c) Individuals with developmental disabilities who may lack the mental capacity to handle their own affairs.

Mental capacity will need to be determined by a medical professional or psychiatrist who is experienced in the field and has been documented and provided to the court as evidence.