

Estate and Gift Tax Controversies - Next Stop, The Tax Court

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 - A. Does the Proposed Plan Have Estate/Gift Tax Audit Exposure?
 1. Factual vs. Legal Issues
 - B. Contemporaneous Planning For Potential Tax Controversies and Documentation
 1. How Best to Preserve Documentation
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Tax Court Rulings

§ 143 Evidence.

(a) General:

Trials before the Court will be conducted in accordance with the rules of evidence applicable in trials without a jury in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. See Code sec. 7453. To the extent applicable to such trials, those rules include the rules of evidence in the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and any rules of evidence generally applicable in the Federal courts (including the United States District Court for the District of Columbia). Evidence which is relevant only to the issue of a party's entitlement to reasonable litigation or administrative costs shall not be introduced during the trial of the case (other than a case commenced under Title XXVI of these Rules, relating to actions for administrative costs). As to claims for reasonable litigation or administrative costs and their disposition, see Rules 231 and 232. As to evidence in an action for administrative costs, see Rule 274 (and that Rule's incorporation of the provisions of Rule 174(b)).

(b) Ex Parte Statements:

Ex parte affidavits, statements in briefs, and unadmitted allegations in pleadings do not constitute evidence. As to allegations in pleadings not denied, see Rules 36(c) and 37(c) and (d).

[Caution: On 3/27/2009, the Tax Court proposed adding the following subsec. (b) to Rule 143 and redesignating current subsecs. (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) as subsecs. (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g), respectively. See above for the current text of subsec. (b).]

(b) Testimony:

The testimony of a witness generally must be taken in open court except as otherwise provided by the Court or these Rules. For good cause in compelling circumstances and with appropriate safeguards, the Court may permit testimony in open court by contemporaneous transmission from a different location.

(c) Depositions:

Testimony taken by deposition shall not be treated as evidence in a case until offered and received in evidence. Error in the transcript of a deposition may be corrected by agreement of the parties, or by the Court on proof it deems satisfactory to show an error exists and the correction to be made, subject to the requirements of Rules 81(h)(1) and 85(e). As to the use of a deposition, see Rule 81(i).

(d) Documentary Evidence:

(1) Copies:

A copy is admissible to the same extent as an original unless a genuine question is raised as to the authenticity of the original or in the circumstances it would be unfair to admit the copy in lieu of the original. Where the original is admitted in evidence, a clearly legible copy may be substituted later for the original or such part thereof as may be material or

relevant, upon leave granted in the discretion of the Court.

(2) Return of Exhibits:

Exhibits may be disposed of as the Court deems advisable. A party desiring the return at such party's expense of any exhibit belonging to such party, shall, within 90 days after the decision of the case by the Court has become final, make written application to the Clerk, suggesting a practical manner of delivery. If such application is not timely made, the exhibits in the case will be destroyed.

(e) Interpreters:

The parties ordinarily will be expected to make their own arrangements for obtaining and compensating interpreters. However, the Court may appoint an interpreter of its own selection and may fix the interpreter's reasonable compensation, which compensation shall be paid by one or more of the parties or otherwise as the Court may direct.

(f) Expert Witness Reports:

(1) Unless otherwise permitted by the Court upon timely request, any party who calls an expert witness shall cause that witness to prepare a written report for submission to the Court and to the opposing party. The report shall set forth the qualifications of the expert witness and shall state the witness's opinion and the facts or data on which that opinion is based. The report shall set forth in detail the reasons for the conclusion, and it will be marked as an exhibit, identified by the witness, and received in evidence as the direct testimony of the expert witness, unless the Court determines that the witness is not qualified as an expert. Additional direct testimony with respect to the report may be allowed to clarify or emphasize matters in the report, to cover matters arising after the preparation of the report, or otherwise at the discretion of the Court. After the case is calendared for trial or assigned to a Judge or Special Trial Judge, each party who calls any expert witness shall serve on each other party, and shall submit to the Court, not later than 30 days before the call of the trial calendar on which the case shall appear, a copy of all expert witness reports prepared pursuant to this subparagraph. An expert witness's testimony will be excluded altogether for failure to comply with the provisions of this paragraph, unless the failure is shown to be due to good cause and unless the failure does not unduly prejudice the opposing party, such as by significantly impairing the opposing party's ability to cross-examine the expert witness or by denying the opposing party the reasonable opportunity to obtain evidence in rebuttal to the expert witness's testimony.

(2) The Court ordinarily will not grant a request to permit an expert witness to testify without a written report where the expert witness's testimony is based on thirdparty contacts, comparable sales, statistical data, or other detailed, technical information. The Court may grant such a request, for example, where the expert witness testifies only with respect to industry practice or only in rebuttal to another expert witness.

(3) For circumstances under which the transcript of the deposition of an expert witness may serve as the written report required by subparagraph (1), see Rule 76(e)(1).

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Tax Court Rules

TITLE XIII CALENDARS AND CONTINUANCES. RULES 130 - 133

Rule 131 Trial Calendars.

Tax Court Rulings

§ 131 Trial Calendars.

***(a) General:**

Each case, when at issue, will be placed upon a calendar for trial in accordance with Rule 140. The Clerk shall notify the parties of the place and time for which the calendar is set.

(b) Standing Pretrial Order:

In order to facilitate the orderly and efficient disposition of all cases on a trial calendar, at the direction of the trial judge, the Clerk shall include with the notice of trial a Standing Pretrial Order or other instructions for trial preparation. Unexcused failure to comply with any such order may subject a party or a party's counsel to sanctions. See, e.g., Rules 104, 123, 202.

(c) Calendar Call:

Each case appearing on a trial calendar will be called at the time and place scheduled. At the call, counsel or the parties shall indicate their estimate of the time required for trial. The cases for trial will thereupon be tried in due course, but not necessarily in the order listed.

** The amendments are effective as of March 1, 2008.*

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UNITED STATES TAX COURT
WASHINGTON, DC
www.ustaxcourt.gov

STANDING PRETRIAL ORDER

To the parties: The attached Notice Setting Case for Trial provides that this case is calendared for trial at the trial session commencing on October 19, 2009.

The parties shall begin discussions as soon as practicable for purposes of settlement and/or preparation of a stipulation of facts. Valuation cases and reasonable compensation cases are generally susceptible of settlement, and the Court expects the parties to negotiate in good faith with this objective in mind. All minor issues should be settled so that the Court can focus on the issue(s) needing a Court decision.

If difficulties are encountered in communicating with another party or in complying with this order, the affected party should promptly advise the Court in writing, with a copy to each other party, or in a conference call among the parties and the trial Judge.

Continuances will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. See Rule 133, Tax Court Rules of Practice and Procedure. (The Court's Rules are available at www.ustaxcourt.gov.) Even joint motions for continuance will not routinely be granted.

The Court may impose appropriate sanctions, including dismissal, for any unexcused failure to comply with this Order. See Rule 131(b). Such failure may also be considered in relation to sanctions against and disciplinary proceedings involving counsel. See Rule 202(a).

To facilitate an orderly and efficient disposition of all cases on the trial calendar, it is hereby

ORDERED that all facts shall be stipulated to the maximum extent possible. All documentary and written evidence shall be marked and stipulated in accordance with Rule 91(b), unless the evidence is to be used solely to impeach the credibility of a witness. Objections may be preserved in the stipulation. If a complete stipulation of facts is not ready for submission at the commencement of the trial or at such other time ordered by the Court, and if the Court determines that this is the result of either party's failure to fully cooperate in the preparation thereof, the Court may order sanctions against the uncooperative party. Any documents or materials which a party expects to utilize in the event of trial (except solely for impeachment), but which are not stipulated, shall be identified in writing and exchanged by the parties at least 14 days before the first day of the trial session. The Court may refuse to receive in evidence any document or material not so stipulated or exchanged, unless otherwise agreed by

the parties or allowed by the Court for good cause shown. It is further

ORDERED that unless a basis of settlement has been reached, each party shall prepare a pretrial memorandum substantially in the form attached hereto, which shall indicate the current status of the case. Each party shall submit the Pretrial Memorandum directly to the undersigned and to the opposing party not less than 14 days before the first day of the trial session. It is further

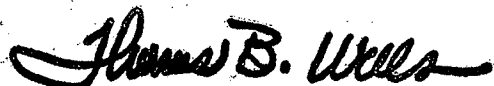
ORDERED that, if the status of the case changes from that reported in a party's pretrial memorandum, the party shall submit to the undersigned and to the opposing party a Final Status Report substantially in the form attached hereto. It is further

ORDERED that witnesses shall be identified in the Pretrial Memorandum with a brief summary of the anticipated testimony of such witnesses. Witnesses who are not identified will not be permitted to testify at the trial without leave of the Court upon sufficient showing of cause. Unless otherwise permitted by the Court upon timely request, expert witnesses shall prepare a written report which shall be submitted directly to the undersigned and served upon each other party at least 30 days before the first day of the trial session. An expert witness's testimony may be excluded for failure to comply with this Order and the provisions of Rule 143(f). It is further

ORDERED that where a basis of settlement has been reached, a stipulated decision shall be submitted to the Court prior to or at the call of the calendar on the first day of the trial session. Additional time for submitting a stipulated decision will be granted only where it is clear that settlement has been approved by all parties, and the parties shall be prepared to state for the record the basis of settlement and the reasons for delay. The Court will specify the date by which the stipulated decision and any related settlement documents will be due. It is further

ORDERED that all parties shall be prepared for trial at any time during the term of the trial session unless a specific date has been previously set by the Court. It is further

ORDERED that every pleading, motion, letter or other document (with the exception of posttrial briefs, see Rule 151(c)) submitted to the Court by any party subsequent to the date of the Notice Setting Case For Trial shall be served by the party upon every other party or counsel for a party and shall contain a certificate of service as specified in Rule 21(b).



Thomas B. Wells
Judge

Dated: May 13, 2009