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What was the genesis of the idea/path that has made you a trailblazer?

We represented a widow in a dispute regarding whether a holographic will, allegedly signed by the testator in Belgium, was valid under Florida law. The opposition argued that the will was valid under Belgium law and, therefore, the Florida court had to accept it. Alternatively, they argued that, even if the holographic will did not meet Florida's testamentary statutes, it was still sufficient to revoke the will proffered by the widow, which has been executed earlier in time.

We argued that the foreign will was not executed in strict compliance with Florida's testamentary statutes because it was signed in the presence of only one witness. While there was no case law directly addressing this issue, we argued that because the holographic will was not a valid will under Florida law, it also did not act as a revocation of the widow's will.

This issue had not been addressed before, so we presented a novel, yet logical argument that finally resolved a gray area in Florida law.

What sort of change has resulted from the concept?

This ruling set a precedent for future cases involving the impact and effect of holographic wills in Florida. Since Florida's Third District Court of Appeal adopted our argument, the decision has been cited by treatises both within Florida and nationwide as well as by litigants in their briefs.

What bearing will this have on the future?

Not only does this affect future lawsuits, but people who are planning for their estate now have a better understanding of the validity and effect of holographic wills.

