

## Orphans' Court-Specific Classes

**2026**

Class Title	Date	Description
Probate Potpourri	3/11/2026	<p>What did I hear you say? Was that hearsay? This course will take a look at courtroom proceedings and the rules of evidence. We will explore how and when to apply the rules and how to effectively manage a hearing. We will also discuss how to deal effectively with conflict in the courtroom.</p> <p>Topics to be covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence &amp; Hearsay</li> <li>- Courtroom Management &amp; Challenging Situations</li> <li>- An Update on Probate Laws</li> </ul>
Ethical Issues for Orphans' Court Judges	9/2/2026	<p>On and off the bench, Orphans' Court judges encounter ethical issues on a regular basis. Join our distinguished faculty for an updated and informed look at the Code of Judicial Conduct and judicial discipline process as pertains to the Orphans' Court judge. We will explore a variety of ethical issues faced by judges in Maryland and nationally, including topics such as courtroom demeanor, use of social media and other online platforms, and political activity.</p>

**2025**

Class Title	Date	Description
Understanding the Augmented Estate	5/21/2025	<p>The augmented estate is a daunting section of the Estates &amp; Trusts Article for most judges and practitioners. Find out how the law attempts to prevent people from disinherit their spouses.</p>
Dissecting the Will: Exploring the Document	5/21/2025	<p>We will look closely at Subtitle 1 of Title 4 of the Estates &amp; Trusts Article of the Maryland Code - Just 7 Code sections. Exactly what meets the Maryland definition of a valid will. What provisions are found in the typical will and their effects: The introductory clause, debts and funeral expenses, specific bequests, the residuary clause, the appointment of the personal representative (PR), powers of the PR, the bond provision, witnesses, and signatures.</p>
Ethical Issues for Orphans' Court Judges	8/27/2025	<p>On and off the bench, Orphans' Court judges encounter ethical issues on a regular basis. Let's take a deeper dive into the Code of Judicial Conduct and the rules governing Judicial Disabilities and Discipline as pertains to the Orphans' Court judge. Come explore ethical issues faced by judges in Maryland and Nationally.</p>

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**2024**

Class Title	Date	Description
Guardianship of the Property for Orphans' Court Judges	5/21/2024	Thinking of disinherit your spouse? Thought it was as simple as leaving your spouse out of the will and naming joint owners to your property? Not so fast and not anymore. The statute has been amended so that the elective share is no longer a simple fraction of the probate estate. Learn what assets make up the augmented estate and how to calculate the new elective share. Study the factors to consider when an heir or joint property owner disputes a spouse's election. "Til death do us part" may not be viewed the same.
Creditor Claims in the Orphans' Court	5/21/2024	The personal representative has filed a final account and is ready to make distribution to the heirs and legatees. Not so fast. There are outstanding claims that have to be addressed. This class will do an in-depth study of the statutes and rules regarding creditor claims. Learn the order of priority in making payments. Understand the effect of the statute of limitations; the limitation on presentment of claims; the manner of presenting claims; when and whether to allow claims fully or partially; and the possible liability of the personal representative. The determination is yours.
Judicial Ethics & Discipline for Orphans' Court Judges	10/23/2024	Explore the application of the Maryland Rules of Evidence, specifically the Dead Man's Statute in the Orphans' Court. The faculty will provide practical tips on when and how to rule from the bench on these topics.

**2023**

Class Title	Date	Description
Dissecting the Will	5/11/2023	In this course we will review the many details and sections of a will and how to decipher the content.
Probate on the Big Screen: Did Hollywood Get It Right?	5/11/2023	Hollywood makes everything look easy, even probate. Let's see how easy, or not easy, it can be. In this course we will identify best tips and practices for avoiding pitfalls during probate.
Statutory Interpretation for the Orphans' Court Judge	9/18/2023	When is an "or" also an "and"? In this course we will identify and apply the various canons of interpretation including textual canons, substantive canons, and deference in the course of an Orphan's Court case.
Writing for Orphans' Court Judges	9/18/2023	Orphan's Court judges issue many written findings and orders. You have taken the case under advisement and now you must draft a written order to include your fact findings and legal rulings. Our experienced faculty will focus on these types of cases and give you a framework for making this task easier for you and the order more clear to the parties.

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2022

Class Title	Date	Description
Personal Representative's Commission & Attorney's Fees	3/24/2022	They usually go hand in hand. Sometimes the personal representative asks for one and not the other. How are commissions determined? What does the personal representative have to do to earn them? Do you have to consider commissions before you grant attorney's fees? When can a personal representative request commissions and/or attorney's fees? Do the personal representative and attorney always get what they ask for? It all seems so simple but can sometimes get complicated. Learn what you should evaluate before awarding commissions and fees.
Estate Creditor Claims	3/24/2022	The estate has property. The heirs have calculated their share. Not so fast. Creditors are knocking at the door. The funeral bill has to be paid. There are hospital bills. What about the outstanding credit card statements? A second cousin once removed says that he loaned the decedent money. One sibling wants to be compensated for taking care of the decedent during her last illness. Who gets paid and who doesn't? You be the judge!
Evidence in Orphans' Court	10/28/2022	Explore the application of the Maryland Rules of Evidence, specifically the Dead Man's Statute in the Orphans' Court. The faculty will provide practical tips on when and how to rule from the bench on these topics.
Heirs, Legatees, and Related Issues	10/28/2022	Identify who are heirs and who are legatees, and the rules that govern each group. Evaluate the rights that are inherent to each group. Discuss the process to challenge the claims of heirs and legatees.