

PRO SE (WITHOUT A LAWYER) LITIGANTS

The following checklist represents the Muscogee County Probate Court's general requirements for parties representing themselves.

1. We encourage you to hire a lawyer because the legal system can be complicated and confusing.
2. If you represent yourself, you must follow the same rules of evidence and procedure as if you are a lawyer. You must make sure all the parties, who have not properly consented to what you are trying to do in court, are "served" as required by law. For further information on service, see: www.gaprobate.org or talk to a lawyer.
3. You are required to use the standard probate forms available at: www.gaprobate.org . You may purchase standard form packets from the probate court for \$1.00 per page.
4. If you choose to represent yourself, you must prepare and file all the paperwork for your case. The court staff, law librarians, and non-lawyers cannot prepare this paperwork. It is up to you to make sure your paperwork is done correctly and filed properly.
5. **The judge and clerks cannot give you legal advice.** If you have questions, you should talk to a lawyer.
6. The court fee schedule is available at: www.columbusga.org/probate/. In certain cases, you can request that court fees be waived based upon your income. It is up to the judge to decide if the fees can be waived. Fees will not be waived in cases where there is property in the deceased person's estate.
7. The judge and clerks cannot discuss the merits of your case. The clerk can only talk about procedural matters like the status of your file and how to schedule a hearing.
8. You must make sure the probate court has your current mailing address and daytime telephone number at all times.
9. Court is a serious matter. Therefore, chewing gum, food, and drink are not allowed in the courtroom. Also, you should dress appropriately for court. You are not allowed to wear shorts, hats or caps, flip-flops, halter-tops, tank tops, cropped shirts, or any other clothes inconsistent with serious legal proceedings.
10. You must keep up with all court dates and everything about your case. It is up to you to keep your case moving through the process. The Judge and clerk do not send out reminders about court. Be on time for court. If you do not keep up with your case or are not present when your case is called, you may lose your case.

By signing below, I state that I have read and understand these general requirements for *pro se* parties.

Pro Se Party

Date: