

Heraldic Wills

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One of the areas that few people think about is what will happen with the names and armory they register once they are no longer on this mortal earth. Heralds should make sure that folks are aware that they have the right to determine what happens to their registered items. It's possible that some people will not be concerned with the matter. For others, however, they will have a specific desire about how the issue should be handled. For these gentiles, they need to be made aware of the regulations concerning Heraldic Wills.

The Administrative Handbook of the College of Arms of the SCA in section IV.G. states:

Heraldic Wills - The owner of any registered item may execute a heraldic will, which is a statement of transfer that specifically transfers registered items to another at the owner's death. (See Appendix D for a standard form for a heraldic will.)

1. Any person may designate a heraldic heir. The heraldic will must bear the Society and legal name of the owner, be signed by the legal name of the owner, adequately describe the item(s) being transferred by the heraldic will, and adequately identify (include both) the legal and Society (where appropriate) name of the person who is authorized to accept transfer of the item(s). The owner need not transfer all registered armory or registered names to a single recipient upon the owner's death, but may allocate names, arms and badges to different persons.

2. The heraldic will may be filed during the lifetime of the owner, in which case the owner sends a copy of the will to the principal herald and to the Laurel Sovereign of Arms; or after the death of the owner, in which case the "heraldic heir" must include the original or a certified copy of the heraldic will with the transfer submission. In either case, the submission must be included in a letter of intent. If the heraldic will is registered with Laurel before death, it may be altered at any point up to the owner's death by executing a new heraldic will.

3. Upon the actual death of the owner, the designated heir may ask for a transfer of the item(s) willed to that designated heir. The submission is handled as any other transfer, except that instead of the letter extending the transfer and accepting the transfer, the submitter notes the existence of the heraldic will and the death of the prior owner.

The new submitter must establish personal entitlement to use any restricted or reserved element contained in any armory transferred.

4. If, upon the death of the owner of registered items in the Society, no heraldic will has been located, then the Personal Representative/Executor or the residual property heirs of the owner under the laws of the state of the owner's death have the right to give permission to conflict, release the items, or transfer the items as these heirs deem appropriate.

5. If a heraldic will is registered with Laurel Sovereign, the person designated as heir may register a cadenced version of the armory without needing to obtain further letters of permission to conflict from the owner. If the owner changes the heraldic will, the new heir may also register a cadenced version, but may be obligated to obtain permission to conflict from the former designated heir just as they would from any other person with conflicting armory.

6. If more than one person designates the same person as heraldic heir to their devices, the heir may display, but not register, these devices quartered and differenced.

A couple of standard forms for a heraldic will as per Appendix D of the Administrative Handbook of the CoA follow. Note that portions (such as the general release of an item) may be taken out if they do not apply.

Heraldic Will Sample #1

I [Legal name of owner], known in the Society for Creative Anachronism, Incorporated (SCA) as [SCA name of owner] leave to [legal name of heraldic heir], known in the SCA as [SCA name of heraldic heir, if any] my (name/armory) registered in the SCA, ([name to be transferred]/blazoned as [blazon of armory to be transferred]).

I [Legal name of owner], known in the Society for Creative Anachronism, Incorporated (SCA) as [SCA name of owner] release the following names and armory registered to me in the SCA [insert list of all names or armories to be released]

[Date] [Signature of [Name]]

Heraldic Will Sample #2

I [Legal name of owner], known in the Society for Creative Anachronism, Incorporated (SCA) as [SCA name of owner] wish to make the following determinations to my name(s) and/or armory upon my death as below:

[select options as desired; items may be split amongst multiple people or released entirely]

- transfer to [legal name of heraldic heir], known in the SCA as [SCA name of heraldic heir, if any] my [name/armory] registered in the SCA, [insert name or "blazoned as [insert blazon of armory]].

- release the following [name/armory] registered to me in the SCA [insert list of all names or armories to be released]

[Date] [Signature of [Name]]

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