

When Getting Financial Advice, Don't Be Fooled by Impressive-Sounding Credentials

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A "certified senior advisor" may sound like a trustworthy person to provide investment advice to the elderly, but beware! While the title has an impressive ring to it, it doesn't take much to earn it.

Insurance companies are using sales agents with fancy-sounding credentials, but few actual qualifications, to sell annuities to seniors. Thousands of financial advisors market themselves as trained to provide advice to seniors, using authoritative titles like "certified senior advisor" or "certified retirement counselor."

Unlike a "certified financial planner," which requires years of rigorous study, becoming a "certified senior advisor" involves attending a three-and-a-half-day seminar and then passing an easy multiple choice test. "Certified senior advisors" are not even required to have a high school or college diploma.

Insurance companies often use graduates of these programs to sell insurance contracts to seniors-in particular deferred annuity contracts, which may not be in the best interest of the senior. Unlike an immediate annuity, which begins paying money right away, a deferred annuity does not begin paying for a set number of years.

While deferred annuities can be a good way for some wealthy seniors to pass money to their heirs, it is not a good product for seniors living off their savings because they may die before they receive the money. However, insurance sales agents often push deferred annuities because the products pay higher commissions.

The following credentials sound impressive, but actually take only a few days to earn:

- certified senior adviser
- certified retirement counselor
- registered financial gerontologist
- certified retirement financial adviser

If you are looking for qualified financial advice, look for a "certified financial planner" or a "chartered financial analyst." Both programs actually involve years of study and require a college degree.

**“Those Who Plan Ahead Win.
Those Who Don’t Plan Ahead Lose.”**

This article is for informational purpose only and is not intended as legal advice. It is recommended that you call Timothy P. Crawford for a free conference to discuss your situation in more detail. Attorney Crawford can be reached toll free at 1-262-634-6659. Please refer to this article when you call.

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford is a Nationally Board Certified Elder Law Attorney(CELA). He has been Board Certified by the National Elder Law Foundation which has been approved as the Sole Certifying Organization for Elder Law Attorneys by the American Bar Association.

Timothy P. Crawford was invited to join the Council of Advanced Practitioners(CAP) of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) in August of 2005. CAP is a small group of premier elder law attorneys, all of whom have been members of NAELA for at least 10 years, are certified as elder law attorneys by the National Elder Law Foundation, and are AV rated by Martindale Hubbell, a service that provides an independent rating of the quality of attorneys, as one of the top attorneys in the nation.

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford has been selected as a Fellow of NAELA. Fellow is the highest honor bestowed by the Academy. Selection as a Fellow signifies that his peers recognize the lawyer as a model for others and as an exceptional lawyer and leader.

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford has a superb rating of 10 out of 10 with A V V O.

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