

What are Heirs, Beneficiaries, Legatees and Devisees?

What are heirs, beneficiaries, legatees and devisees? Two of these terms are archaic but the others have specific meanings.

Typically, an heir is someone who is legally entitled to inherit property from someone if that someone dies without leaving a legally valid will.

Beneficiaries are generally individuals who are designated to receive property after a person dies. They may be named in a will, a trust, or other legal documents.

Legatee and devisee are two older terms that may be encountered in legal documents involving the settlement of an estate when there is a valid will admitted to probate. A legatee is someone who is named to inherit personal property. A devisee is someone who is named to inherit real property.

(Source: Genealogy Tip of the Day, January 30, 2024)