Today's lunch discussion, co-led by Karen Gallardo and Beth McNally, builds on Beth's nuts and bolts session on estate administration and is based on a time when we sat across the aisle from each other at The Nature Conservancy and learned from each other on donors' wishes before and after their death.

We'll review six scenarios and share lessons learned from real bequests which will illustrate how even small changes (when the bequest is being created), easily implemented by organizations of all sizes, can result in bequests that are more likely to be efficiently accepted and utilized by an organization.

Keep in mind that it is likely your donor will be the one with the most charitable intent and support of your organization. Try to work with that donor while they are living so their goals are expressed and can be carried out. Don't assume other family members or executors/attorneys will share the donor's same interests and goals.

Finally, we believe organizations should be proactive in their planned giving programs both in asking for gifts and how they receive bequest gifts. Today's scenarios will help your organization take another step down that path and prepare you better for the interesting things that come to us through bequest gifts.

Scenario #1 – "What's in a name?"
What if your organization has changed names (perhaps several times) and a bequest is received naming a former iteration of your organization?

Scenario #2 – "What instrument is the vehicle for your gift?"
What if a donor makes a gift through their Will but all their assets are in their Trust? Or their Will or Trust names one beneficiary of life insurance but their beneficiary designation names another?

Scenario #3 – "Creative restrictions"
Is there language that allows your organization the flexibility to accept a restricted gift if a program has changed?

Scenario #4 – "I'm sure the organization will do the right thing after I'm gone…"
How to talk to donors while they are living to clarify expectations of a future bequest including documentation of special requests, e.g. special rent rate or life estate for personal assistant or family member.

Scenario #5 – "Do you have a copy of the will?"
What if a family member calls your organization asking for copies of their parent's Will, Trust, etc.?

Scenario #6 – "Building your internal team"
How do you work with your general counsel and/or finance team when accepting bequests? Incredibly important to prepare for the day when the gift includes complex assets from estates?