# Elder Mediation: Resolving Family Conflicts in Elder Care for William Curry



In Chelmsford, Massachusetts, the family of William Curry, a retired electrical engineer with advancing dementia, faced significant challenges regarding his care. William's elderly wife, Melissa, initially refused to place him in a specialized memory care facility, despite her own faltering health and issues managing his medication. The impasse among family members led them to seek the aid of Elder Decisions, a company offering mediation services for families dealing with elder-care issues.

Elder Decisions, led by Crystal Thorpe and co-mediator Rikk Larsen, facilitated a family meeting around the dining table to discuss William's needs, adjusting from litigation-focused solutions towards consensus and compromise. This intervention allowed every family member, including William, to express their needs and viewpoints. Eventually, with Melissa's consent, William was moved to a nearby memory care facility where he lived until he passed away at 82, followed by his wife several years later at the age of 88.

Mediation in elder care is increasingly seen as a beneficial option to prevent costly and stressful litigation. It aims to achieve mutual agreement without assigning winners or losers, centering on the best interests of the elderly person involved. Elder mediation remains an emerging field without standardized certification, involving professionals from various backgrounds such as law and social work, and costing differently across states.