

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003**

**SESSION LAW 2003-168
SENATE BILL 394**

AN ACT ALLOWING A CLAIM FOR EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION TO SURVIVE
THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE WHEN THE PARTIES ARE LIVING SEPARATE
AND APART AT THE TIME OF DEATH AND THE CLAIM IS TIMELY FILED.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 50-20(l) reads as rewritten:

"(l) ~~A pending action for equitable distribution shall not abate upon the death of a party.~~

- (1) A claim for equitable distribution, whether an action is filed or not, survives the death of a spouse so long as the parties are living separate and apart at the time of death.
- (2) The provisions of Article 19 of Chapter 28A of the General Statutes shall be applicable to a claim for equitable distribution against the estate of the deceased spouse.
- (3) Any claim for equitable distribution against the surviving spouse made by the estate of the deceased spouse must be filed with the district court within one year of the date of death of the deceased spouse or be forever barred."

SECTION 2. The catch line for G.S. 50-20 reads as rewritten:

"§ 50-20. ~~Distribution by court of marital and divisible property upon divorce property.~~"

SECTION 3. Article 19 of Chapter 28A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 28A-19-19. Claims for equitable distribution.

(a) The provisions of G.S. 28A-19-5 and G.S. 28A-19-7 shall not apply to claims for equitable distribution.

(b) The personal representative may enter into an agreement, in writing, with a claimant providing for distribution of marital or divisible property, or both, in a manner deemed by the personal representative and the claimant to be equitable. The agreement shall be filed in the clerk's office where the letters were granted and shall be a lawful voucher for the personal representative. The same may be impeached in any proceeding against the personal representative for fraud therein.

(c) Unless the claim for equitable distribution has been referred as provided in G.S. 28A-19-15, the claimant may at anytime, subject to the provisions of G.S. 28A-19-16, file an action with the district court for distribution of marital or divisible property in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 50-20."

SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law.
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 5th day of June,
2003.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved 9:59 a.m. this 12th day of June, 2003