

**QUESTION 4 THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION SHOULD GO IN BLUEBOOK II OR IN EXAMPLIFY ANSWER SCREEN 4**

Jason and Joni met at age 18 in 2008, started dating immediately, and moved in together in January 2010. Jointly renting a home to live in, they also shared just about everything else regarded themselves as a couple, and otherwise held themselves out as inseparable in all walks of life. After eight years of living together, the couple married in late 2018.

After their wedding, which had been attended by both families, except Joni's only grandmother, Jason and Joni quickly grew apart and quarreling took hold of their marriage. Central to their acrimony was the birth of a full term baby boy six months after the wedding.

In the summer of 2020, Joni separated from Jason and filed for divorce seeking custody, child support, alimony, and an equitable distribution of the marital estate. She maintains that, because they lived together for eight years before they married, and held themselves out as a couple, the "length of the marriage" was actually ten years and not less than two. This, Joni reasons, strengthens her claim for alimony, based on the length of the marriage, and her claim that Jason's pre-owned and separately held investment property, worth \$2 million, should be included in the marital estate.

Jason disputes Joni's claims. He argues his prior-owned property should not be included in the marital estate. While conceding a slight disparity in their incomes, Jason counters that their marriage is not even two years old and that such a short marriage does not warrant an alimony award. Jason has "no problem" with Joni getting custody but disputes he should be obligated to pay child support because the baby was "conceived before marriage." Jason also lays claim to one-half of a \$2 million inheritance Joni received from her grandmother's will a week after separation and filing for divorce and which Joni deposited in her separate – not the parties' joint-account. Joni's grandmother (who died right after the wedding) despised Jason from the moment she met him, boycotted the wedding, and was with her estate lawyer signing the will at the time of the ceremony. The bequest was described "as Joni's sole property."

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**Under Michigan law, evaluate the parties' requests. Explain your answers.**