

Judicial Inquiry Commission

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MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104

March 3, 1986

The Judicial Inquiry Commission has considered your request for an opinion concerning whether, under the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics, a District Court Judge may serve as Safety Chairman for the National Council on Alcoholism. As Chairman, the Judge would be involved in the Drinking and Driving Awareness Program and the Seat Belt Safety Program. The Drinking and Driving Awareness Program is designed to increase public awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving, to aid in lowering the percentage of alcohol-related traffic fatalities and to encourage safe driving. This program, if successful, would aid in reducing the number of alcohol-related traffic cases filed in district courts by decreasing instances of drinking and driving.

Similarly, the Seat Belt Safety Program is designed to increase highway safety by increasing the use of seat belts on Alabama highways.

It is the opinion of the Commission that a District Court Judge is not prohibited from serving as Chairman of the described programs, appearing in public service advertising, and speaking on the issues involved. A Judge's extra-judicial activities are governed largely by Canons 4 and 5 of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics. The purpose of the programs described above is consistent with those Canons in that they are designed to promote the law in traffic safety. In participating in these programs, a Judge should be ever mindful of the provisions of Canons 4 and 5.

Sincerely,

JUDICIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION