

Judicial Inquiry Commission

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June 4, 1991

In your letter of May 31, 1991, you request an opinion from the Judicial Inquiry Commission on the following question: Can a district judge, who regularly presides over cases brought by the Birmingham Police Department, serve on a special committee created by the City Council "for the purpose of studying, researching, and recommending proposals, ways and means of assisting the Birmingham Police Department to more effectively carry out its overall mission and responsibilities of enforcing law and order in the City of Birmingham and to formulate and propose innovative programs to reduce and deter crime in all aspects of community life"? The membership of the committee is selected from "a representative cross-section of business, civil, governmental, judicial and law enforcement elements of this community or other organizations with special expertise to contribute to better law enforcement and reduction of crime".

It is the opinion of the Commission that membership in such a committee or task force is not a violation of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics. In fact, to the extent that a judge's time permits, a judge is encouraged to "engage in activities to improve the law, the legal system, and the administration of justice". Canon 4, Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics.

Sincerely,

JUDICIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION