



JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

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June 15, 2007

Re: JIC Advisory Opinion 2007-13

Dear Judge

In a recent letter to the Judicial Investigation Commission you asked for an advisory opinion. In that correspondence you stated that you have been invited to participate in an American Bar Association Workshop in Wilmington, Delaware this fall. You were being asked to participate in a panel that would deal with various issues related to chemical product liability trials. The workshop is sponsored by the American Bar Association and is open to the public and will further be attended by plaintiff's lawyers, defense lawyers, and others. You enclosed in your letter information about the workshop.

To address the matter which you have raised, the Commission has reviewed Canon 4B., of the Code of Judicial Conduct. That Canon states in relevant part:

Canon 4. A judge shall so conduct the judge's extra-judicial activities as to minimize the risk of conflict with judicial obligations.

. . . .

B. Avocational activities. – A judge may speak, write, lecture, teach, and participate in other extra-judicial activities concerning the law, the legal system, the administration of justice, and non-legal subjects, subject to the requirements of this Code.

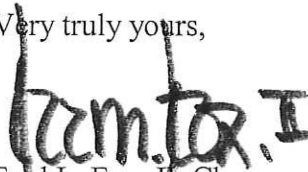
June 15, 2007

The commentary to that Canon further states "As a judicial officer and person specially learned in the law, a judge is in unique position to contribute to the improvement of the law, the legal system, and the administration of justice, including revision of substantive and procedural law and improvement of criminal and juvenile justice. To the extent that time permits, a judge is encouraged to do so, either independently or through a bar association, judicial conference, or other organization dedicated to the improvement of the law".

Based upon the information provided to the Commission, it appears that the workshop is sponsored by the American Bar Association and will be attended by plaintiff's attorneys, defense lawyers, and other individuals who have an interest in the subject matter of the event. The workshop is also opened to the public. It is the opinion of the Commission based upon the language contained in Canon 4 and the information which you have provided that you could attend the workshop and participate in it as a panel member. You should not, however, discuss any specific pending or impending cases.

It is hoped that this opinion fully addresses the question which you have raised. If there is any further question regarding this matter, do not hesitate to contact the Commission.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fred L. Fox, II". The signature is stylized with a large, prominent "F" and "L".

Fred L. Fox, II, Chairman
Judicial Investigation Commission

CRG/bl