

ETHICS OPINION

RO-90-01

████████████████████

QUESTION:

"My secretary has recently been certified as a Professional Legal Secretary. This certification is issued by the National Association of Legal Secretaries to those professionals who pass an extensive two day examination which is given twice each year. This is the only national certification available in this area of the field of law.

The purpose of this letter is to inquire if there would be any violation of the Code of ethics if my secretary had business cards with her name followed by the initials PLS (Professional Legal Secretary) and my office address showing thereon.

In my research of the Code of Ethics, I find that there would be no violation, however, I would appreciate you looking into this formally and providing me with a response."

* * *

ANSWER:

Temporary Disciplinary Rule 2-106 provides as follows:

"DR 2-106 * * *

A professional card of a non-lawyer employee of a lawyer or law firm must contain the identification of the non-lawyer employee as 'Non-Lawyer Assistant.' Such cards may be used for identification, subject to Temporary DR 2-103."

While the Code of Professional Responsibility does provide a mechanism whereby organizations that certify lawyers may be approved, no such mechanism is in place for organizations that certify non-lawyers. Nonetheless, it is our opinion that the designation "Professional Legal Secretary" as certified by the National Association of Legal Secretaries may be listed by your secretary on her otherwise permissible business card, which contains her name, followed by the initials PLS, and which also contains your office address. We would opine further, however, that the

RO-90-01

card must also include the mandatory language of Temporary Disciplinary Rule
2-106 as set forth hereinabove.

AWJ/vf

1/17/90