

Judicial Inquiry Commission

800 SOUTH MCDONOUGH STREET
SUITE 201
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104

October 16, 1985

The Judicial Inquiry Commission has considered your request for an opinion concerning whether a juvenile judge may appear in judicial robes in a public service announcement encouraging parents to use seat belts for their children. The program is known as "Buckle-Up" and is sponsored by the Jaycees and local television stations. The program does not advertise specific name-brand products.

It is the opinion of the Commission that a judge may appear in the public service advertisement as described. A judge's extra-judicial activities are governed largely by Canons 4 and 5 of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics. The public service advertisement described here is for the purpose of promoting the use of seat belts for the public safety and welfare. In sitting in personal injury lawsuits, judges are frequently confronted with the results of a person's failure to take proper safety precautions. Judges may appear in noncommercial public service advertisements designed to promote the law, i.e. the child restraint law, and the public safety.

Sincerely,

JUDICIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION