

Judicial Inquiry Commission

800 SOUTH MCDONOUGH STREET
SUITE 201
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36104

August 3, 1987

The Judicial Inquiry Commission has considered your request for an opinion concerning whether under the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics a judge may participate in the Alabama Jefferson Meeting on the Constitution sponsored by Cumberland School of Law and funded by the Alabama Humanities Foundation. The Foundation will pay room and board for all participants. The meeting is designed for study, discussion and debate concerning the desirability of amendments to the United States Constitution. The meeting is being held in celebration of the bicentenary year of the United States Constitution.

It is the opinion of the Commission that a judge's participation in the proposed meeting is specifically permitted within the guidelines of Canon 4 of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics.

Canon 4 provides as follows:

"A Judge May Engage in Activities to Improve the Law, the Legal System, and the Administration of Justice.

A judge, subject to the proper performance of his judicial duties, may engage in the following quasi-judicial activities, if in doing so he does not cast doubt on his capacity to decide impartially any issue that may come before him:

A. He may speak, write, lecture, teach, and participate in other activities concerning the law, the legal system, and the administration of justice.

B. He may appear at a public hearing before an executive or legislative body or official and may otherwise consult with an executive or legislative body or official on matters concerning the law, the legal system, and the administration of justice."

The purpose of the proposed meeting is consistent with the purpose of the activities permitted by Canon 4. Therefore, so long as the judge's participation does not interfere with the proper performance of his judicial duties and does not cast doubt on his impartiality, the judge may attend and participate in the meeting.

Sincerely,

JUDICIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION