

Judicial Inquiry Commission

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January 28, 1994

This is in response to your request for an advisory opinion from the Judicial Inquiry Commission. Your question is whether, as a municipal judge, you may instruct educational courses at the Prichard Police Department Academy.

It is the opinion of this Commission that a judge may teach and instruct educational courses at a police department academy. This type of activity is encouraged by Canon 4 which, in pertinent part, provides:

“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.”

See Advisory Opinions 93-471 (A judge may ethically teach courses on Alabama Drugs Laws and Moot Court at the Southwest Alabama Police Academy.) and 91-433 (A full-time elected judge may teach a law related course on a part-time basis so long as 1) in doing so he does not cast doubt on his capacity to decide impartially any issue that may come before him, and 2) does not detract from the dignity of his office or interfere with the performance of his judicial duties.).

The singular fact that many of the students as police officers will eventually appear before you in municipal court does not, in and of itself, constitute a basis for your disqualification in those cases.

This opinion has been considered by the entire Commission and is the opinion of the Commission.