

(Originally issued: June 1984)

**PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL, RELIGIOUS,  
CHARITABLE, FRATERNAL OR CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS  
AS AN OFFICER, DIRECTOR OR TRUSTEE**

**AUTHORITY:** Canons 4C(3)(d)(i) and (iv)

**I. Background**

The Committee has frequently been presented questions for informal opinions as to the propriety of a judge serving as an officer or director of a charitable organization. A further inquiry is made as to whether or not the judge's name can appear on the official stationery or announcements of the charitable organizations. In the past, the Committee on Judicial Ethics has not responded in a consistent fashion, and it appeared appropriate to publicize, in the form of a formal opinion, the determination of the Committee.

**II. Questions**

1. May a judge serve as an officer or director of a charitable organization?
2. May a judge's name appear on the official stationery or announcements of the charitable organizations?
3. May a judge sign a letter soliciting funds for a charitable organization?

**III. Answer**

The answer to questions 1 and 2 is yes, and the answer to question 3 is no. Participation in educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organizations as an Officer, Director or Trustee is proper, but a judge may not sign a letter soliciting funds.

**IV. Discussion**

Canon 4C(3)(d)(i) and (iv) prohibits judges from personally soliciting funds, except from each other and forbids judges from using the prestige of their office for fund-raising or membership solicitation. Judges may assist in planning fund-raising activities, but may not personally solicit funds.

The Committee is of the opinion that a judge may be listed as an officer, director or trustee of a charitable organization which engages in fund-raising activities. To delete the judge's name would be a misrepresentation. A judge should not sign a letter soliciting funds but may be listed, along with other officers or directors, in letters or fliers soliciting funds.

This opinion is advisory only. The Committee acts on specific questions submitted, and its opinion is based on facts as set forth in the questions submitted.