

Ethics Opinion No. 69-4

Propriety of Lawyers Owning or Occupying Space in "Anchorage Legal Center."

The Committee has been asked for an opinion on the propriety on lawyers either owning or occupying space in a building called "Anchorage Legal Center." The Committee concludes that it is improper for attorneys to either own or occupy office space in a building so named.

The Committee believes that the geographical reference in the name, especially when used with the word "center", is misleading because it may be taken as a representation that the occupants have an official character.

The Committee also believes that the name constitutes an indirect form of advertising. Attorneys having an office in a building so named would have a certain advantage over other attorneys merely because of the building's name. A person wishing to retain an attorney might well seek one in the Anchorage Legal Center because of the name of the building.

Canon 27 of the Canons of Professional Ethics prohibits advertising, direct or indirect. We believe that the owner who names his building "The Legal Center" or "Lawyers' Building" is advertising for the benefit of his prospective tenants.

We know that in some other jurisdictions there exist buildings named "Lawyers' Building", but we do not believe this to be a particularly persuasive justification. Nor are we unmindful of the uncertain client drawing strength which names such as "The Legal Center" may have. It may be slight. Still, we do believe there to be an inevitable element of advertising in the use of such a name. Further, we see no social utility in the practice.

Adopted by Board of Governors in September, 1969.