

Opinion 196
June 1960
18 Baylor L. Rev. 287 (1966)

SOLICITATION - STIRRING UP LITIGATION - PARTICIPATION IN OUTSIDE BUSINESS - "FEEDING" OF LAW BUSINESS

The "feeding" of law business from an abstract company to an attorney who owns or manages the abstract company is improper.

SOLICITATION - SIGNS - JOINT OCCUPANTS

An attorney, who occupies an office in the same building with an abstract company owned or managed by the attorney, may not have his professional sign at the front of the building below the abstract company's more prominent sign at the top of the building.

OUTSIDE BUSINESS - ADVERTISING - NEWSPAPERS

An attorney may have his name appear in a newspaper advertisement by an abstract company which he owns or manages, provided he does not list himself therein as an attorney, even though located in a sparsely populated community where he is well known as an attorney.

Canons 24, 25.

QUESTION

1. If an attorney owns or manages an abstract company and 99% of the local abstract and title insurance business and law work go either from the attorney to the abstract company or from the abstract company to the attorney, is such feeding of the business back and forth ethical?
2. In respect to question No. 1 would it be proper for the attorney to have his professional sign at the front of the abstract company building below the window with the abstract company sign at the top of the building in substantially larger letters?
3. In respect to questions Nos. 1 and 2, would it be proper for the attorney to have his name, alone, in a newspaper advertisement by the abstract company in a sparsely populated community where he is well known as an attorney?

OPINION

1. The "feeding" of law business from an abstract company to a lawyer who controls the company violates Texas Canons 24 and 25. We know of nothing to prevent a lawyer from owning and operating an abstract company if he does not use it as a feeder or solicitor for his law business, and does not permit it to engage in the unauthorized practice of law. See Opinions 92 and 119. (7-0.)
2. While presenting a closer question, this is held to be a violation of Canon 24, assuming that the office of the attorney is in the same building with the abstract company. See Opinion 142, dealing with a similar situation. (4-3.)
3. In this particular situation the conduct does not appear to be unethical, provided the attorney does not have his name as an attorney in such advertisement. (7-0.)