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**E-72-1      Local Bar Association judicial  
endorsement programs are exempt from  
prohibition on judicial testimonials**

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You have asked whether the officially sanctioned activities of the Lawyers Judicial Endorsement Executive Committee are excepted from the purview of advisory opinion 1971-A which was published in the April, 1971 [Wisconsin] Bar Bulletin.

That opinion, in substance, determines that it is unethical for an attorney alone or with other *individual* attorneys or lay persons or lay groups, to organize a testimonial dinner for a sitting judge or for a candidate for the office of judge. Further, that it is unethical for an attorney to purchase tickets for, attend or contribute to such a testimonial, *unless organized by the Bar Association*.

We understand that the “Lawyers Judicial Endorsement Executive Committee” is an official arm of both the Milwaukee Bar Association and the Milwaukee Junior Bar Association and is organized to promulgate the principles announced in Ethical Consideration (EC 8-6).

You have advised that the activities concerning which you inquire relate to money-raising functions, the proceeds from which are to be used to support those judicial candidates endorsed by the associations involved through the procedures of the joint endorsement committee.

It is also noted that the By-Laws of the Committee provide that so far as possible, “The fund raising campaign should be commenced substantially prior to determination of any endorsements.”

It is the opinion that the functions of the Committee involved are not affected by Advisory Opinions 18 or 19.

You should further understand that official opinions of the Ethics Committee are advisory only and are subject to review and change by the Supreme Court.