JUDICIAL ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL

Judicial Ethics Opinion JE 91

September 20, 1999

FACTS: A citizen of the judge’s community proposes to make a substantial
gift to the local public school foundation. The gift is to be used to
fund a classroom and the classroom is to bear the judge’s name. The
gift is expressly given to honor the judge for “years of service to
children and youth.” The judge states that the donor is a person who
is unlikely to appear in the judge’s court.

QUESTION: May a sitting judge permit such a recognition?

ANSWER: Yes. The judge is not “lending the prestige of judicial office to
advance (any) private interests ...” The mere fact that a classroom is
named after a judge does not “convey the impression that (anyone is)
Ct. R. Annot. 449,450. In the unlikely event that the donor comes
before the judge, the judge should, of course, recuse himself or
herself. We find no violation of the Canons.

Robert H. Miller, Chairman

Adrian J. Allen