

**ETHICS OPINION NUMBER 139  
OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAR  
RENDERED DECEMBER 11, 1987  
AMENDED APRIL 6, 2013**

**FIRM NAME - LETTERHEAD** - An attorney who is also a licensed medical doctor may ethically use the abbreviated forms of medical doctor and juris doctor together after his name as well as his medical specialty on stationery and business cards and in legal journals and in announcements of availability as a consultant/associate to other lawyers.

The Ethics Committee of The Mississippi Bar has been asked to render its opinion on the following situation:

An attorney is also a practicing physician specializing in anatomic and clinical pathology and occasionally practicing forensic pathology. The attorney-doctor intends to develop a consultation-referral type of law practice, in addition to continuing his medical practice. The attorney-doctor intends to limit his law practice to personal injury and medical malpractice cases. This type of practice would involve assisting attorneys in evaluating cases for merit, taking depositions and in trying cases: e.g., cross and direct examination of physicians and medical personnel. The attorney-doctor maintains separate offices for his medical practice and for his legal practice.

The requesting attorney asks if he may ethically use the abbreviated forms of medical doctor (M.D.) and juris doctor (J.D.) together after his name as well as his medical specialty on stationery and business cards: e.g., \_\_\_\_\_ M.D., J.D. Fellow of the College of American Pathology (F.C.A.P.) in legal journals and announcements of availability as a consultant/associate to other lawyers. The requesting attorney advises that the purpose of the dual designation (M.D.-J.D.) on business cards and stationery is to inform attorneys of his education and training and not indicating any special competence in a particular area of law.

The Committee concludes that the attorney may ethically include the abbreviated forms of M.D. and J.D. after his name as well as his medical specialty on his stationery and business cards and in legal journals and announcements of his availability as a consultant/associate to other lawyers. Rule 7.1 of the Mississippi Rules of Professional Conduct prohibits a lawyer from making a "false, deceptive or misleading communication" about the lawyer or his services. Rule 7.2(a) permits a lawyer to advertise his services through a public communication subject to the requirement of Rule 7.1. Rule 7.7(a) prohibits a lawyer from using a firm name, letterhead or other professional designation that violates Rule 7.1. Assuming that the requesting attorney's medical licensure and specialty are accurate, the use of these designations on letterhead and cards or in announcements to other lawyers concerning his availability for consultation would not be false, deceptive, or misleading. *See Ibanez v. Fla. Dept. of Bus. and Prof. Regulation*, 512 U.S. 136 (1994).

The requesting attorney does not specify particular fields of practice of law to be communicated. Therefore, this opinion does not address that question other than to note that such advertising is governed specifically by Rule 7.2(f) and Rule 7.4. Further, this opinion does not address the content of advertisements or solicitation directed at laymen.