

**ETHICS OPINION NUMBER 166
OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAR
RENDERED JUNE 23, 1989**

DUTY OF REPRESENTATION - An attorney has no ethical duty to represent a former client for any subsequent dealings or litigation once the lawyer-client relationship has been effectively terminated.

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

An attorney represented a party in a divorce proceeding which culminated by the entry of a divorce Decree in February, 1980. The attorney has had no contact with either party and has not represented either party in any way since 1980. The attorney wishes to know whether he is accountable to the parties years later for any subsequent dealings or litigation between the parties or between the parties and third parties.

The previous opinion of the Mississippi State Bar rendered on December 11, 1987, and numbered Opinion Number 138 is controlling on this situation. Opinion Number 138 applies to questions of whether a lawyer has a duty to represent a former client in a subsequent criminal proceedings after the lawyer-client relationship has been effectively terminated. The opinion does not require continued representation once the case is over.

As in Opinion Number 138, the Committee can now discern no ethical requirement for continued representation of a client once the attorney-client relationship has terminated. Therefore, the Committee concludes that the attorney is not accountable to a client for any subsequent dealings or litigation, and no Court permission is required to end an attorney's duty once the case is over.