**Report on a Case by the Board of Ethical Review**

**Case No. 62-15**

**Advertising—Listing of Name**

**Facts:**
A local newspaper publishes about twice a week advertisements in connection with churches, salutes to school patrols, Christmas greetings, local college football teams, etc. These advertisements are sponsored by a variety of business firms whose names appear in uniform size type with a brief description of their product or service. In addition, the sponsors include one or more consulting engineering firms.

**Question:**
In connection with such advertisements, is a listing of the name of a consulting engineering firm along with various business enterprises consistent with the Canons of Ethics?

**References:**
Canons of Ethics-Canon 2- "He will not advertise his work or merit in a self-laudatory manner and he will avoid all conduct or practice likely to discredit or do injury to the dignity and honor of his profession."

Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 5-"Circumspect advertising may be properly employed by the engineer to announce his practice and availability. The form and manner of such advertising shall satisfy in all respects the dictate and intent of the Canons. Only those media shall be used as are necessary to reach directly an interested and potential client or employer, and such media shall in themselves be dignified, reputable and characteristically free of any factor or circumstance that would bring disrepute to the profession or to the professional using them.

The substance of such advertising shall be limited to fact and shall contain no statement or offer in tended to discredit or displace an other engineer, either specifically or by implication."

**Discussion:**
It may be questioned whether a listing under these circumstances is intended as an "advertisement" of the kind contemplated in Canon 2 and Rule 5. Nevertheless, the listing meets the dictionary definition of an advertisement in that it is a form of public notice and will be read as "intended to aid directly or indirectly in the sale of a commodity, in securing employment, etc."

Treating the listing as an advertisement, we think it violates Canon 2 as a practice which is "likely to discredit or do injury to the dignity and honor of his profession" because of its association with a conglomeration of unrelated business enterprises, thereby leaving the

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public with the impression that the practice of engineering is merely another in a series of business and commercial enterprises. It therefore follows that the advertisement is not "circumspect" as required by Rule 5. Further, Rule 5 limits the form and manner of advertising to "only those media . . . necessary to reach directly an interested and potential client or employer." This restriction limits advertising to these media which are of a specialized nature and may be calculated to reach primarily readers who reasonably can be expected to have an interest in the type of engineering services which are being offered, as distinguished from an advertisement in a newspaper or magazine of general circulation.

**Conclusion:**
It is inconsistent with the Canons of Ethics for an engineer to include a listing of his firm name along with similar listings for business and commercial firms in such advertisements.

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