

FEDERAL SOLDIERS' HOMES: : A woman is not entitled to admission
DEFINITIONS: : to the Federal Soldiers' Home by
: virtue of being the mother-in-law
: of a former serviceman.
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January 5, 1955

Honorable Marvin H. McDaniel
Superintendent
State Federal Soldiers' Home
of Missouri
St. James, Missouri

Dear Sir:

Your letter of December 30, 1954, requesting
an opinion of this office reads:

"I wish to refer you to Missouri Revised
Statutes 1949, Section 212.140, Who May
Be Admitted.

"This is to request you furnish us with
an official opinion with reference to the
above referred to Statute as follows:

"Would a woman, who has a son-in-law,
who served in the United States Armed
Services be entitled to admission to
this Home as a mother?"

Section 212.140, RSMo 1949, which sets the stan-
dards of admission to the Federal Soldiers' Homes,
reads as follows:

"The soldiers and sailors who shall be
entitled to admission into said home
shall be citizens of the state of
Missouri, who were honorably discharged
from the service of the United States,
and who are in indigent circumstances,
and from any disability, not received
in any illegal act, are unable to sup-
port themselves by manual labor, and
that the aged mother, wife or widow of
such soldier or sailor, and army nurses,
who served with the armies of the United

Honorable Marvin H. McDaniel:

States or such ex-members of the enrolled Missouri militia, who served ninety days or more in the field during the civil war, shall also be entitled to admission in said home, provided they be in indigent circumstances and unable to support themselves by manual labor."

Your request requires us to determine whether the phrase "aged mother * * * of such soldier or sailor" includes mothers-in-law of such former servicemen.

In construing the meaning of the word "mother" we are guided by Section 1.090, RSMo 1949, which reads:

"Words and phrases shall be taken in their plain or ordinary and usual sense, but technical words and phrases having a peculiar and appropriate meaning in law shall be understood according to their technical import."

The word "mother" is not a technical word, and is ordinarily taken to mean "female parent". "Mother-in-law" is ordinarily understood to mean the mother of one's spouse. (Black's Law Dictionary, 4th Edition, Page 1164). We conclude that since the word "mother" is not ordinarily understood to include one's mother-in-law, it was not the intention of the Legislature to include mothers-in-law within that category, and that it was not the intention of the Legislature to make eligible for admission to the Home mothers-in-law of former servicemen.

CONCLUSION

It is, therefore, the opinion of this office that a woman is not entitled to admission to the Federal Soldiers' Home by virtue of being the mother-in-law of a former serviceman.

The foregoing opinion, which I hereby approve, was prepared by my Assistant, Mr. Paul McGhee.

Very truly yours,

PMcG:irk

JOHN M. DALTON
Attorney General