



JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
Sworn Statement to be included in Transcript of Public Hearings

**Supreme Court/Court of Appeals
(New Candidate)**

Full Name: Letitia Hamilton Verdin

Business Address: 305 East North Street
Suite 318
Greenville, SC 29601

Business Telephone: (864) 467-8448

1. Do you plan to serve your full term if elected? Yes

2. If elected, do you have any plans to return to private practice one day? No

3. Have you met the Constitutional requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice? Yes

4. What is your philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications? Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated?

Ex parte communication should be avoided; however, in certain matters where such communication is allowed, such as in motions for emergency relief or in strictly administrative matters where no party could gain an advantage, I have allowed *ex parte* communication when absolutely necessary. I do require that all parties be notified of the substance of the communication immediately.

5. If you disclosed something that had the appearance of bias, but you believed it would not actually prejudice your impartiality, what deference would you give a party that requested your recusal? Would you grant such a motion?

I give great deference to such a request, and I would grant the motion for recusal because trust in the legal system and the judiciary should be of the highest importance. While I take my duty to sit as a judge very seriously, that duty is outweighed by the duty to avoid the appearance of impropriety or bias.

6. What standards have you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality?

I do not accept gifts from any lawyer or person who could ever appear in front of me. The Judicial Canons do allow a judge to receive normal social hospitality; however, I do not accept even the allowed hospitality from anyone who has any pending matter before me.

7. How would you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct or appearance of infirmity of a lawyer or of a fellow judge?

I would inform, and unfortunately have informed, the appropriate authority immediately.

8. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions? If so, in what capacity are you serving?

No

9. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any political, social, community, or religious organizations? Please describe.

No

10. How would you prepare for cases that were before you?

I calendar time to review case filings fully in advance of hearings, and I request that my law clerk brief me on any law with which I am unfamiliar. As a Court of Appeals judge, I would use a bench brief as a starting point for my notes of my review of the case. I generally have preferred to rely on my review of a case.

11. What is your philosophy on “judicial activism,” and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy?

I do not, and would not, engage in “judicial activism.” I believe that a judge’s job is to interpret the law enacted by the Legislature. Any attempt to rule based on what I may believe our law should be, would circumvent our highly successful system of checks and balances and would be a violation of my judicial oath.

12. Canon 4 allows a judge to engage in activities to improve the law, legal system, and administration of justice. What activities would you plan to undertake to further this improvement of the legal system?

I attempt to serve in any capacity allowed to contribute to the fair and efficient administration of our court system. I have made, and would continue to make, myself available to speak at CLE seminars or other speaking engagements so long as those engagements did not interfere with my judicial responsibilities. Furthermore, I currently serve on the Circuit Judges’ Advisory Committee, and I am President of the Circuit Judges’ Association. Additionally, I have served as Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on the Commission on Standards of Judicial Conduct and have served on the Alternative Dispute Resolution Commission and the General Sessions Statewide Docketing Committee.

13. Do you feel that the pressure of serving as a judge would strain personal relationships (i.e. spouse, children, friends, or relatives)? How would you plan to address this?

At times, it does. However, I am blessed to have an extremely supportive husband, Chuck Verdin, who is also an attorney. We have always supported one another throughout our twenty-five year marriage and have learned to deal well with the demands of a two-career family. Our twin sons are now in college at Clemson University, and I found the job of judge these past 14 years to be

more difficult when they lived at home full-time of course. We are also blessed to have two, large, extended, and involved families that live nearby. While the demands of being a judge have on occasion been great, I believe that our support system is very strong and that we have dealt with those demands well.

14. Please describe your methods of analysis in matters of South Carolina's Constitution and its interpretation by explaining your approach in the following areas. Which area should be given the greatest weight?

a) The use and value of historical evidence in practical application of the Constitution:

If the language of the South Carolina Constitution or legislation is unambiguous, I would seek no further clarification as to its meaning. However, where needed to clarify ambiguities, I would rely on historical evidence to assist me in determining the Legislature's intent.

b) The use and value of an agency's interpretation of the Constitution:

I would give an agency's interpretation of the Constitution little weight.

c) The use and value of documents produced contemporaneously to the Constitution, such as the minutes of the convention:

I would give documents produced contemporaneously to the Constitution the most weight of the three areas because such documents could give me the greatest insight into the intent of the Legislature. However, if there are no ambiguities in the Constitution, I would seek no further guidance than the document itself.

15. Are you a member of any organization or association that, by policy or practice, prohibits or limits its membership on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin? If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis.

No

16. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses for the past reporting period?

Yes

17. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge and when do these rules apply?

A judge should be punctual, courteous, open-minded, and respectful of all parties and attorneys. He or she should be decisive and clear in making rulings and must maintain control of the courtroom at all times. A judge must be courteous and respectful to members of the Bar and public at all times.

18. Would there be a role for sternness or anger in meetings with attorneys?

Although some situations may require a judge to be firm, I do not believe it is ever appropriate for a judge to display anger. Allowing myself to give in to anger with fellow members of the Bar might cast doubt on my ability to be impartial in a matter and would detract from my ability to conduct a meeting in an orderly and productive manner.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ANSWERS TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS ARE TRUE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

Sworn to before me this ____ day of _____, 2022.

(Signature)

(Print name)

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission Expires: _____

