



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

**Family Court**  
**(Incumbent)**

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1. Why do you want to serve another term as a Family Court judge?  
This job is without question the most rewarding, fulfilling and meaningful job I have ever had. It is a great responsibility to be in a position of dealing with people who are possibly going through one of the worst experiences in their lives. I feel that I have made a difference to many of these people and wish to continue doing so if given the opportunity.
2. Do you plan to serve your full term if re-elected? Yes.
3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day? No.
4. Have you met the statutory requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice? Yes.
5. What is your philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications? Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated?

Ex parte communications are, except in limited situations, prohibited by the judicial canons. Unfortunately, many litigants, and some attorneys, do not understand that I cannot discuss the merits of a case without all parties being involved. I am sometimes put in the position of having to explain that I cannot and will not discuss a case with an individual without the opposing side being involved. Usually this involves a pro se litigant. That being said, scheduling requests,

such as an emergency request for a continuance, are sometimes submitted and a decision must be made without the input of all parties. However, all parties must be made aware of any such communication.

6. 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 would probably grant the motion particularly if the case could be easily swapped with another judge. If I was the only judge available and the hearing could not be rescheduled without undue burden on the parties and I believed that I could remain impartial I would probably not grant the motion.

7. How do you handle the appearance of impropriety because of the financial or social involvement of your spouse or a close relative?

I have recused myself in a situation where one of the litigants was a former law partner of my wife. In this situation I was able to get the case switched to another judge well in advance of the trial so that there was no delay. I will continue to recuse myself if the circumstances indicate that there is a conflict of interest.

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

I typically don't accept gifts except those that are from close friends and even then, only if the gift is modest in amount and consistent with past practice.

9. 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?

If I did not have actual knowledge of the misconduct or infirmity, I would address my concerns with the judge or attorney and report the misconduct if it was confirmed to be true. I am duty bound to report any unethical conduct committed by a judge or attorney when I have firsthand knowledge of the conduct.

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

No.

11. Do you have any business activities that you have remained involved with since your election to the bench?

No.

12. Since Family Court judges do not have law clerks, how do you handle the drafting of orders?

If I issue a ruling from the bench, I typically ask one of the attorneys to draft an order for my review and instruct the attorney to share it with all other attorneys, or pro se litigants, before submitting it to me. If I take a matter under advisement, I draft detailed instructions setting forth my decision and the basis for same. I send the instructions to all parties and ask one of the attorneys to prepare an order and share it with all attorneys before submitting it to me. I often draft simple orders myself. Occasionally I will draft a complex order if I feel it is necessary to do so.

13. What methods do you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?

My assistant and I work together to make sure orders are submitted timely. Occasionally she will have to contact attorneys to remind them an order is due. On the very rare occasion they ignore her, I will contact the attorneys personally and give them a specific deadline for submission of the order. The attorneys have been compliant in those few instances.

14. What specific actions or steps do you take to ensure that the guidelines of the guardian ad litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case?

Unless some sort of motion hearing is held, I am not generally aware of the guardian's work during the pendency of a case. If a motion hearing is scheduled during the pendency of the case, I will review the guardian's preliminary report and ask if there are any issues that need to be addressed in order for them to complete their

investigation. If so, it will be addressed during the hearing. Otherwise at a final hearing the guardian's report is reviewed and the parties are given the opportunity to question the guardian as to matters at hand.

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

The Family Court is a trial court. We are required to follow statutory law enacted by the General Assembly and case law decided by the appellate courts. Family Court is not a place for judicial activism.

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

I will continue to speak at CLE's as requested. I have had the pleasure of judging mock trials for several years and regularly participate in the Judicial Observation Experience. I believe these give me an opportunity to have a positive influence on our future attorneys.

17. Do you feel that the pressure of serving as a judge strains personal relationships (i.e. spouse, children, friends, or relatives)? How do you address this?

I do not feel that my personal relationships are strained due to my position.

18. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality?

No.

19. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved?

Probably not, unless after disclosure all parties consented.

20. 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.

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

Yes.

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

A judge should be polite, patient, humble, open minded, impartial and even tempered. A judge should display this demeanor at all times. I am aware that I am a judge 24 hours a day. I should display this demeanor 24 hours a day, not just in the courtroom.

23. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public, especially with a criminal defendant? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?

Anger is not an appropriate emotion in dealing with anyone, particularly courthouse staff, attorneys, litigants and criminal defendants. Anger will negatively impact a decision that may affect a person's life. Anger also gives the public a negative impression of the judicial system. This position does require a certain amount of firmness but even that must be dispensed with the appropriate demeanor and tact.

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: \_\_\_\_\_