



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

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

Full Name: Matthew Price Turner

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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?

In general, I believe that *ex parte* communication with the Judge is inappropriate. A judge must maintain impartiality which could be affected by *ex parte* communication. Litigants and their attorney's must always feel that the court is fair and impartial, and that each side has had an equal opportunity to be heard on the issues. Any *ex parte* communication may give the appearance of bias or unfairness. There are certain, limited exceptions when *ex parte* communications are allowed under Canon 3B (7). However, it is my opinion that any *ex parte* communication should only be allowed when absolutely necessary and only when the specific criteria in the exceptions of Cannon 3B (7) have been met.

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?

If my disclosure had the appearance of bias, I would have to recuse myself even if I truly believed it would not actually prejudice my impartiality. Again, the Canons require that a Judge disqualify himself or herself if the Judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned.

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

Canon 4D (5) addresses the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality by a judge and/or his or her household members. I will continue to accept gifts from family and very close friends who have given gifts in the past so long as the gift from a friend is commensurate with the occasion and relationship and has not significantly changed from what was given prior to my election to the bench. I have informed my wife and children that they are required to abide by the same rules as me in this regard. I do not accept gifts from individuals who may appear before me or whom had not given gifts prior to my election to the bench.

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 follow the requirements of Canon 3D and take appropriate action. This includes communicating with the judge or attorney about their misconduct and/or infirmity and reporting the same to the appropriate authority, if necessary.

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.

I have not engaged in any fund-raising activities since my election to the Family Court in 2018.

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

As a Family Court judge, I review each case on my docket prior to starting court. Since I do not have a law clerk, I conduct my own research on certain issues that are set before me, when necessary. As a Court of Appeals judge, I would do the same. I would read the briefs and record on appeal and take notes. I would then conduct my own research. I would ask my law clerks to do the same and then discuss each case with them.

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

The legislature is responsible for creating the law. The court's role is to interpret the relevant law and apply it to the facts of each case. I personally do not believe the court has any role in setting public policy.

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?

When I was an attorney, I spoke at schools on a few occasions and gave a few presentations to the public about certain legal issues through the South Carolina Bar. I spoke at two (2) CLE seminars when first elected to the bench, but have not been asked to speak in the past few years. I would love the opportunity to speak at CLE seminars and at schools or other community events so long as doing so would not interfere with my judicial duties or violate any of the judicial cannons. I am more than willing to do what I can to help improve the legal system.

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?

I have served as a Family Court judge for the past five (5) years. I do not believe serving as a judge has caused any undue stress or burden on my family or social relationships. My wife and children are very supportive of me and my position. I have always managed to work hard and make time for my family. The key is to plan ahead and to be intentional with my time. My family is my top priority and I will continue to be proactive in making sure that I have time for family so I can continue to balance my work life and personal life as I have in the past. I also have not noticed any strain in other personal relationships and I understand my duty to maintain confidentiality.

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:
- b) The use and value of an agency's interpretation of the Constitution:
- c) The use and value of documents produced contemporaneously to the Constitution, such as the minutes of the convention:

If the document is unambiguous, the court should look only at the document itself. In the event of ambiguity, I would give the documents produced contemporaneously to the Constitution the most weight as these documents provide insight into the drafter's intent. Historical evidence may be beneficial in providing additional insight into the drafter's intent in certain circumstances. I would give the agency's interpretation very little, if any, weight.

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?

I am a firm believer that judges should treat everyone the same way that they want to be treated. This requires the judge to be fair, kind, impartial, and respectful. While in the courtroom, the judge should treat all litigants, attorneys, witnesses, and court personnel with kindness and respect. The judge should also be professional and attentive, and give equal opportunity for all litigants to be heard. A judge is a representative of the bench and the state and these same guidelines should apply at all times and to anyone with whom the judge comes in contact.

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

Again, a judge is to treat everyone with kindness and respect. A judge should never show anger toward anyone or be disrespectful to anyone. Although a judge's patience may be tested, the judge should never allow this to affect his/her demeanor, nor should the judge to allow this to affect his/her ruling.

There may be certain situations in which a judge must be stern. Although being stern in these situations may be necessary and appropriate, a judge must keep his/her emotions in check and not get angry or even give the appearance of being angry.

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 \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_