



**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**

Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying: Family Court, At-Large, Seat #2

1. Name: Mr. Robert Wallis Cone

Name that you are known by if different from above
(Example: A Nickname): None

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge? If part-time, please note.
(Includes Municipal, Magistrate, Etc.): No.

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Business Address: 1118 Phoenix Street
Greenwood, SC 29648

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: (home): [REDACTED]
(office): 803-924-0787
(cell): [REDACTED]

2. Date of Birth: [REDACTED] 1971
Place of Birth: Richmond, Virginia
Social Security Number: [REDACTED]

3. Are you a citizen of South Carolina? Yes
Have you been a resident of this state for at least the immediate past five years? Yes

4. SCDL# or SCHD#: [REDACTED]
Voter Registration Number: [REDACTED]

5. Have you served in the military? If so, give the dates, branch of service, highest rank attained, serial number (if applicable), present status, and the character of your discharge or release. Please provide a copy of your DD214 concerning your discharge. Not applicable.

6. Family Status: In the space below, (a) state whether you are single, married, widowed, divorced, or separated; (b) if married, state the date of your marriage and your spouse's full name and occupation; (c) if you have ever been divorced or are in the process of obtaining a divorce, state the date, name of the moving party, court, and grounds; and (d) state the

names of your children and their ages. If your children are old enough to work, include the occupation of each child.

Family Status: Married November 15, 2003 to Emily Willard Cone
Never divorced, one child.

[REDACTED]

7. List each college and law school you attended, including the dates of your attendance, the degrees you received, and if you left an institution without receiving a degree, the reason for your departure.
 - a) University of South Carolina, School of Law. August, 1995 to May, 1998. JD degree.
 - b) Medical University of South Carolina, Fall semester, August to December, 1993. Dropped out of medical school due to lack of interest in continuing the program.
 - c) Furman University, September 1989 through May, 1993. Bachelor of Arts, Political Science

8. List the significant activities in which you took part during your attendance at law school. Give the years you were involved in these activities and list any leadership positions you held.

University of South Carolina, School of Law:

- a) Palmetto Legal Society, member 1995-1998
 - b) Christian Legal Society, member 1995-1998
 - c) Intellectual Property Law Society, member 1996-1998
 - d) Legal Writing Instructor, Professor Thomas Haggard, 1997-98.
 - e) Law Clerk, Administrative Law Court, Staff Attorneys' office, 1996-1998.
9. List the states in which you have been admitted to practice law and the year of each admission. Also list any states in which you took the bar exam but were never admitted to the practice of law. Please indicate the number of times you took the exam in each state.

State of South Carolina, admitted 1998. Passed the South Carolina bar exam on first attempt.

10. Describe chronologically, since graduation from law school, your legal experience. Please include a list of all positions held in which you worked in a legal capacity. Describe the general character of your practice and divide it into periods with dates if its character has changed over the years. Please also describe the extent to which you were involved with the administrative and financial management of each of these entities, including management of trust accounts.
 - a) McDonald, Patrick, Baggett, Poston, and Hemphill, L.L.P., 414 Main Street, Greenwood, South Carolina. Associate attorney. From 1998 to 2002, my practice

primarily involved insurance defense litigation in personal injury, medical malpractice, and tort cases filed against state agencies insured through the South Carolina Insurance Reserve Fund. Due to changes in insurance practices and experience I was gaining representing persons in Family Court, I began to develop a practice in the field of family law and shifted my focus to that field in 2002. From 1998 to 2005 I also handled estate planning, probate matters, business formations, debt collection, and bankruptcy matters for business clients.

- b) The Cone Law Firm, PC, 128 Maxwell Avenue, Greenwood, SC 29646, November 2005 to April, 2012. I opened my own law firm in 2005 and operated as a solo practitioner. My practice focused on civil litigation, specifically in family law. I also handled probate matters, bankruptcy cases, debt collection, business formations and estate planning. During this time I became a contract attorney for the Department of Social Services, representing the agency in child welfare, abuse and neglect cases. I served as the sole attorney, managing the firm's trust account and paralegal staff.
- c) South Carolina Department of Social Services, April, 2012 to April, 2016. Managing Attorney for Greenwood, Abbeville, and Newberry counties. I became a full time employee of the Department of Social Services and represented the agency in child welfare, abuse and neglect cases. I primarily operated in the Eighth Judicial Circuit, but would conduct trials in numerous counties when other agency attorneys were unavailable. I supervised two paralegals during this time.
- d) South Carolina Department of Social Services, April, 2016 to July, 2019. Regional Managing Attorney for the Second, Eighth, and Eleventh Judicial Circuits. I was promoted to Regional Managing Attorney, supervising a legal staff of 7 attorneys and 8 paralegals. During my tenure the legal staff grew to 10 attorneys and 13 paralegals, plus three contract attorneys. I was responsible for the overall management of the Department's caseload across the 11 counties of the three Circuits. I handled all personnel matters, addressed specific case issues, conducted legal research, and handled high priority or complex legal cases in all of the counties. I also filled in as county attorney when there were vacancies or other absences. I also maintained professional relationships between the Department and other participants in the Family Court system related to abuse and neglect cases, including judges, clerks of court, law enforcement, the Department of Juvenile Justice, guardians ad litem, and opposing counsel.
- e) South Carolina Department of Social Services, July, 2019 to present. Assistant Managing Attorney for County Operations, Office of General Counsel. In July I was promoted to this position, assisting the Managing Attorney for all county legal operations across the state. I am responsible for developing and conducting training programs for agency attorneys, paralegals, and case management staff on issues pertaining to the Department's participation in the Family Court system. I also administer the agency's Legal Case Management software system and train users on it's proper use. I serve as agency liaison to the state's Court Improvement Project and the Bench/Bar Committee on child welfare issues.

Justices/judges applying for re-election to their current position may omit Questions 11–17. If you are a full-time judge seeking a judgeship different than your current position, Questions 11-17 should be answered based on your experience *prior to serving on the bench.*

11. Please answer the following:

- (a) If you are a candidate for Family Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience within each of the following Family Court practice areas: divorce and equitable division of property, child custody, adoption, abuse and neglect, and juvenile justice. Include information about cases you have handled in each of these practice areas, or if you have not practiced in an area, describe how your background and procedural knowledge has prepared you to preside over such matters as a Family Court Judge. Please also indicate the frequency of your appearances before a Family Court Judge within the past five years.

In preparing my response to this question, I reviewed my case files going back to 1998. I found that since that time, I have handled more than 200 private Family Court cases, including cases where I represented husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, and grandparents in cases involving divorce, equitable division of property, and child custody/child support.

I have served as a private Guardian ad litem in more than 40 cases, representing the interests of children in contested custody matters. I have also been fortunate to represent 19 families in private adoption cases. I have also been appointed to represent juveniles as their Guardian ad Litem in a number of Juvenile Justice cases.

Beginning in the fall of 2007, I began representing the Department of Social Services as a contract attorney, handling child abuse, child neglect, adult abuse, and adult neglect cases.

These numbers reflect my Family Court experience as a private attorney, and cases I was either hired or appointed to represent individuals.

Beginning in April, 2012, when I joined the Department of Social Services as a full time attorney, I continued to represent the Department in child abuse, child neglect, adult abuse, and adult neglect cases. These cases included termination of parental rights actions and appeals. From 2012 to 2016, I handled between 100 to 125 cases per year.

In 2016, I changed positions and moved into a more managerial role, but continued to appear in court and train new attorneys on the correct processes and procedures for representing the Department in Family Court.

- (b) If you are a candidate for Circuit Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience in criminal matters, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Further, please provide a brief written description of your experience in civil matters, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the types of matters handled, issues involved, and procedural history. Please include information such as the primary areas in civil court in which you practice, whether you represent plaintiffs or defendants, or both. You may go back further than five years if you feel

it would assist the Commission with its assessment of your experience. If you lack experience in an area, describe how your background and procedural knowledge has prepared you to preside over such matters as a Circuit Court Judge, or how you would compensate for your lack of experience in this area. Please also indicate the frequency of your appearances before a Circuit Court Judge within the past five years.

- (c) If you are a candidate for Master-In-Equity, please provide a brief written description of your experience in the Master's court, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Please include the frequency of your appearances before a Master-In-Equity or a Circuit Court Judge within the past five years.
 - (d) If you are a candidate for Administrative Law Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience before an Administrative Law Judge, including any issues discussed and the frequency of your appearances before the Administrative Law or Circuit Court within the past five years.
12. What was the frequency of your court appearances during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench?
- (a) federal: none
 - (b) state: Multiple days each week.
13. What percentage of your practice involved civil, criminal, domestic, and other matters during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench?
- (a) civil: 1% (Probate work for vulnerable adults)
 - (b) criminal: 2% (Department of Juvenile Justice)
 - (c) domestic: 97%
 - (d) other:
14. What percentage of your practice in trial court during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench involved matters that went to a jury, including those that settled prior to trial?
- (a) jury: 0%
 - (b) non-jury: 100%

During the past five years, did you most often serve as sole counsel, chief counsel, or associate counsel?

I always served as sole counsel, except for a handful of cases in the past three years where I sat second chair with a new attorney as part of their training.

15. List five of the most significant litigated matters you have personally handled in either trial or appellate court or before a state or federal agency. Give citations if the cases were reported and describe why these matters were significant.

(a) Burton v. Molen, 2008-DR-01-35 (Abbeville County).

This is a case where I represented the biological father in a custody dispute. The child in question was three years old when the mother left South Carolina without warning and took the child to Texas. Over a period of nearly 2 years, we engaged in a complex legal proceeding, with hearings in both South Carolina and Texas, to try and return the child to South Carolina. While the case was on appeal, we were able to negotiate a settlement that resulted in joint custody for my client. This was one of the most challenging cases of my legal career, involving multiple hearings in more than one jurisdiction, and working with agencies such as the FBI, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

(b) SCDSS vs. Sharpe, et al. 2007-DR-01-190; 2012-DR-01-46 (Abbeville County)

This was a contested termination of parental rights action where the minor children had been victims of sexual abuse, and because of many procedural delays, the minor children had been in foster care for nearly 5 years without a resolution. A particular challenge was the mother's continued participation in some treatment efforts and regular contact with the children, but this had to be considered in the context that she remained in contact with the children's abuser. After a lengthy trial, we were successful in having the parents' rights to the children terminated, making them free for adoption.

(b) Carter v. Hayford, 2006-DR-24-583 (Greenwood County).

This was a case where I served as the Guardian ad litem for a young girl whose parents been divorced for several years. The mother had remarried, and was seeking to relocate with the child to the state of Kentucky. The father opposed the move and sought a change of custody. Ultimately, we were able to resolve the case on the eve of trial and established a visitation plan that allowed the child to move, but still gave father substantial visitation throughout the year. This case was significant to me because of the challenge involved in choosing between two good parents, both of whom were deeply involved in the child's life.

(c) SCDSS v. Balasty, 2013-DR-24-78; 2015-DR-24-536

This was a case involving severe and repeated neglect of young children by a mother who had mental health, substance abuse, and violent behavioral issues. The case involved two children, and one of the more contentious issues was a custody dispute as to one of the children. A set of maternal relatives sought custody of the child, as did the child's stepfather, who had been the child's caregiver for years. Issues of the value of biological versus psychological attachment played a large role in this case.

- (d) SCDSS v. Crawford, 2013-DR-01-66 (Abbeville County)

This case began as an educational neglect case, but ended with the parent losing full custody of her children. It became a complex case due to the intervention of maternal relatives, and also the participation of one child's biological father, who lived out of state, and was deployed on military service during the pendency of the case. It was a complex matter, dealing with overlapping jurisdictional issues and the need to compliance with the federal Service Member's Relief Act.

16. List up to five civil appeals you have personally handled. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision, and the citation if the case was reported.
- (a) Joubert v. South Carolina Department of Social Services, 341 S.C. 176, 534 S.E.2d 1 (Ct. App. 2000)
 - (b) Allegiant v. Emerald Inns, Inc., 2007-UP-325, Court of Appeals, 2007.
 - (c) South Carolina Dept. of Social Services v. Driggers, 2015-UP-038, Court of Appeals, 2015.
 - (d) South Carolina Dept. of Social Services v. Gary, 2006-UP-288, Court of Appeals, 2006.
 - (e) South Carolina Dept. of Social Services v. May, 2017-UP-447, Court of Appeals, 2017.
17. List up to five criminal appeals you have personally handled. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision and the citation if the case was reported.
- (a) None.
18. Have you ever held judicial office? If so, list the periods of your service, the courts involved, and whether you were elected or appointed. Describe the jurisdiction of each of the courts and note any limitations on the jurisdiction of each court.

I served part-time as the Municipal Judge for the Town of Ninety-Six, South Carolina from October, 2008 to January, 2013. I was appointed to the position by the Town Council. The court handled traffic violations, town ordinance violations, bond hearings for all persons arrested by the Town's police department, and misdemeanor criminal matters within the town limits. I also issued search warrants, arrest warrants, and conducted preliminary hearings in criminal matters for the Town, whether misdemeanors or felonies.

19. If the answer to question 18 is yes, describe or list five of your most significant orders or opinions and give the citations if they were reported. Also list citations to any appellate review of these orders or opinions.

Municipal Courts are summary courts, and the only written orders issued were bond orders or custody orders. I occasionally issued an order committing a defendant to a Pre-Trial Intervention or similar diversion program, but these were form orders provided by the Solicitor's office.

20. List all courts in which you have been admitted to practice and list the dates of your admission. Give the same information for administrative bodies that require a special admission to practice.
- a) Admitted to practice before the State Courts of South Carolina in 1998.
 - b) Admitted to practice before the Federal District Court and Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2000.
21. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs? If so, briefly describe each course or lecture.
- a) I have presented at CLEs for the Department of Social Services' new attorneys boot camp on the roles and responsibilities of agency attorneys in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.
 - b) I have presented at a CLE on "Effective Advocacy in Termination of Parental Rights Proceedings" in February, 2017.
 - c) In September, 2013 and 2014, I presented a CLE on Abuse and Neglect cases for attorneys and volunteer guardians ad litem in Greenwood and Abbeville counties.
 - d) I have taught the course on "Consumer Law and Debt Collection in South Carolina" for the South Carolina Bar's Law School for Nonlawyers at Piedmont Technical College in Greenwood, South Carolina in 2007, 2008, and 2011.
 - e) I presented a seminar on "Mechanic's Liens and Collections in South Carolina", Greenwood Home Builders Association. January, 2002
 - f) I presented a seminar on "The Church Under Fire, Youth Ministry and the Law" Greater Greenwood Youth Ministries (GYM), October, 2003.
 - g) I presented a seminar on "Sexual Harassment and Schools", Ninety-Six Primary School Faculty, September, 2005.
 - h) I taught a class on Business Law at Lander University during the Fall Semester of 2000.
22. Provide, as a separate attachment, your continuing legal or judicial education report from the past five years.
- See attached.
23. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each.
- None.
24. Please furnish as a separate attachment, two examples of legal articles, briefs, orders, or other legal writings for which you can claim sole or primary authorship. If you cannot claim sole authorship, please explain the extent to which you are the primary author, to include a description of the other authors and their contributions. The writing samples are for the Commission's use only and will not be published. (If you are a judge and are not seeking a different type of judgeship, this question is inapplicable.)

See attached Final Brief of Respondent in SCDSS v. May, 2017-UP-447 (2017). See also Final Order in Burton v. Molen, 2008-DR-01-35.

25. What is your rating or membership status, if any, by any legal rating organization, such as, Best Lawyers, Chambers, Legal 500, Martindale-Hubbell, Who's Who Legal, Super Lawyers, Million Dollar Advocates Forum, etc.? If you are currently a member of the judiciary, list your last available rating, if any.

I am not a member of any rating organization and am not aware of any rating(s) I may have been give.

26. List all bar associations and professional organizations of which you are a member and give the titles and dates of any offices you have held in such groups.
- (a) South Carolina Bar Association
 - (b) Greenwood County Bar Association

27. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? If so, list the periods of your service, the office or offices involved, and whether you were elected or appointed. Also, state whether or not you have timely filed your report with the State Ethics Commission during the period you held public office. If not, were you ever subject to a penalty? If so, give details, including dates.

I served as the Town Attorney for the Town of McCormick, South Carolina from 1999 to 2008. I was appointed to that position by the Town Council, and reappointed on an annual basis. I ended my service when I was appointed Municipal Court Judge for the Town of Ninety-Six, SC.

28. For sitting or former judges, list all employment you had while serving as a judge (whether full-time or part-time, contractual or at will, consulting or otherwise) other than elected judicial office. Specify your dates of employment, employer, major job responsibilities, and supervisor.

While municipal court judge, I was also working as the sole attorney in my private practice.

29. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.
- a) In 2010, I ran for the office of Probate Judge for Greenwood County. After a contested primary in June, 2010, I was the Republican candidate for Probate Judge. I lost in the general election in November, 2010.
 - b) In 2012, I was a candidate for Family Court Judge, Eighth Judicial Circuit, Seat 3. I was found qualified, but not nominated for the position.

30. Have you ever been engaged in any occupation, business, or profession other than the practice of law, teaching of law, or holding judicial or other public office? If so, give

details, including a description of your occupation, business, or profession, the dates of your employment, and the name of your business or employer.

- a) First Baptist Church of Greenwood, Greenwood, South Carolina. Interim Minister to Students, 1994-95. I was responsible for leading church-wide ministry program for students, age 11-18 and college students. I was also responsible for fundraising activities to support non-budgeted student activities and ministry projects.
- b) YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, Black Mountain, North Carolina. Associate Director of Conference Services, 1993-94; Assistant Conference Services Director (Audio-Visual), Summer 1992; Assistant Program Director, Summers 1990 and 1991.

I worked in a variety of positions at a conference center operated by YMCAs of the Southeast. I supervised teams of up to 15 college age workers to prepare meeting and convention facilities for use by diverse groups, including community, corporate, and church organizations.

31. Are you now an officer or director or involved in the management of any business enterprise? Explain the nature of the business, your duties, and the term of your service.

Not applicable.

32. Are you now or have you ever been employed as a "lobbyist," as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(13), or have you acted in the capacity of a "lobbyist's principal," as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(14)? If so, give the dates of your employment or activity in such capacity and specify by whom you were directed or employed.

Not applicable.

33. Provide, as a **separate attachment**, a complete, current financial net worth statement that itemizes in detail:

- (a) the identity and value of all financial assets held, directly or indirectly, including, but not limited to, bank accounts, real estate, securities, trusts, investments, and other financial holdings; and
- (b) the identity and amount of each liability owed, directly or indirectly, which is in excess of \$1,000, including, but not limited to, debts, mortgages, loans, and other financial obligations.

(A net worth statement form is provided with this questionnaire and you must use this format for submission of your financial statement.)

NOTE: The Commission may require written confirmation that financial obligations have been satisfied or that the parties have agreed upon a payment schedule.

34. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities? Have you ever defaulted on a student loan? Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? If so, give details.

Not applicable.

35. Since filing with the Commission your letter of intent to run for judicial office, have you accepted lodging, transportation, entertainment, food, meals, beverages, money, or any other thing of value as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(1) from a lobbyist or lobbyist's principal? If so, please specify the item or items you received, the date of receipt, and the lobbyist or lobbyist's principal involved.

Not applicable.

36. Itemize (by amount, type, and date) all expenditures, other than those for travel and room and board, made by you, or on your behalf in furtherance of your candidacy for the position you seek. If you have spent over \$100, have you reported your expenditures to the House and Senate Ethics Committees?

None.

37. List the recipient and amount of all contributions made by you, a member of your immediate family, or by a business with whom you are associated, to members of the General Assembly within the past four years.

None.

38. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy? If so, please specify the amount, solicitor, donor, and date of the solicitation.

Not applicable.

39. Describe any financial arrangements or business relationships you have, or have had in the past, that could constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position you seek or currently hold. Explain how you would resolve any potential conflict of interest.

Not applicable.

40. Describe any interest you or a member of your immediate family has in real property:
- (a) in which there is a potential conflict of interest with your involvement in a South Carolina state or local public agency;
 - (b) in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or more that adjoins property in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or more; or
 - (c) which was sold, leased, or rented to a state or local public agency in South Carolina.

List the interest you hold and the value and location of the property. Identify as applicable the:

- (a) nature of any potential conflict of interest;
- (b) nature and value of any public improvements; and
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property.

Attach a copy of any contract or agreement.

Not applicable.

41. Identify any personal property interest you or a member of your immediate family sold, leased, or rented to a South Carolina state or local public agency. Identify the property, its amount or value, and the name of the agency. Attach a copy of any contract or agreement.

Not applicable.

42. For sitting judges, if you currently hold an interest in stock or other securities or have held such an interest, list each stock you currently own or owned during the prior calendar year. If you prefer, you may attach broker or account records containing the requested information instead of listing it here.

Not applicable.

43. For sitting judges, have you ever accepted anything of value from an attorney or litigant in a matter currently or previously before you or your court? If so, please give the details, including the name of the attorney or litigant and the thing of value you received.

Not applicable.

44. For sitting judges, have you used the services of your staff, for which you did not pay, while campaigning for this office?

Not applicable.

45. Have you ever been arrested, charged, or held by federal, state, or other law enforcement authorities for violation or for suspicion of violation of any federal law or regulation, state law or regulation, or county or municipal law, regulation, or ordinance, or any other law, including another country's law? If so, give details but do not include traffic violations which are subject to a penalty of \$125 or less. You must include any and all arrests, including, but not limited to, offenses for driving under the influence or similar traffic offenses. Include all arrests that resulted in expungement, which will be redacted. If you have questions regarding whether to include an offense, please contact the Commission.

[All answers have been received and considered by the Commission, and as noted above, any expunged matters are redacted from the record.]

46. Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? If yes, explain.

Not applicable.

47. Have you ever been sued by a client? Have you ever been a named party (personally or professionally) in or had a pecuniary interest in any civil or criminal proceedings? If so, give details, including, but not limited to, dates, and resolutions.

Not applicable.

48. If you are in private practice, are you covered by malpractice insurance and, if so, how long have you carried malpractice insurance? If applicable, have you ever been covered by a tail policy? If so, please explain when you were covered by a tail policy. Also, if applicable, indicate your coverage and deductible for your current malpractice policy.

Not applicable.

49. Have you ever, in South Carolina or any other jurisdiction, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, been sanctioned or disciplined for lawyer, judicial, or other professional misconduct or has any jurisdiction found that you committed any misconduct? If so, give the details and describe any final disposition. Include any and all confidential and public sanction, discipline, or finding of misconduct of any kind.

[Yes and no responses are redacted for all candidates unless there is a public discipline.]

50. Have you ever been investigated by the Department of Social Services? If so, give the details and the resolution. Has your name ever been enrolled on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect? If so, give the details.

Not applicable.

Note: The flash drive with your application materials contains (1) Section 2-19-70(c); (2) JMSC Rule 24, (3) Memo of Guidance, and (4) informal opinions and letters concerning pledging prohibitions, with which third parties acting on your behalf, as well as you, must comply.

51. Have you directly or indirectly requested the pledge of any member of the General Assembly as to your election for the position for which you are being screened or have you been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening? Have you received the assurance of any public official or public employee that they will seek the pledge of any member of the General Assembly as to your election for the position for which you are being screened? If so, give details.

No.

52. Have you requested any third parties to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf before the final and formal screening report has been released? Describe the campaigning you have done for this election and include a list of those individuals you have asked to campaign on your behalf and, to the best of your knowledge, those who have campaigned for you on their own initiative.

No.

53. Are you familiar with the 48-hour rule, which prohibits a candidate from seeking pledges until after the draft report becomes final, which occurs on the day and time specified on the Commission's published screening schedule?

I am familiar with the 48-hour rule.

54. Since submitting your letter of intent to become a candidate, have you or has anyone acting on your behalf contacted any member of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission about your candidacy or intention to become a candidate? If so, give details.

No.

55. List the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five (5) persons from whom you are providing references. Also, provide the Commission with **original letters** of recommendation from each person listed herein, including their signature (preferably in blue ink). **The Commission will not accept a photocopy or electronic submission of a letter of recommendation and failure to include all five (5) original letters of recommendation in your packet when you submit it will render your packet incomplete.** Please **do not** have references mail your reference letters to the Commission directly. *You must return the five (5) original letters of recommendation to the Commission with your application packet.*

(a) Scarlet Moore, [REDACTED]

(b) Adam Bacot, [REDACTED]

(c) Lil Ann Gray, [REDACTED]

(d) Rosemerry Felder-Commander, [REDACTED]

(e) Adrienne Woods, [REDACTED]

56. Are you active on or a member of a social media or Internet site or have you, to your knowledge, been featured or depicted on a social media or Internet site, such as, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.? If so, how would your use of social media or other similar types of Internet sites be affected if you were serving in a judicial capacity?

I have a Facebook account and use Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram accounts. Facebook is the only social media platform I use with any regularity. I never post regarding work due to the confidentiality of child abuse/neglect cases. My account is limited to Friends, and is not open to the general public. If elected to the Family Court, I would restrict my use of Facebook to only family and personal matters where I keep up

with family and close friends. I certainly would not comment on cases, past or future. Nor would I discuss political issues or engage in other commentary espousing particular political views, platforms, or candidates. I do not generally post anything on other media sites, but if I felt the need to do so, would follow the same guidelines in my postings.

57. List all civic, charitable, educational, social, and fraternal organizations of which you are or have been a member during the past five years and include any offices held in such a group, any professional honors, awards, or other forms of recognition received and not listed elsewhere.
- (a) Cub Scout Pack 921, Greenwood SC. Den Leader 2014-2015; Cubmaster 2016-2019.
 - (b) Boy Scout Troop 313, Greenwood, SC. Assistant Scoutmaster February 2019 - present
 - (c) F3 Men's Fitness Club, 2015 – present.
 - (d) Greenwood County Library Board. Chairman, 2014-2016.
58. Provide any other information that may reflect positively or negatively on your candidacy, or which you believe should be disclosed in connection with consideration of you for nomination for the position you seek. This information may include how your life experiences have affected or influenced the kind or type of judge you have been or plan to be.

Throughout my life, I have had a strong desire to serve and help people. I once considered careers in ministry and later, in medicine, but found that my skills and abilities were best suited for the practice of law. Over the years, I have seen the tremendous impact the court system can have on families. I think I was drawn to family law because you can have a real impact on the lives of families and individuals in the decisions you make in cases you pursue in family court. While family law has not been as financially rewarding as other areas of law can be, it has given me great personal satisfaction to help individuals and families deal with some of the most tumultuous events of their lives.

In recent years, serving the state as an advocate for child welfare, I have seen the critical role Family Court judges have to make each day. Most decisions they are called upon to make will have life-long impacts on families and their children, but they are forced to make those decisions in a limited span of time and without complete information. While a prestigious post, Family Court judges are required to work at a demanding pace, week-in and week-out. At the same time, it promotes injustice and causes harm to children and families when decisions are left "in abeyance" or "under advisement" for prolonged periods of time, leaving children and families in limbo as to their future.

Based on these experiences, I have come to believe that, as a judge, it is crucial that you listen carefully to the evidence presented to you, consider the facts and the law, and then make a decision as quickly as possible. After 21 years of law practice, I believe more than ever in the old axiom, "Justice delayed is justice denied." Particularly in family court cases, it is crucial that children and families know what the outcome of their cases will be as quickly as possible, as uncertainty or delay only exacerbates the stresses caused by domestic litigation. Children lingering in the foster care system, juvenile offenders forced to wait for treatment or rehabilitative services, or adoptive parents who must sometimes wait years for their adoption to be finalized and their family made whole, are just a few examples of how delayed decisions cause real harm when it comes to families and children.

Some might be concerned that, given my recent history of working for the Department of Social Services, I might be too lenient on the Department and its staff when they appear before me. I can only say that, in my role today, I spend much of my time pointing out errors in investigations and addressing inconsistencies in practice regarding issues of custody, visitation, and treatment. I have a great deal of sympathy for the parents who become involved in DSS cases. Most of them are not acting out of malice or hatred towards their children, they simply don't understand or have never been taught what it means to be a parent. Courts should make sure that these parents are given a fair chance to make things right in their life, but also be ready to make the tougher decisions about the children's best interests when the parents have shown themselves unable to make things right.

I would hope that my experience would allow me to resolve cases quickly, fairly, and with wisdom and courtesy for all the parties and attorneys. That is how I have tried to conduct myself in my practice, and how I plan to continue as a judge.

YOUR SIGNATURE WILL BE HELD TO CONSTITUTE A WAIVER OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ANY PROCEEDING BEFORE A GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE OR ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR CREDIT.

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

Signature: _____

Sworn to before me this ____ day of _____, 2019.

(Notary Signature)

(Notary Printed Name)
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: _____