

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

**Master-in-Equity
(Incumbent)**

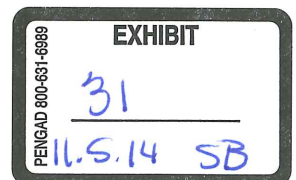
Full Name: Gordon G. Cooper

Business Address: Spartanburg County Judicial Center
180 Magnolia Street, Ste 901
Spartanburg, SC 29306

Business Telephone: (864) 596-2501

1. Do you plan to serve your full term if re-appointed?
YES
2. 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?
I do not allow *ex parte* communications. In the event that an *ex parte* communication does occur because of scheduling or an emergency, I would immediately notify all parties of the *ex parte* communication and the content of the communication. I would then give all parties the opportunity to respond to the *ex parte* communication and if needed immediately set a hearing on the matter.
5. What is your philosophy on recusal, especially in situations in which lawyer-legislators, former associates, or law partners are to appear before you?
I go on the record and advise all parties of the relationship or other basis for my recusal and ask all parties if they want to waive the disqualification. I would then give the parties the opportunity to discuss this with their clients out of my presence. If the parties agree that I should hear the matter, then the agreement to waive the disqualification is placed on the record.
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?

Even if I believed that there would be no bias, I would give deference to the party requesting the recusal. I would grant the motion.



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

My family and I only accept gifts from family or friends on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas, etc. We attend ordinary social functions for church, friends and bar related functions.

8. How would you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct of a lawyer or of a judge?

I would contact the lawyer or judge personally and advise them of the misconduct. Also, I would report the violation to the appropriate authority.

9. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions that need to be re-evaluated?

No

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

No

11. How do you handle the drafting of orders?

In the majority of cases, I rule from the bench and request the prevailing party to draft the Order and send it to the opposing party for review prior to sending to me for signing. In the cases when I do not rule from the bench, I prepare a rough draft of my findings and the ruling and email to the parties. The prevailing party is requested to prepare an Order that is consistent with my finding and ruling. The draft is then provided to all parties for review prior to sending to me for signature. If there are objections to the draft Order, I review the objections and make changes if appropriate. If the objections cannot be resolved, a hearing is held to finalize the wording of the Order.

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

All hearings are originally handwritten in a scheduling book. The main calendar is kept on the main county computer which is accessed by me and my staff. The computer program has a tickler system to advise me and my staff of hearings and upcoming deadlines.

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

Judges should not be involved in setting or promoting public policy.

14. 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 have spoken at the Bridge the Gap seminars presented by the South Carolina Bar. I will continue to speak at these seminars relating

- to the Master-in-Equity system. I have also participated in presenting a program at local elementary school on career day.
15. 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?
No. My family fully supports my service as the Master-in-Equity.
16. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality?
No
17. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved?
No
18. Do you belong to any organizations that discriminate based on race, religion, or gender?
No
19. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses?
Yes
20. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge?
A judge should always be patient and courteous with everyone that he comes in contact with either in an official capacity or private life. All litigants who appear in court should be treated with respect. A judge should not in any way, by word or conduct, manifest any bias or prejudice.
21. Would the rules that you expressed in your previous answer apply only while you are on the bench or in chambers, or do these rules apply seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day?
As far as I am concerned, these rules apply seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day.
22. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public who would appear before you? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?
No
23. How much money have you spent on your campaign? If it is over \$100, has that amount been reported to the House and Senate Ethics Committees?
None
24. While campaigning for this office, have you used judicial letterhead or the services of your staff for your campaign?
No
25. Have you sought or received the pledge of any legislator prior to this date?
No

26. Have you sought or been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening?

No

27. Have you asked any third parties to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf before the final and formal screening report has been released? Are you aware of any friends or colleagues contacting members of the General Assembly on your behalf?

No

28. Have you contacted any members of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission?

No

29. Are you familiar with the 48-hour rule, which prohibits a candidate from seeking pledges for 48 hours after the draft report has been submitted?

Yes.

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

s/Gordon Cooper

Sworn to before me this 25 day of July, 2014.

Jennifer Gibson

Notary Public for S.C.

My commission expires: January 31, 2016