

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

Retired Judge

Full Name: Gafford Thomas Cooper, Jr.

Business Address: P.O. Box 192, Columbia, S.C. 29202

Business Telephone: 803-576-1783

1. Have you met the Constitutional or statutory requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice?

Yes

2. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses?

Yes

3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?

No

4. Are you engaged in any legal activities other than your service as a retired judge, such as acting as an arbitrator or mediator?

Yes

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

No

6. Do you belong to any organizations that discriminate based on race, religion, or gender?

No

7. Have you engaged in any partisan political activity since your retirement?

No

8. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge?

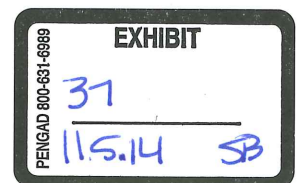
A judge needs to be patient, understanding, tolerant and willing to listen. He or she needs to maintain a sense of equilibrium in dealing with litigants and their attorneys. He or she should be dignified, yet courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses and all others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity.

9. In your position as a retired judge, what methods do you employ to ensure that deadlines for the timely issuance of orders are met?

Although we have few deadlines, we calendar all events in writing and keep up with issuance of orders with a spread sheet for matters under advisement.

10. 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?

No. Frustration is common, impatience is tempting, but never anger.



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

Pursuant to Canon 3 of the Code of Judicial Ethics, Section (D), I would either "take appropriate action" or report the misconduct, depending on my degree of knowledge of the misconduct.

12. What is your philosophy on recusal, especially in situations in which lawyer-legislators, former associates, or law clerks are to appear before you?

Pursuant to Canon 3 of the Code of Judicial Ethics, Section (E), I recuse myself from all matters that involve former law partners. I regularly see lawyer/legislators in my Court. Recusal is not a practical option. If bias is raised as an issue, I deal with it. I make disclosures any time a former law clerk appears before me.

13. Pursuant to Canon 3 of the code of Judicial Ethics, Section (B)(7), I do not allow or participate in ex parte communications with parties or attorneys and do not allow my law clerk to do so either. I do so only when allowed by statute or for scheduling purposes.

14. 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 give great deference to the party who raised the issue of bias or prejudice unless I believe the concern is disingenuous and raised for the purpose of delay or "judge shopping". In most cases I would recuse.

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

Pursuant to Canon 4 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, I will accept only "ordinary social hospitality". I have not and will not dine or otherwise socialize with parties or attorneys that have matters pending before me. I do accept invitations and/or meals from various bar groups. I am always conscious of the "appearance of impropriety" when in the company of attorneys.

16. In order that we might advise court administration on steps that need to be taken, are there any limitations on your sight, hearing, or mobility that should be addressed by the court administrator?

No

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

s/ Thomas G. Cooper

Sworn to before me this 17 day of July, 2014.

Betty S. Smith

(Print name)

Notary Public for S.C.

My Commission Expires: October 22, 2018