

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

Family Court
(New Candidate)

Full Name: Tommy Lee Stanford
Business Address: 307 Main St., P O Box 3321
Greenwood, SC 29648
Business Telephone: (864) 229-3987

1. Why do you want to serve as a Family Court Judge?

I believe that with my vast experience over the years, the knowledge that I have acquired, my ability to work with people; as a judge, I can offer a greater service to the people of this state, and our great legal profession. I want to inspire others to a realization that if they work hard, dedicate themselves, then it is possible to reach higher worthy goals, and contribute even more to the legal profession.

2. Do you plan to serve your full term if 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?

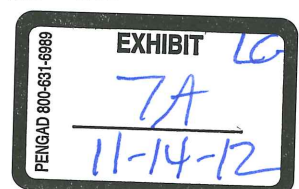
There should be no *ex parte* communication. I cannot think of a circumstance when it is tolerated.

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

I believe that recusal is appropriate when there is a conflict, appearance of a conflict, bias or any instances that does not allow you to be fair, impartial, to all parties. I think that full disclosure should be made to all parties relevant to any matter that could result in recusal or the possibility of recusal.

7. 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 grant the motion if I disclosed something that have the appearance of bias. I would err on the side of being open, fair and impartial. I would not want the person that is requesting recusal to leave the courtroom thinking that his or her case was not handled properly because of a legitimate open disclosure that has the



appearance of bias. I would want the person to have their day in court and leave the court, regardless of the outcome, feeling that I had my day in court based on the issues, the facts and the rule of law.

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

I again would make full disclosure and recues myself. As stated above, I would want a person to have their day in Court, with all litigation, ruling and the case based on the issues, facts and the rule of law.

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

I will not accept gifts or social hospitality.

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

I would report the misconduct of the lawyer or the judge.

11. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions that, if you were elected, would need to be evaluated? No

12. Do you have any business activities that you would envision remaining involved with if elected to the bench? No

13. Since family court judges do not have law clerks, how would you handle the drafting of orders?

I would ask the attorneys that appear before me to draft and submit a proposed order, submitting to the opposing side prior to giving it to me. I would provide the attorneys with findings of facts, conclusions of law that support my ruling. I would review the order, along with my notes and if it meets the requirements, I would sign it.

14. If elected, what method would you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?

If I ask an attorney to submit a proposed order, I would use a practice that I have seen from a sitting Judge. I would require that the order is submitted in a certain number of days. I would use a computerized calendar system and a physical calendar system to keep up and meet deadlines. I will have in place a tickler system for deadlines. I would meet with my staff regularly to discuss and meet deadlines.

15. If elected, what specific actions or steps would you take to ensure that the guidelines of the Guardian Ad Litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case?

I would careful review an order appointing a person to serve as the Guardian Ad Litem to make sure the person meets the requirements. If the person has been appointed, I would insist that the person follow the rule and is in compliances with the qualifications to serve. I would require written reports when applicable. I would devise a check off sheet to follow as well.

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

I believe judges should follow the rule of law as outlined in the codes of law, and the relevant case law. Judges should not set or promote public policy

17. 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?

I would serve on committees as asked by the chief judge, I would ask for input and meet with fellow judges in the circuit to discuss how to improve the legal system. I would be open to discussion from the local bar on ways and means to improve the legal system and the administration of justice.

18. 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? No

19. Would you give any special considerations to a *pro se* litigant in family court?

I would treat all persons fair and equal.

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

No

21. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved? No

22. Do you belong to any organizations that discriminate based on race, religion, or gender? No

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

24. What percentage of your legal experience (including experience as a special appointed judge or referee) concerns the following areas? If you do not have experience in one of these areas, can you suggest how you would compensate for that particular area of practice?

About 40% of my practice is in Family Law. A breakdown of that percentage is

a. Divorce and equitable distribution: 40%

b. Child custody:30% (includes child support, visitation, and paternal)

c. Adoption: 15%

d. Abuse and neglect:13%

e. Juvenile cases:2%

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

A judge should be fair, non-bias, polite, and his behavior, appearance and actions should reflect that he is an impartial Trier of the facts and presider over the case.

26. Would the rules that you expressed in your previous answer apply only while you are on the bench or in chambers, or would these rules apply seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day?
The rules will apply all the time.
27. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public who would appear before you, especially with a criminal defendant? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant? No
28. How much money have you spent on your campaign? If the amount is over \$100, has that been reported to the House and Senate Ethics Committees? \$0.00
29. If you are a sitting judge, have you used judicial letterhead or the services of your staff while campaigning for this office? N/A
30. Have you sought or received the pledge of any legislator prior to this date? No
31. Have you sought or been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening? No
32. 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
33. Have you contacted any members of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission? No
34. 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.

Tommy Lee Stanford

Sworn to before me this 27 day of August, 2012.

Notary Public for South Carolina

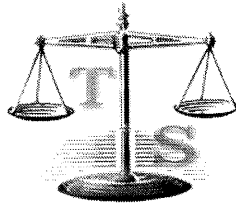
My commission expires: 10/31/16 _____

TOMMY L. STANFORD LAW FIRM, PC

Attorney At Law

Phone: (864) 229-3987

307 Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646



Fax: (864) 229-6304

Mailing Address:
Post Office Box 3321
Greenwood, SC 29648

VIA: Electronic Mail

November 6, 2012

Rep. F.G.Delleney, Jr. Chairman
Judicial Merit Selection Commission
Post Office Box 142
Columbia, SC 29202

RE: Judicial Qualification Committee Report

Dear Chairman Delleney, Jr. and Committee Members:

Thank you for the services that you provide to our state, and the valuable work of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission.

I write this letter with great concern because of the South Carolina Bar Judicial Qualification Committee's report, relevant to my candidacy for Family Court Judge of the Eighth Judicial Circuit, Seat #3. I have received an overall unqualified rating. I was rated unqualified in one category, "Professional and Academic Ability." I was admittedly shocked and surprised to learn of this rating by fellow attorneys. Nevertheless, I accept the report with grace and humility and it has been a teachable experience for me. This report has afforded me the opportunity to take an objective look at my work.

In that regard, the members of the Bench and Survey Committee have stated that I am qualified for the office of the Family Court Judge. I believe and state that I am unequivocally qualified to be a Family Court Judge in this state. I have the professional and academic ability to serve as a judge. I have the intellectual capacity and ability to interpret legal principles, apply them to specific factual situations, and clearly communicate the reasoning leading up to my conclusion. I have practiced law as a licensed attorney in this state for over twenty-five years, with the past nineteen years as a solo practitioner. I have built my career and my practice from the ground up, representing numerous persons from all walks of life, various backgrounds, and different socioeconomic statuses. These persons have put their trust in my ability to know the law, the issues, and for me to have the professional and academic skills to properly represent them. As a testament to the confidence they place in me, I have represented them in other legal matters and received referrals from them. I have also received referrals from members of the community, as well as referrals from fellow attorneys, to either handle a Family Court case or serve as Guardian ad Litem in contested and uncontested Family Court cases.

In addition, as a solo practitioner and a business man, I have successfully managed my own law office with a staff of two persons for over nineteen years. I am a community worker, I am dedicated to the church, and I receive referrals and clients from various churches in the community. I believe that these people place their trust in me and respect me because I have over twenty-five years of professional and academic skills and ability.

In conclusion, I want to assure the committee that I understand the great responsibility of public service and the position of Family Court Judge. I can say without hesitation, I am a dedicated hard worker, and I have the intellectual capacity to interpret legal principles, apply them to factual situations, and clearly and logically communicate the reasoning leading up to my conclusion.

Thank you again for this opportunity. With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

Tommy L. Stanford
Candidate, Family Court Judge
Eighth Circuit, Seat 3