Judicial Merit Selection Commission

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To: Members of the South Carolina Bench and Bar, Members of the Judiciary, and Clerks of Court:

The Judicial Merit Selection Commission would like your input in the General Assembly's screening of candidates for judicial office. The Commission must determine whether each candidate for judicial office is qualified to serve, and in this regard it seeks the opinion of practicing attorneys, members of the judiciary, clerks of court, and sheriffs as to each candidate's fitness for the bench. Please note that this request is separate and distinct from the survey responses requested by the South Carolina Bar’s Judicial Qualifications Committee.

The Commission's ability to determine whether a particular candidate is fit for service on the bench is only as good as its knowledge of the candidate. The Commission conducts a thorough investigation of each candidate, relying in part on responses to the bench/bar questionnaire. The best and most reliable information is that from a known source with first-hand knowledge of the candidate. The second best information is that from a source who, while anonymous, cites specific occurrences or patterns of behavior that would speak to the candidate's fitness for the bench. The Commission seeks both types of information for its investigation. Please complete the questionnaire and include as much detailed information as possible, or contact the Commission directly with information on any or all of the following candidates:

**Supreme Court**

**Seat 4 The Honorable Kaye Gorenflo Hearn, Conway, S.C.**

**Court of Appeals**

**Seat 8 The Honorable Thomas E. Huff, North Augusta, S.C.**

**Circuit Court**

**3rd Circuit, Seat 2 The Honorable George C. James, Jr., Sumter, S.C.**

**4th Circuit, Seat 2 The Honorable John Michael Baxley, Hartsville, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 2 The Honorable Lee Casey Manning, Columbia, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 Joey Randell Floyd, Columbia, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 Lisa C. Glover, Columbia, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 Robert Eldon Hood, Columbia, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 Robert Marshall Paul Masella, Columbia, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 John P. Meadors, Columbia, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 Grady L. Patterson, III, Columbia, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 Robert L. Reibold, Columbia, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 Christian Bradley Stegmaier, Chapin, S.C.**

**5th Circuit, Seat 3 Clifford Scott, Columbia, S.C.**

**7th Circuit, Seat 2 The Honorable Roger Lynn Couch, Spartanburg, S.C.**

**8th Circuit, Seat 2 The Honorable Eugene Cannon Griffith, Jr., Newberry, S.C.**

**9th Circuit, Seat 2 The Honorable Kristi Lea Harrington, Hanahan, S.C.**

**10th Circuit, Seat 2 The Honorable Alexander Stephens Macaulay, West Union, S.C.**

**11th Circuit, Seat 1 The Honorable William Paul Keesley, Edgefield, S.C.**

**11th Circuit, Seat 2 The Honorable R. Knox McMahon, Lexington, S.C.**

**12th Circuit, Seat 1 The Honorable Michael G. Nettles, Lake City, S.C.**

**14th Circuit, Seat 1 The Honorable Perry M. Buckner, III, Walterboro, S.C.**

**Administrative Law Court**

**Seat 2 The Honorable John Davis McLeod, Winnsboro, S.C.**

**Retired**

**Supreme Court The Honorable James Edward Moore, Greenwood, S.C.**

**Circuit Court The Honorable Edward B. Cottingham, West Columbia, S.C.**

**Circuit Court The Honorable Charles Victor Pyle, Jr., Greenville, S.C.**

**Family Court The Honorable Wylie H. Caldwell, Jr., Florence, S.C.**

Your responses to this questionnaire may be anonymous and will be kept strictly confidential. While anonymous questionnaires will not be used as evidence of a judicial candidate's qualifications or lack thereof, the Commission will use the questionnaire responses during its investigative process. Comments may identify potential areas of concern such as a pattern of poor judicial temperament, ethical violations, or other inappropriate conduct that would warrant more intensive investigation and examination by the Commission. **If you wish to testify concerning an area of concern about a candidate, you must file a formal complaint with the Commission on or before Noon, Wednesday, November 2, 2011. (Please note this Commission will not utilize responses to this questionnaire as a formal complaint.)**

 The Commission now utilizes e-mail as the main method to distribute the questionnaire. You have the option of using a questionnaire located on the Judicial Merit Selection Commission homepage, [www.scstatehouse.gov/html-pages/judmerit.html](http://www.scstatehouse.gov/html-pages/judmerit.html). This questionnaire can be downloaded, completed, and returned by e-mail, or, to maintain the confidentiality of the process, completed and mailed to the Commission address. The e-mail address for the Commission is: jms@scsenate.gov. If you would like to comment on more than one candidate, please photocopy the questionnaire. Be sure to indicate the candidate's name at the top of each questionnaire.

**The screening process is currently underway, so please return the questionnaires using the U.S. Mail or e-mail by Noon, Thursday, September 29, 2011.**  If you have questions or if you have information you would like to give to the Commission directly, please call 803-212-6623. Your assistance is appreciated.

Glenn F. McConnell, Chairman