



**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE
2021**

Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying: Family Court, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit,
Seat #2

1. Name: The Honorable Melissa J. Buckhannon

Name that you are known by if different from above
(Example: A Nickname): Lisa

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge? If part-time, please note.
(Includes Municipal, Magistrate, Etc.) Yes – Family Court Judge

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Business Address: Post Office Box 677, Conway, SC 29528

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: (home): [REDACTED]
(office): 843-915-8989
(cell): [REDACTED]

2. Date of Birth: [REDACTED] 1969
Place of Birth: Darlington, SC
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. No

6. Family Status:
(a) State whether you are single, married, widowed, divorced, or separated. Married
(b) If married, state the date of your marriage and your spouse's full name and occupation.

Family Status: Married on December 26, 2015 to Thomas Eli Buckhannon, IV,
Law Enforcement Officer with SCDNR

- (c) If widowed, list the name(s) of spouse(s).
- (d) 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.

Divorced on May 25, 2007, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Family Court, State of South Carolina,
Adultery - Melissa Emery n/k/a Melissa Buckhannon was the moving party.

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



- 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) Francis Marion College: August 1987 – May 1991; Bachelor of Science
- (b) University of South Carolina School of Law: August 1991–May 1994; Juris Doctor

- 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.

- (a) University of South Carolina School of Law:
- (b) Student Bar Association, 1991 – 1994
- (c) Women’s Law Society, 1991 – 1994
- (d) Young Lawyers Division – Student Chapter, 1993 - 1994

- 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.

South Carolina - 1994

- 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 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) Law Clerk to the Honorable James E. Lockemy, Circuit Judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit – August 1994 to August 1995.
- (b) Law Offices of John R. Clarke, North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Associate, Civil and Domestic Litigation, August 1995 to November 1996
- (c) Jeffcoat Pike & Nappier, LLC, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Associate, Domestic Litigation to include GAL work and mediation, November 1996 to August 2000
- (d) Monckton Law Firm, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Associate, Domestic Litigation to include GAL work and mediation, August 2000 to March 2001
- (e) Jeffcoat Pike & Nappier, LLC, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Partner, Domestic Litigation to include GAL work and mediation, March 2001 to October 2007. I was not a managing partner; therefore, my involvement with administrative and financial management was to review proposals of the managing partners as a partner. I had signatory authority on the trust accounts but did not perform any accounting or balancing of these accounts as that was done by the firm bookkeeper.
- (f) McLain & Lee, LLC, Conway, South Carolina, Partner, Domestic Litigation to include GAL work and mediation, October 2007 to December 2010. I was the partner in charge of the Conway office, and I made the day-to-day decisions for that office. Any major decisions impacting the firm was made by the managing partner. I had signatory authority on the trust accounts but did not perform any accounting or balancing of these accounts as that was done by the firm bookkeeper.
- (g) Melissa Johnson Emery, LLC, Conway, South Carolina, Owner, Domestic Litigation to include GAL work and mediation, January 2011 to February 2014. As a sole practitioner, I made all managerial decisions for the office. I also oversaw all bank accounts, including the trust account.
- (h) Family Court Judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, Seat #2, February 2014 to present.

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.

- (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, and 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:
 - (b) state:
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:
 - (b) criminal:
 - (c) domestic:
 - (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:
 - (b) non-jury:

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

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)
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)
 - (e)

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)
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)
 - (e)

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)
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)
 - (e)

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.

Family Court Judge, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, Seat 2 – Elected by the General Assembly in February 2014. I have served as a Family Court judge from February 2014 until present.

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.

(a) Mark S. Jakubowski v. Pamela Jakubowski (2018-DR-26-1160)

This case dealt with the issue of modification of custody, wherein the parents had joint custody of the minor children pursuant to a settlement agreement that was approved and made part of the Final Order in their divorce case, with Plaintiff Father having primary status and Defendant Mother having secondary status. Plaintiff was seeking to modify custody and visitation based upon his desire to move from the area with the minor children. His reason for moving was two-fold. First, he had married, and his new wife

lived in another state, and she earned a significantly higher income than he did and would not give up her job to move to SC. Second, he alleged his job situation had changed in SC causing him to make less money, and he believed he could make more money if he moved to the area in which his new wife lived. Father further testified that if he could not take the children with him, he would not move and allow Mother to have primary custody. Mother objected to the modification because she would lose the significant amount of time she spent with her children. Mother exercised her shared time with the children each week and often got more time than ordered. She was active in their schools, social and extracurricular activities. In fact, after the Final Order was entered, the Father moved to another area of the county, she moved as well to be close to the children even though it put her further away from her job.

Father failed to show a material and substantial change of circumstances *in the best interest of the children* to warrant a modification to allow him to take the children with him if he moved. At the time he entered into the agreement with Mother, he was already dating the woman and he knew she lived in another state, and they had already discussed marriage. Therefore, the fact of his marrying a woman who lived in another state should have been taken into consideration when entering into the agreement. Father also failed to present any evidence that his job status had changed through no fault of his own. In fact, he took so much time off to travel to see his wife, his boss reduced his hours which affected his income. Father also failed to show that he could have a better job in the other state because he had not yet applied for any jobs. Mother showed that she had a close relationship with the children, and that relationship would be hugely impacted if the children were moved to another state. She did not have the financial resources to travel to see the children or be involved in their activities on a regular basis.

I ruled that while the Court could not prevent Father from relocating, he could not relocate the children. If he chose to remain in South Carolina the Final Order would not be modified and would remain in place. However, if he chose to relocate, Mother would then have primary custody of the children, and Father would have a standard visitation schedule for out of state parents.

The Final Order was not appealed.

- (b) Craig Doehner and Sharon Doehner v. Eric J. Perry (2019-DR-22-0316)
Ex Parte Linda Charles (Unpublished Opinion No. 2021-UP-004)

This case was a TPR/Adoption case wherein the maternal grandparents sought to terminate the parental rights of the Defendant Father and adopt his two minor children. Defendant Father is incarcerated for killing the mother of the children, and the Plaintiffs received an order of custody of the two children after the death of their daughter. The Defendant's mother, Linda Charles filed a Motion to Intervene into the action. Ms. Charles had filed an action against Craig and Sharon Doehner seeking visitation rights to the minor children prior to the filing of the TPR/Adoption action. However, after the TPR/Adoption action was filed, the visitation case between the grandparents went to trial. Ms. Carter was awarded visitation with the minor children. She filed her Motion to Intervene stating concern that the TPR/Adoption action, if granted, would stop her visitation with the minor children.

I denied her Motion to Intervene and found that she did not have standing to intervene into the TPR/Adoption action as her consent and relinquishment to the TPR and adoption was not required. I found that she had a separate order of visitation with the minor children in which the Doehners were bound, and they would have to modify that order if they wished to take away her rights to see the children. Ms. Charles appealed the Order regarding the Motion to Intervene, and the Order was affirmed.

- (c) In the Interest of James Conway – A juvenile (2017-JU- 26-148; 2018-JU-26-425, 426, 457, 458, 482, 483)

This case dealt with a juvenile who was charged with four counts of Pointing and Presenting a Firearm and four counts of Assault & Battery 2nd degree. A truancy contempt charge was Nolle Prosequi by the State.

The juvenile, along with two friends, went to the pool area of an apartment complex that primarily houses students from Coastal Carolina University. They did not live in the complex and were not there visiting anyone in the complex. While there, they encountered four young adult men in the pool area. Pursuant to the testimony of all witnesses, one of these men and a friend of the Defendant exchanged words, but it did not become heated. They were all exiting the pool area at around the same time. When the Defendant got into his car, he was upset that one of the men had said something to his friend. He retrieved a gun from the console of the vehicle and pointing it at the four young men while yelling threats and obscenities. He then sped off in his vehicle while continuing to point the gun. Shots were not fired.

The juvenile was adjudicated delinquent and prior to sentencing was sent to the Reception and Evaluation center for a complete and thorough evaluation not to exceed forty-five days prior to disposition. Often sending a child to R&E makes a huge difference in their lives because they get a glimpse of what life behind the fence at DJJ can be like. Those forty-five days can serve as a turning point in their lives, and that is exactly what happened with this juvenile. When he came back after evaluation, he was a different person. He took responsibility for his actions and had remorse, which he had not shown during his testimony at trial. The report of his behavior from the R&E center was positive as he had no behavioral problems and did all that was asked of him. Based upon his evaluation and good behavior, I sentenced him to DJJ suspended to probation, with an opportunity to stay home unless his good behavior did not last. In that event he could be placed automatically in alternative placement. I have heard of no further misconduct by this juvenile.

The Order was not appealed.

- (d) Michelle Kosier v. Carroll Curtis Coats, Jr. (2018-DR-22-0376)

This case dealt with the issue of transmutation of non-marital assets during the marriage. These parties were both in their fifties when they married after a short courtship. Both owned assets prior to the marriage. Husband owned real estate in a trust with his family and Wife had substantial investment accounts and owned a home. Both parties took steps within the first couple of years of marriage to add the other's name in some way to their non-marital property. Wife liquidated most of her investment accounts which was used as down payments to a home and business in Pawley's Island. Those properties were deeded in both names. Husband added the Wife's name to his family trust which

held three homes in West Virginia, making her an equal beneficiary to the trust as him. During the marriage, both parties assured the other of being willing to walk away from the other's property if the marriage did not last; however, after the end of the short-term marriage, both parties claimed an equal interest in the other's property.

The tough issues of the case were the contribution levels of the parties to the marital property and the losses that were received because of forced sales of properties when the marriage collapse so soon after property was purchased. While it was clear Wife's non-marital funds were used to purchase the Pawley's Island properties, Husband did contribute some from his income to his income but not very much. When this property was sold, the parties took a huge loss and did not recover the amount of the down payments on the properties. Wife wanted the entire proceeds from the sale of the properties and wanted additional funds from Husband to make her "whole" considering what she had liquidated and used in non-marital funds. While Husband did add Wife's name to his non-marital property, they both testified that she had contributed nothing financially to this property. She had never even seen this property. However, she demanded to be awarded half of the property, and Husband wanted her to receive nothing. This case was a classic example of "What's mine is mine and what's yours is mine!" There were other assets that had been acquired during the marriage that was clearly marital, but not a substantial amount.

I found that both parties had transmuted the non-marital property into marital property. However, I took into consideration the contribution levels of the parties to the marital property and divided the property so that they had an even division of assets. In my ruling I focused heavily on being responsible for one's own actions.

The Final Order was not appealed.

(e) South Carolina Department of Social Services v. Victoria Lynn Rose and Medardo Cortes Carbajal (2017-DR 26-1144)

This was a termination of parental rights action brought by SCDSS. The Defendants are the biological parents of four children. Mother is a US citizen and Father is from Mexico and was a legal resident. The two youngest children are twins and upon their birth, they along with Mother tested positive for drugs. At that time SCDSS opened an abuse and neglect case against Mother. They placed all four children, which included the infants, a four-year-old and six-year-old, with Father as an in-home protector. Mother was given a treatment plan, but she consistently failed to actively participate in the treatment plan.

Father was stopped one day during a routine traffic stop and was found to have an outstanding warrant for CDV that Mother had taken out a few years earlier. The warrant had never been served upon him. Father was deported and went home to Tijuana, Mexico. The children were removed from the home and placed in separate foster care homes. Father attempted to maintain a relationship with the children through DSS, but his efforts were ignored. Even though he provided an address to SCDSS he received nothing. He pressured Mother to maintain her visitation with the children as he was able to FaceTime with them during her visits. After many months, Mother failed to successfully complete her treatment plan and the abuse and neglect case was closed.

Because Father had never been served or given any possibility of participation in the case, all action taken in the underlying case was without prejudice to him.

SCDSS then filed the TPR case against both parents seeking to terminate their parental rights to the minor children. The alleged grounds against Father were failure to visit for over six months, failure to pay support for over six months, and children had been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months. Father was served with the Summons and Complaint and an attorney was appointed for him. Father objected to having his parental rights terminated. While SCDSS did not like the fact Father lived in Mexico, upon a home study being done on Father's home in Tijuana, it was found that he was gainfully employed, had a home that could accommodate the children and had family support. All references spoke highly of Father and his work ethic. SCDSS rejected the first home study as "unsatisfactory" even though the agency who did the study found his home to be "satisfactory". However, once Father became aware of the problem, he obtained new housing and made every effort to address any issues that SCDSS may have had. Once again, they found the home study "unsatisfactory" after the agency doing the study found his home "satisfactory". SCDSS continued with the TPR action against Father and Mother.

I found that SCDSS failed to meet their burden in proving their grounds for TPR against Father. The statute requires proof that a parent who fails to visit has not been prevented from doing so. By his deportation and SCDSS's refusal to arrange any contact between him and the children, he was prevented from having any meaningful contact with his children. Regarding the allegations of failure to support, SCDSS would provide no information of where support could be sent. Once he was provided the information, he began sending support each month. Regarding the time the children spent in foster care, the case worker acknowledged that Father had been suitable when in the US, but she never considered placing the children with him in his home in Mexico, and she made the decision to put them in foster care and leave them there. Basically, SCDSS made the decision they were not going to go through any steps to reunite the children with Father because of the fact he lived in Mexico.

I granted the TPR as to Mother, as she had done absolutely nothing to get her children back, including not showing up for the trial. However, I denied it as to Father and required SCDSS to reunite him with the children. This case was a learning experience as the children had to have passports issued, and the Mexican consulate became involved as a resource. However, the children were reunited with their Father.

The Final Order was not appealed.

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 1994.
 - (b) Admitted to practice before the Federal District Court in 1996.

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 coordinated and participated as a presenter for the annual Horry County Family Court Procedural & Substantive Law Seminar from 2000 to 2013. I have continued to contribute the seminar as a part of the organizational committee and presenter from 2015 until present. This is an annual seminar that is conducted each year by the Horry County Family Court Bar. In working closely with our resident judges, the committee presents a practical nuts & bolts type seminar which aids the Family Court practitioner with substantive and procedural issues dealt with in Family Court.

(b) I was part of the presentation faculty for the seminar Presenting the Family Law Case: The Basic Essentials on April 27, 2012. This is a seminar presented by the Family Law Council of the SC Bar on a bi-annual basis to teach attorneys who are new to Family Court the basic procedures for practicing in Family Court.

(c) I was part of the presentation faculty for the seminar Steering Your Way Through Family Court on May 21, 2010. This is the first seminar presented by the Family Law Council of the SC Bar, now done on a bi-annual basis to teach attorneys who are new to Family Court the basic procedures for practicing in Family Court.

(d) I was part of the presentation faculty for the seminar Children's Issues in Family Court on March 17, 2006, and March 28, 2008. This seminar dealt directly with the issues of children in Family Court. It also served as training for Guardians ad Litem in Family Court.

(e) I was part of the presentation faculty for the seminar Hot Tips from the Coolest Domestic Law Practitioners on September 23, 2005, September 26, 2014, September 2018, and September 2020. This is a seminar conducted by the Family Law Council each year to educate new and experienced attorneys alike in Family court.

(f) I was part of the presentation faculty for the seminar guardian ad litem Training on March 5, 2004. This seminar dealt directly with the issues of children in Family Court and served as training for guardians ad litem in Family Court.

(g) I as part of the presentation faculty for the SC Bar Convention Family Court Seminar in January 2019.

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.

South Carolina Family Lawyer's Toolkit, Second Edition

Published by the South Carolina Bar in 2010

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.)

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. BV

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) Horry County Bar Association

(c) Coastal Women's Law Society, 2000 – present; President 2000 – 2003

(d) Chief Justice's Commission on the Profession

(e) SC Human Trafficking Taskforce for the Coastal Region - Mentor

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.

Francis Marion University Board of Trustees – May 1998 to June 2013. Elected by the SC General Assembly. All reports were timely filed.

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.

None

29. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.

(a) I ran for Horry County Family Court Seat 3 in 2008. I withdrew from the race in January 2008.

(b) I ran for Family Court At-Large Seat 5 in 2013. I lost the race by vote of the General Assembly.

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.

I have had no other employment since graduating law school in 1994 other than the ones listed above. Prior to graduating law school, I worked as a law clerk for Koon & Cook, PA in Columbia from May 1993 until May 1994. In addition, I had jobs as a server/wait staff in three restaurants between high school and graduating law school.

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.

No

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.

No

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.)

A complete, current financial net worth statement was provided to the Commission.

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. Also, proof of satisfaction of any liens or defaults must be submitted with your application package.

No

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.

No

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.

My husband, Thomas E. Buckhannon, IV attended a barbecue fundraiser for Heather Ammons Crawford in November 2019 and paid \$100 as a contribution to the event.

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.

No

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.

None

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.

None

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.

None

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.

None

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.

None

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.

No

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

No

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 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.

No

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.

No. (See Attached documents from Horry County Clerk of Court)

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.

N/A

49. Have you ever, in South Carolina or any other jurisdiction, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, been cautioned with or without a finding of misconduct, 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 sanctions, disciplines, letters of caution, or findings of misconduct of any kind. Private or confidential dispositions will be redacted.

[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.

No

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?

Yes

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.*

(a) Martha L. Hamel

[Redacted]

(b) Captain Sherri Smith

[Redacted]

(c) Christopher Casella

[Redacted]

(d) Aaron Wilkes

[Redacted]

(e) Erin Marshall

[Redacted]

56. Are you active on or a member of a social media or Internet site such as, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.?

No

If so, please list the account names for each account and the relevant platform.

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 can think of no impact as I am not a member of any social media sites.

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, and any professional honors, awards, or other forms of recognition received and not listed elsewhere.
- (a) Coastal Inn of Court – 2014 – Present
 - (b) Your Sister’s Closet charitable organization – 2015 – present; Vice President
 - (c) South Carolina Family Court Inn of Court – June 2021 – I am a charter member and we have just received our formal charter from the Inn of Court organization. It is in the formation stages; however, as the charter has been approved, I am including it in my information.
 - (d) Silver Fox Landing, HOA Board or Directors – November 2018 – present; President of the BOD May 2019 - present
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.

Except for my first year in practice, I have dedicated my entire professional life to practicing in Family Court and have practiced in no other area. I am passionate about this area of the law. We deal with people’s children, livelihood, and assets during the most difficult time of their lives. Having gone through the process of a divorce myself, I have been on the “litigant” side of Family Court as well. Therefore, I am well acquainted with the fact that someone going into the Family Court arena must put their trust in the system and the fact that the judge presiding over the matter has the requisite knowledge of law and concern for the litigants.

Since becoming a Family Court judge, I have come to realize what importance the position brings with it. I believe we not only have a duty to serve in the courtroom, but we have a duty to help educate where we can to make the Family Court system work better and benefit the people we serve. While judges are important to the justice system, we are just one cog in a big wheel, and I feel an obligation to make sure the entire wheel is working.

As a judge, I have endeavored to do as much as I possibly can to educate attorneys who practice in Family Law. However, recently my endeavors to educate has extended to newly

elected Family Court judges as well. As one of the two Family Court judges who serve on the Chief Justice's Commission on the Profession, I took on the task of addressing the issue of training for newly elected Family Court judges. To accomplish this, I created and chair a Training Committee that developed a new training plan for Family Court judges. This plan includes a training team of judges who are committed to providing extensive training on the bench and in chambers. The plan also includes expanded training time and exposure to different circuits around the state. It is our goal to make sure each judge who presides in Family Court has the training to make the decisions that we are called upon to make.

As part of my desire to see better prepared people in Family Court, I have helped train lay guardians ad litem who represent children in abuse and neglect cases in Horry County. Every child in cases such as these must have an advocate who is trained in the role, they must play in the court process. Therefore, I participate in the training of these guardian ad litem, and I also participate in their required continuing education courses. It is my goal that each child has representation as prepared and capable as any other participant in a DSS case.

I have also partnered with the Horry County School District to combat the problem of truancy. It is an established fact that truancy is a bigger indicator of future delinquent behavior than any other indicator including race, gender, or social economic status. Horry County is one of the few counties that aggressively deals with truancy, which has a correlating effect upon lessening the amount of violent and more serious crimes in juvenile court. Therefore, I participate in the programs the district holds with parents and students to educate them about the importance of school attendance. It is my goal for every child to get an education so that they can have every chance available to them to succeed.

I have participated with the South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force for the Coastal Region to educate members of the community regarding the indicators and dangers of sex trafficking that impacts our children and young adults. I have participated in seminars held in schools, churches, civic organizations, etc. to help stop this tremendous problem that has so many victims. I have traveled to Charleston, Columbia, Anderson, and other places around the state to take part in the vital effort to educate parents, children, and community leaders about how victimization happens and how it can be avoided. I believe that education is key.

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 _____, 2021.

(Notary Signature)

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