



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

**Family Court  
(Incumbent)**

Full Name: Thomas Murray Bultman

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1. Why do you want to serve another term as a Family Court judge? This is the best job I have ever had. I look forward to coming to work each day. That is something I could not say while in private practice for thirty-nine years.
2. Do you plan to serve your full term if re-elected? I will be seventy-two on May 25, 2025. Unless the South Carolina legislature raises the retirement age, I will not be able to serve as an active Family Court Judge for the entire six year term.
3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day? Probably not.
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? Ex parte communications should be avoided; however, when an emergency exists allowing ex parte communications would be appropriate. By way of example, signing an ex parte order which places a minor child in emergency protective custody. Any ex parte order which I would sign would be without prejudice or precedential value for any subsequent hearing. I would follow the directives of Cannon 3B(7).
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? I would certainly consider same. Would you grant such a motion? It depends on the specific factual situation. By way of example, when the lawyer who represented me in my divorce which concluded on December 14, 2009, appears before me at a hearing or trial, I state on the record his having previously represented me in a family law action which concluded in December 2009. If the other lawyer or self represented litigant requests that I recuse myself, I so far have respectfully denied that request.

7. How do you handle the appearance of impropriety because of the financial or social involvement of your spouse or a close relative? I would inform the lawyers and litigants on the record of such financial or social involvement.
8. What standards have you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality? I follow the directives of Cannon 4D(5).
9. How would you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct or appearance of infirmity of a lawyer or of a fellow judge? Depending on the circumstances, I would do one or more of the following: speak directly to the individual; notify the individual with supervisory responsibility over the individual; or make a referral to an assistance program such as Lawyers Helping Lawyers of the South Carolina Bar in accordance with Rule 428, SCACR. Depending on the gravity of the conduct that came to my attention, I would report the individual to the appropriate disciplinary authority. I follow the directives of Cannon 3D(1) and (2).
10. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any social, community, or religious organizations? Please describe. None since being elected as a Family Court Judge.
11. Do you have any business activities that you have remained involved with since your election to the bench? No; however, in June 2021, I received \$10,000.00 from The Bryan Law Firm where I was a partner until I was elected by the South Carolina General Assembly as Family Court Judge, Third Judicial Circuit, Seat 1. The \$10,000.00 was the remaining amount due me from my 2018 profit share.
12. Since Family Court judges do not have law clerks, how do you handle the drafting of orders? If I am able to do so, I announce my decision from the bench and direct one of the lawyers to prepare the proposed Order or Decree. If I have to take the matter under advisement, I prepare a written Memorandum of Decision from the hearing or trial which is then attached to an e-mail which is transmitted to the lawyers involved with instructions for one lawyer to prepare the proposed Order or Decree and for that lawyer to provide a copy to the other lawyer for that lawyer's review and comments before submitting same to me. Most of my Memorandums of Decision are such that all the lawyer has to do is cut and paste same into the proposed Order or Decree. Concerning Pro Se Divorces or Pro Se Protections from Domestic Abuse, either my administrative assistant, Julie S. Hubbard, or I complete the form Order for Protection from Domestic Abuse Act or the form Divorce Decree.
13. What methods do you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines? The event will be entered into the calendar which I keep on my desk, as well as in my computer well in advance of the due date. In addition, my administrative assistant does the same thing. In other words, a tickler system is used.
14. What specific actions or steps do you take to ensure that the guidelines of the guardian ad litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case? I monitor the cases to which I am assigned to ensure those guidelines are being followed.

15. What is your philosophy on “judicial activism,” and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy? I am opposed to "judicial activism". I would only interpret the law as I believe a judge should not be setting or promoting public policy as that is the function of the legislature.
16. 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? Speaking at civic clubs, continuing legal education seminars, schools, or religious groups when invited to do so.
17. 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? There is no pressure or strains of personal relationships as a result of my serving as a Family Court Judge.
18. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality? No.
19. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved? I would inform the lawyers and litigants of the financial interest and I would decide on a case by case basis if I should recuse myself.
20. Are you a member of any organization or association that, by policy or practice, prohibits or limits its membership on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin? No. If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis.
21. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses for the past reporting period? Yes.
22. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge and when do these rules apply? To be patient, open minded, courteous, dignified, tactful, firm when one has to be, understanding, compassionate, respectful, and humble which apply at all times.
23. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public, especially with a criminal defendant? No. Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant? Never.

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

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Thomas M. Bultman

Sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_ day of July, 2021.

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Julie S. Hubbard  
Notary Public for South Carolina  
My commission expires: June 10, 2030