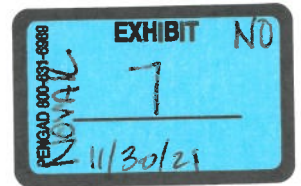


**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE
2021**



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

1. Name: The Honorable Douglas L. Novak

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

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge? If part-time, please note.
(Includes Municipal, Magistrate, Etc.) Family Court Judge
Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, Seat 2

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Business Address: Beaufort County Courthouse
Post Office Drawer 1124
Beaufort, South Carolina 29901

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: (home):
(office): (843) 255.5669
(cell): [REDACTED]

2. Date of Birth: [REDACTED] 1968
Place of Birth: Livingston, New Jersey
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.

- (b) If married, state the date of your marriage and your spouse's full name and occupation.
- (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.
- (e) State the names of your children and their ages. If your children are old enough to work, include the occupation of each child.

Family Status: Married on March 25, 1995 to Erin Kathleen Novak, Closing Coordinator
Never divorced, one 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) The University of South Carolina, August 1986 - May 1990, BA
 - (b) Seton Hall University School of Law, August 1990 - May 1991 (transfer)
 - (c) Tulane University School of Law, August 1991 - May 1993, JD
- 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) Tulane University School of Law Ambassador (1992-1993)
 - (b) Tulane University School of Law Public Interest Fellow (1992)
 - (c) Tulane University School of Law Family Law Clinic (1992-1993)
- 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.
 - (a) South Carolina, admitted 1993, took the bar exam once
 - (b) New Jersey, not admitted, took the bar exam twice
- 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) Aiken County Public Defender, 12/15/93 - 1/15/95
Special Grant Attorney
Assigned to the representation of juveniles in Family Court adjudications.
- (b) Solicitor's Office, Second Judicial Circuit, 1/15/95 - 1/5/97
Assistant Solicitor
Assigned to full caseload throughout Aiken, Bamber and Barnwell Counties, in addition to prosecution of juvenile delinquency adjunctions in the Family Court.
- (c) Office of the Governor, 1/6/97 - 1/5/99
Legal Counsel to the Governor
Served as executive counsel to the Governor including staffing proposed legislation, extraditions, capital case reviews, liaison work with the South Carolina Congressional Delegation and federal agencies associated with the Savannah River Site complex, in addition to representing the Governor on a number of environmental boards and commissions.
- Low-Level Nuclear Waste Forum
 - Hazardous Waste Management Select Oversight Committee
 - South Carolina Natural Resource Trustee
 - South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Council
 - South Carolina Geological Mapping Advisory Committee
 - South Carolina Procurement Review Panel
- (d) Montgomery, Patterson, Potts & Willard, LLP, 1/15/99 - 1/15/01
Partner
General practice law firm with a primary focus on domestic relations, personal injury and corporate litigation.
- (e) Solicitor's Office, Ninth Judicial Circuit, 1/15/01 - 8/15/04
Assistant Managing Solicitor
Assigned to administration of Charleston and Berkeley County offices, including personnel, budget, grant development and oversight, and department liaison work. Also assigned a caseload for prosecution through trial, diversion and negotiated pleas.
- (f) Novak and Novak, LLC, 8/15/04 - 9/1/05
Associate
General practice law firm with a primary focus on municipal representation, real estate, domestic relations and civil litigation.

- (g) Vaux & Marscher, P.A., 9/1/05 - 6/15/09
Senior Litigator
General practice law firm with a primary focus on criminal defense, civil litigation and domestic relations. In addition, assigned management of firm litigation team and support staff.
- (h) The Novak Law Group, LLC, 7/15/09 - 4/20/20
Attorney
General practice law firm with a primary focus on domestic relations, guardian ad litem work, and extensive practice as a Certified Family Court Mediator. Practice included the management and oversight of general operating and client trust accounts.
- (i) Magistrate Court, Beaufort County, 7/2/12 - 4/14/20
Magistrate
Associate Chief Magistrate, 6/25/18 - 4/14/20
Part-time Magistrate handling civil and criminal matters (jury and non-jury matters), evictions, restraining orders and bond hearings. In addition, staffed with management of judicial clerks, case/hearing scheduling, roster meetings, processing continuance requests and orders of protection, scheduling trials, and civil/criminal docket management.
- (j) Family Court, Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, 4/20/20 - Present
Judge, Seat 2
Resident Family Court Judge for Beaufort County presiding over the scheduled Court dockets for Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton, Allendale and Colleton Counties. Docket work includes case motions, status conferences, adoptions, Emergency Orders of Protection from Domestic Abuse, Temporary Hearings, Juvenile Adjudications, South Carolina Department of Social Services actions (abuse and neglect), divorce, custody, visitation, support and general litigation.

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.
 - (a) Beaufort County Magistrate, 7/2/12 - 4/14/20
 - (b) Appointed by the Governor / Advice and consent of the South Carolina Senate
 - (c) Criminal jurisdiction: Up to \$500.00, and/or up to thirty (30) days in jail
Civil jurisdiction: Up to \$7,500.00 in controversy

 - (a) Beaufort County Associate Chief Magistrate, 6/25/18 - 4/14/20
 - (b) Appointed by Chief Justice Donald W. Beatty, South Carolina Supreme Court

 - (a) Family Court Judge, Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, 4/20/20 - Present
 - (b) Elected by the South Carolina General Assembly
 - (c) Jurisdiction: Domestic matters as outlined in South Carolina Code §63-3-530

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) In the Interest of XB, 2019-JU-07-0317, Waiver Hearing/Order for juvenile to the South Carolina Court of General Sessions
 - (b) South Carolina Department of Social Services v. Smith, et al., 2020-DR-07-0392, Abuse/Neglect case with one minor child placed in foster care, investigation of one out of state placement, and one minor child being placed out of the country
 - (c) South Carolina Department of Social Services v. Marquez, 2021-DR-07-0097, Action seeking the entry of a parent onto the Central Registry of Abuse and Neglect
 - (d) Shaw, et al. v. Conde, et al., 2017-DR-15-0552, Adoption action between maternal and paternal grandparents
 - (e) Salgado v. Maldonado, 2020-DR-07-0904, Custody/Visitation action seeking Court determination of an unfit deceased parent for use in a Special Juvenile Immigrant Status action
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) South Carolina Supreme Court, November 1993
 - (b) United States District Court, District of South Carolina, October 1995
 - (c) United States District Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit, February 2000
 - (d) United States Supreme Court, February 2017
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. No
22. Provide, as a separate attachment, your continuing legal or judicial education report from the past five years. Attached.
23. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each. N/A
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.) N/A

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.
- (a) Martin-Hubbell: AV Preeminent Rating
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) Beaufort County Bar Association
(c) Hilton Head Island Bar Association
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. No
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.
- (a) Private practice of law while serving as a part-time Magistrate
29. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.
- (a) Yes, offered candidacy for Family Court, Fourteenth Circuit, Seat 2 in 2018, withdrew
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. No
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 at this time
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. None
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: None
- (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.

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.

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. N/A
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.

(a) 05/02/11: 2011-CP-07-01985, Foreclosure action filed on primary residence
Case dismissed on 12/01/11 with home being sold in a short sale

To place this event in proper context I would state that approximately one year previous to the filing of this action I was working as the senior litigator in a local law firm. One of the partners met with me to explain the firm was hemorrhaging from expenses as the firm was heavily dependent on real estate closings and was suffering from the national recession. The partner explained I was the highest paid associate and had to be let go in their effort to stay afloat.

Given the state of the national and local economy, I was not able to quickly secure employment and decided to start my own practice. While this turned out to be a blessing and very rewarding in the long run, at the time my income was drastically reduced and my wife and I quickly realized we were not going to be able to continue to service our mortgage. We immediately contacted the mortgage company and worked to prepare and list our home for sale, located a buyer and negotiated a short sale. Thereafter, the mortgage company dismissed the action.

(b) 04/19/16: 2016-CV-07-103-00381, Eviction action against law firm
Case dismissed on 05/05/16 with firm relocating out of office complex

Myself and another Attorney had been sharing office space in a commercial office complex for several years wherein the written lease had long since expired. The office complex was purchased out of foreclosure by a Tennessee investment group. At that time, the property manager approached us and indicated the new owners wished to secure new long-term written leases for the complex tenants and asked if we were interested. We indicated that we were of course interested and asked him to provide us a copy of the proposed lease. Several days later, the property manager was walking through our office space with new tenants that he had signed to a lease on the space.

I believe the property manager/new owners expected protracted litigation over the commercial space given our long-term possession of the property and thus filed a preemptive eviction action. Rather than litigate, the Attorney that I was sharing the space with and I put our energy into locating new office space and relocating our respective businesses. The eviction action was thereafter dismissed within two (2) weeks of having been filed.

(c) 10/13/16: 2016-CV-07-10300975, Collection action against former client
Case dismissed on 05/05/17 with out of court resolution

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.

(a) I have not directly or indirectly requested any third parties to contact members of the General Assembly on my behalf before the final and formal screening report has been released.

(b) While I have not yet engaged in any campaigning for this election, nor have I asked anyone to campaign on my behalf, I anticipate in the next several months that I will undertake efforts to introduce myself, my candidacy and share my qualifications.

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) P.J. Tanner, Beaufort County Sheriff

[Redacted]

(b) James Wedgeworth, Charter One Reality

[Redacted]

(b) Lawrence P. McElynn, Beaufort County Councilman, Chief Magistrate (retired)

[Redacted]

(c) Teri H. Porcel, Victim Witness Advocate Coordinator

[Redacted]

(d) The Honorable Jane D. Fender, Family Court Judge (retired)

[Redacted]

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

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

(a) Instagram (dnovak2001): I am not active on the platform and my account is private.

How would your use of social media or other similar types of Internet sites be affected if you were serving in a judicial capacity?

(a) My account is not accessible to the public, and contains five (5) followers who are family members. I maintain the account for purposes of following my daughter.

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) Judicial Observation and Experience (JOE) Program

(b) Southern Beaufort County Corridor Beautification Committee, Chairman

(c) Port Royal Historic Review Commission

(d) St. Gregory the Great Pastoral Council

(e) St. Vincent's Academy Grounds Beautification Commission

(f) The Gamecock Club

(g) RBC Heritage Golf Tournament, Practice Area Marshall, Co-Chairman

(h) South Carolina Bar, Fourteenth Circuit, Pro-Bono Board

(i) South Carolina Bar, Mock Trial Competition, Judge

(j) South Carolina Bar, Beaufort County, Fee Arbitration Board

(k) Lowcountry Legal Volunteers, Estate Planning Workshop for First Responders

(l) Hopeful Horizons, LLC, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Workshop

(a) The Order of the Palmetto

(b) Eagle Scout, Boy Scouts of America

(c) Certified Family Court Mediator

(d) Finalist for "Best Law Firm" (The Sun Today, 2019)

(e) Bluffton's "Best Attorney" (Bluffton Today, 2012), nominee 2012-2019

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.

I am a firm believer that every individual is a creature of his or her own experiences. In that respect, I think both the breadth and depth of my personal and professional experience have provided me with the necessary tools to effectively serve our state on the Family Court Bench. My career has included a great deal of direct experience in the Family Courts of this state from the defense and prosecution of juvenile adjudications, to the more traditional representation of adult clients in divorce, division of property and custody actions. In addition, I have also had the opportunity to serve as a guardian ad litem for many years, and to mediate hundreds of cases within the Family Court system. I have certainly depended on these experiences and believe they have provided an excellent foundation for the rigors and technical experience I have found is required of a Family Court Judge.

At the same time, I have had the opportunity to serve at the highest levels of state government, practiced law in both the firm and solo settings, and presided over criminal and civil cases in the Beaufort County Magistrate Court for nearly eight (8) years. On the personal side, I have been married for twenty-five (25) years and have a twenty-three (23) year old daughter who has earned an undergraduate and Master's Degree, and is now starting her own professional career in Washington, DC. I believe all of this 'experience', both professional and personal, ground me as a person, guide me as an Attorney, and will continue to inspire me as a Judge.

Commencing my service on the Family Court bench, albeit in the midst of the pandemic, has been both educational and challenging; there have been good days, bad days and very disappointing and sad days. All tallied, and without a doubt; the opportunity to serve in this capacity has been the honor of a lifetime.

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.

Karen Patterson

Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: June 1, 2030