



**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION  
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE  
2025**

1. Judicial placement for which you are applying:

Court: Court of Appeals  
Seat: 7

2. Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge (to include municipal, magistrate, etc.)?

Yes.

If so, state the position. If part-time, please indicate.

Associate Judge, South Carolina Court of Appeals, Seat 7

**Personal**

3. Name: The Honorable Stephanie Pendarvis McDonald

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

Home Address: [Redacted]

County of Residence: Charleston

Business Address: South Carolina Court of Appeals  
1220 Senate Street  
Columbia, SC 29412

Charleston Courthouse: 100 Broad Street, Suite 427  
Charleston, SC 29401

E-Mail Address: [Redacted]

Telephone Number: (home): [Redacted]  
(office): (843) 958-5102 (Charleston courthouse)  
(cell): [Redacted]

4 Date of Birth: [Redacted], 1969  
Place of Birth: Columbia, South Carolina

5. 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

6. SCDL# or SCHD#: [Redacted]  
Voter Registration Number: [Redacted]

7. 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.

8. 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 NOT full-time students, also include the occupation and employer of each child.

Family Status: Divorced  
Married on October 29, 1994, in Charleston  
Divorced on September 21, 2007; Charleston County (SC Family Court)  
I was the moving party; one year of continuous separation was the sole ground.

One child: [Redacted]

9. 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) University of South Carolina – Honors College  
1987-1991  
Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and English, *Magna cum Laude*,  
*with Honors from South Carolina College*, May 1991

(b) University of South Carolina School of Law  
1994-1997  
Juris Doctor, 1994

10. 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) Moot Court (1992-1994)  
Finalist (argued before the South Carolina Supreme Court – 1993)

Order of the Barristers (1993-1994)  
Captain, Craven Moot Court Team (1994)  
(b) Law School Pro Bono Board (1992-1994)  
    Vice-President (1993-1994)  
(c) Volunteer, Richland County Guardian ad Litem Project  
    (1993-1994)  
(d) Senate Judiciary Committee Law Clerk (1992-1994)

11. 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.

Martindale Hubbell: AV

12. 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  
    Positions held for the Young Lawyers Division (YLD):  
        Chair, Law School for Non-Lawyers project (1998)  
        Co-Chair, Lawyers as Mentors project (1997)  
        Chair, "Citizenship in Schools" project at Fraser Elementary School (1996)  
        Co-Chair, Lawyers for Literacy project (1995)  
        Delegate, ABA Annual Meeting (Young Lawyers Division) 1997  
(b) Charleston County Bar Association  
(c) Charleston Lawyers Club (for YLD members of the Charleston County Bar)  
    President, 1998-99  
(d) South Carolina Bar Foundation Board Member, 1998-2001  
(e) Federal Bar Association (former member)  
(f) South Carolina Women Lawyers Association  
(g) American Bar Association Judicial Division (former member)

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

I am somewhat active on Facebook but I do not comment on political issues, cases, or matters which might implicate the Canons of the Code of Judicial Conduct or SCJB policy.

I also have Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter (X) accounts, but I am mostly an observer on these sites. I occasionally post court-related announcements to Twitter. When I was in private practice, I signed up for a free Linked In account. I have thus far been unable to deactivate the account, but other than very basic information, there is nothing posted there.

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

Facebook: [Redacted]  
Twitter (X): [Redacted]  
Instagram: [Redacted]  
Snapchat: [Redacted]  
Linked In: [Redacted]

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 use my Facebook account to post messages announcing emergency closures of the Charleston County Judicial Center, other courthouse closures, and court announcements that may be helpful members of the Bar and the public. For example, during the 2015 flooding and subsequent hurricane scares, a number of counties had closures. I shared this information as I received it from Clerks of Court and other officials. I have also shared links to orders from our Supreme Court addressing the computation of time during emergencies and inclement weather events.

During the COVID-19 shutdowns, I used my personal Facebook page, the Charleston County Bar Association's page, and a page for South Carolina attorneys to share with attorneys and the community information from the South Carolina Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and county Clerks of Court. Lawyers and trial judges were under tremendous stress at this time, and many of those seeking access to our Supreme Court's various Administrative Orders were either unaware of the issuance of the orders or did not know how to access them. Social media was helpful in sharing this information in an expedited manner.

14. 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) 2025 South Carolina Association for Justice Outstanding Contribution to Justice Award
- (b) 2024 Lowcountry American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) Featured Speaker
- (c) 2024 Judge Richard Fields Public Service Award (Charleston County Bar Association)
- (d) Charleston County Judicial Center Court Security Committee (2016-present)

In the community:

- (a) President, Junior League of Charleston (2010-2011)
- (b) Mentor, South Carolina Lawyer Mentoring Program (2009-2010)
- (c) Board Member, Association of Junior Leagues International, New York, NY (2006-2009)

- (d) Commissioner, City of Charleston Mayor's Office for Children, Youth & Families (2000-2003)
- (e) Chair and Parliamentarian, 120<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Episcopal (now Anglican) Church Women of the Diocese of South Carolina (2004)
- (f) President, St. Philip's Church Women (2003-2004)
- (g) Board Member, Youth Service Charleston (2001-2003)
- (h) Junior League of Charleston Community Impact Award (2002)
- (i) Leadership Charleston Class of 2001
- (j) Youth Mentor, Mitchell Elementary School (1998-2001)
- (k) Advisory Board, Charleston County School District Parenting Center, District #20 (2000-2001)

Law School Awards: American Jurisprudence Award for Evidence  
 American Jurisprudence Award for Moot Court  
 First Year Legal Writing Award

Undergraduate: Carolina Cares, USC's Philanthropic Organization (1988-1991)  
 President (1990-1991)  
 Alpha Delta Pi Sorority (1987-present)  
 President (1990-1991)  
 Student Alumni Association (1989-1991)  
 Secretary/Treasurer (1990-1991)  
 Interclub Council (1989-1991)  
 Secretary/Treasurer (1989-1990)  
 USC Community Service Programs Advisory Board (1990-1991)  
 Assistant Student Advocate (Student Government) (1989-1990)  
 Campus Judicial Board (1990-1991)  
 Hurricane Hugo Relief (Salvation Army) (1989)  
 Association of Honors Students (1987-1991)  
 Mortar Board (1989-1991)  
 Omicron Delta Kappa (1990-1991)  
 Order of Omega (1989-1991)

College Honors: Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award  
 Phi Beta Kappa  
 Mortar Board Graduate Fellowship  
 Dorothy Shaw Leadership Award (National Sorority Award)  
 USC Hall of Leaders  
 Josiah Morse Award

15. 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.

It has been my honor and privilege to serve on the Circuit Court and Court of Appeals, and I hope the Commission and General Assembly will allow me to continue. While in private practice, I tried over forty (40) cases as either lead counsel or co-counsel, and I personally handled at least forty-five (45) appeals. I assisted other attorneys and firms with over twenty (20) others. I know what it means to be a practicing courtroom lawyer and a trial judge, and I believe this allows me to bring additional understanding to my judicial role with respect to temperament, decision-making, and continuing study. Treating others with fairness, impartiality, integrity, and dignity—in life and in the courtroom—is critical to the practice of law and our judicial system. I hope I have demonstrated such characteristics during my time on the bench. Patience, scholarship, and the willingness to make difficult decisions are important traits for any judge, and I am always working to try to improve in these areas.

I also believe my experiences as a working mother and trial and appellate lawyer have provided me with a perspective that has enhanced my ability as a judge to understand some of the issues attorney parents face as they seek to balance a law practice with the demands of raising children. The challenges attorneys and trial judges face daily were heightened during the pandemic as the working parents of pre-school and school-aged children struggled to deal with the stress of home and online school and other childcare-related issues. Most of our trial and appellate judges understand the balancing act required and are able to work with attorneys and court staff to address their needs in conjunction with docket efficiency. But some do not, and this is a constant source of stress for lawyers. I try each day to remain open to communication about the challenges facing working attorneys, trial judges, and court staff; to never forget what it was like to practice as an attorney or serve as a trial judge; and to help our court leadership and court administration understand the realities faced by those working in and with our judicial system.

16. List the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of 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 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 5 original letters of recommendation to the Commission with your application.*
  - (a) The Honorable Julie J. Armstrong  
Charleston County Clerk of Court  
[Redacted]
  - (b) The Honorable J. C. “Buddy” Nicholson, Jr.  
Certified Mediator and Arbitrator  
Retired Circuit Court Judge  
[Redacted]

- (c) M. Dawes Cooke, Jr.  
Member Attorney  
Barnwell Whaley Attorneys at Law  
[Redacted]
- (d) Laura Johnson Evans  
Partner  
Burr & Forman  
[Redacted]
- (e) Alissa C. Lietzow  
Chief Executive Officer  
Charleston Pro Bono Legal Services  
[Redacted]

## Experience

17. 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 – admitted to practice in 1994  
I have taken only the South Carolina bar exam (once).

18. 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.

Prior to my election to the Circuit Court in 2011, my legal experience included:

(a) Associate, Stuckey & Kobrovsky, which later became Stuckey & Senn  
(Aug. 1994-June 1997)

Approximately 70% of this practice included civil defense work in state and federal courts, primarily involving constitutional and governmental issues. The remainder of my work included probate administration/estate representation, non-complex family court work and the firm's DSS appointments, property/business litigation, plaintiff's work, and appellate work in state and federal courts. My first three solo trials involved constitutional claims in United States District Court.

I was not involved in the financial management of the firm.  
Administrative work included timekeeping and reviewing bills.  
I did not handle or have access to the firm's trust account.

(b) Solo practitioner (1998-2003)

In June 1997, I became quite ill while pregnant with my only child and took a two-month leave of absence for home intravenous treatments. I attempted to return to part-time work in August, 1997; however, when my doctor prescribed bedrest a few weeks later, I made the decision to leave the law firm.

In early 1998, I started my own practice in order to stay home with my daughter as much as possible. My practice focused on appellate work and a variety of research, writing, and editing for other attorneys. I also continued some trial work with other attorneys in state and federal court during this time period.

During this time, I handled appellate matters for:

Stuckey Law Firm  
Sandra J. Senn, P.A.  
Clawson and Staubes  
Rhoad Law Firm (Bamberg)  
Padgett Law Firm (Bennettsville)  
Jennings and Harris (Bennettsville)  
Jay Ervin (Darlington)

I did other litigation research, writing, or editing for:

E. Bart Daniel  
J. Brady Hair  
Larry Kobrovsky  
Joye Law Firm  
David Whittington  
Robert Gailliard  
John Price Law Firm  
Stanley Feldman

I handled all billing and administrative matters.

I did not maintain a trust account as all of my work was billed hourly to other attorneys or firms.

(c) Senn, McDonald, and Leinbach, LLC (2003-2011)

Once my daughter was in school, I joined Senn, McDonald, and Leinbach. By this time, approximately 50% of my practice consisted of appellate matters for other firms (for plaintiffs, defendants, and family court litigants). The remainder of my practice focused primarily on civil defense work for public officials, law enforcement officials and agencies, state agencies, and local governments. This work included frequent

appearances in state and federal courts. I handled some trial level work for plaintiffs as well, primarily in the area of employment discrimination and harassment.

From 2010-2011, I served as a volunteer prosecutor for the South Carolina Attorney General's Criminal Domestic Violence Task Force. Most of this work took place in Orangeburg County. Prior to 2010, our firm also assisted with the prosecution of cases for Attorney General McMaster's Dogfighting Task Force.

I was not involved in the financial management of the firm. Administrative work included timekeeping, reviewing bills, and addressing personnel matters as needed. I did not handle or have access to the firm's trust account.

**Justices/judges applying for re-election to their current position may omit Questions 19-25. If you are a full-time judge seeking a judgeship different than your current position, Questions 19-25 should be answered based on your experience *prior to serving on the bench*.**

- 19-25. Not applicable.
26. 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.

Yes. On February 2, 2011, I was elected by the General Assembly to the position of Circuit Judge, At-Large, Seat 9. I was sworn in on June 30, 2011, and served continuously until I began work at the South Carolina Court of Appeals on July 1, 2014.

The Circuit Court is South Carolina's court of general jurisdiction. It consists of the Court of General Sessions, which handles criminal matters, and the Court of Common Pleas, which handles civil matters and appeals from the Probate, Magistrate's, and Municipal Courts. Article 5 of Title 14 sets forth additional provisions relating to Circuit Court operations.

On May 28, 2014, I was elected by the General Assembly to Seat 7 on the South Carolina Court of Appeals. I began working at the Court of Appeals on July 1, 2014, and I have served continuously since that time. I was elected to a second term in February 2020.

The Court of Appeals is a statutorily created court; section 14-8-200(a) sets forth its jurisdiction. With certain statutory exceptions, the Court of Appeals has jurisdiction when an appeal is taken from an order or judgment of the Circuit Court, Family Court, Administrative Law Court, or Appellate Panel of the South Carolina Worker's Compensation Commission. This code section also authorizes the Supreme Court to provide by rule for the Court of Appeals to consider post-conviction relief matters.

27. If the answer to question 26 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) Stoney v. Stoney, 425 S.C. 47, 819 S.E.2d 201 (Ct. App. 2018), cert. denied, June 28, 2019.

(b) Jacobs v. Zarcone, 436 S.C. 170, 871 S.E.2d 211 (Ct. App. 2022). No petition for a writ of certiorari was filed; the remittitur issued on April 8, 2022.

(c) State v. Daise, 421 S.C. 442, 807 S.E.2d 710 (Ct. App. 2017). No petition for a writ of certiorari was filed; the remittitur issued on January 22, 2018.

(d) Pickens County v. SCDHEC, 429 S.C. 92, 837 S.E.2d 743 (Ct. App. 2020), aff'd in part, vacated in part, 435 S.C. 99 (Dec. 8, 2021).

(e) State v. Dinkins, 435 S.C. 541, 868 S.E.2d 181 (Ct. App. 2021). No petition for a writ of certiorari was filed; the remittitur issued on January 7, 2022.

28. 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 (1994);

(b) Admitted to practice before the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina (1995);

(c) Admitted to practice before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (1995); and

(d) Admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court (2019).

29. 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. Yes.

(a) On March 20, 2025, I served on a judicial panel at the Southeastern Women Litigators' Conference in Asheville. SEWL is an affiliate of the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys' Association (SCDTAA);

(b) On March 7, 2025, I served on a judicial panel at a continuing legal education event sponsored by SCWLA and SCYLD;

(c) On February 12, 2025, I presented with another Court of Appeals judge and three veteran appellate attorneys at a CLE on "Effective Legal Writing";

(d) On January 8, 2025, I served on a judicial panel with Justice Letitia Verdin and Judge Deadra Jefferson at a CLE presented by the Petigru Inn of Court in Charleston;

(e) On February 18, 2024, I served on a judicial panel at the SC Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys' "Back to Basics: Criminal Defense Do's and Don'ts" CLE;

(f) On November 2, 2023, I served on the ethics panel at the SC Bar's "Wildlife Law, Ethics, and Sporting Clays" CLE in Edgefield;

(g) On October 27, 2023, I presented with a panel on the topic of "Being an Effective

Advocate through a Webcam: Tips for Arguing Remotely” at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual NC/SC Labor & Employment Law Conference in Charleston;

(h) On January 22, 2023, I served on a judicial panel with Judge Jay Richardson and Judge Frank Addy for the Trial and Appellate Advocacy Section at the South Carolina Bar Convention in Columbia;

(i) On May 6, 2022, at the South Carolina Bar Association’s “Why Family Court Attorneys should do Appeals” CLE seminar, I gave a presentation on the appellate court rules and preservation pitfalls, and I participated on an appellate practice panel;

(j) On November 19, 2021, I participated on a judicial panel addressing “How the Last 18 Months have Changed the Practice of Law” for the SC Defense Trial Attorneys’ Association’s Annual Meeting;

(k) I participated on a judicial panel for the Charleston School of Law Women in Law networking event in November 2021;

(l) On April 7, 2021, I participated on a James L. Petigru Inn of Court Zoom panel discussion on “The Practice of Law in and out of the Courtroom and Everywhere in Between”;

(m) In March 2021, I participated in a Virtual Fireside Chat for Women’s History Month sponsored by the South Carolina Bar;

(n) On February 22, 2021, I gave a Zoom presentation for the Charleston County Bar Law Student Division;

(o) On February 5, 2021, I participated on the judicial panel for the Charleston County Bar Association’s annual “What Works” CLE;

(p) On December 10, 2020, I moderated a mock trial and spoke on the topic of expert testimony at a course for firefighters and law enforcement investigators sponsored by the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI);

(q) From April 28-29, 2020, I participated in WebEx seminars organized and conducted by Charleston County Clerk of Court Julie Armstrong as she worked to address issues resulting from COVID-19 in Common Pleas, General Sessions, Family Court, and before the Master-in-Equity. These WebEx seminars involved discussions of docket management and practice/procedure issues as well as question and answer sessions with members of the Bar;

(r) I presented on the topic of “Joint Custody—Recent Developments” and served on an Appellate Practice panel at the February 10, 2020 Hilton Head Island Bar Association Super CLE;

(s) I spoke at and conducted a “behind the scenes” tour of the Court of Appeals with Chief Judge James Lockemy at an event for the SC Bar Convention in January 2020;

(t) I spoke at a Washington D.C. event and introduced a group of attorneys from the South Carolina Women Lawyers Association for admission to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court in December 2019, and again in April 2023;

(u) I served on a judicial panel with Judge Aphrodite Konduros at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the SC Defense Trial Attorneys’ Association;

(v) I served as a panelist for the October 2019 “Ethics with the Judges” SC Bar Sporting Clays CLE;

(w) Judge Katherine Tiffany and I co-presented on the topic of joint custody in September 2019 at the S.C. Bar’s annual “Hot Tips” CLE;

- (x) I presented on “Appellate Court” at the 2019 New Circuit Judges Orientation;
- (y) I served as a panelist on “Leading from the Bench” at The Citadel’s 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Principled Leadership Symposium in 2019;
- (z) I served as a trial judge and presenter at the SCDTAA’s 2019 Trial Academy;
- (aa) I served as a panelist at the 2019 SC Defense Trial Attorneys’ Women in Law Committee forum titled “Can We Really Have It All?;
- (bb) Judge Aphrodite Konduros and I co-presented a three-hour program on “Tips from the Bench” at CSOL’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual CLE Seminar on November 30, 2018;
- (cc) I presented at the SC Bar’s 2018 CLE on “The Unauthorized Practice of Law and How it Impacts Licensed Attorneys”;
- (dd) I served as a trial judge and presenter at the SCDTAA’s 2018 Trial Academy;
- (ee) I served as a trial judge and presenter at the SCDTAA’s 2017 Trial Academy;
- (ff) I served on a judicial panel addressing questions relating to appeals in workers’ compensation cases at the Injured Workers’ Advocates’ 2017 Annual Meeting;
- (gg) I served as a panelist at the Charleston County Bar’s 2017 “What Works” CLE;
- (hh) I served as a panelist for the SC Bar’s 2016 “Ethics with the Judges” Sporting Clays CLE;
- (ii) I served as a trial judge and speaker at a 2016 CSOL Mock Trial competition;
- (jj) I co-presented on the topic “How to Best Present Your Case Before the Appellate Courts” at the 2015 Injured Workers’ Advocates’ Annual Meeting;
- (kk) I presented on “Tips from the Appellate Bench” at the Fourteenth Circuit’s 2015 “Tips from the Bench: What Your Judges Want You to Know” CLE;
- (ll) I served as a panelist for the 2015 SC Women Lawyers Association’s 2015 breakfast program on women running for public office;
- (mm) I served as a panelist for the 2015 “Ethics with the Judges” Sporting Clays CLE;
- (nn) I presented on the “Top Ten Ways to Avoid Reversal on Appeal” at the 2015 South Carolina Circuit Judges Conference;
- (oo) I served as a panelist for the 2014 “Ethics with the Judges” Sporting Clays CLE;
- (pp) I spoke on “Civility, Competence, and Candor: Minding your Manners to Avoid Obvious Courtroom Pitfalls” at the 2014 USC School of Law’s Reunion CLE;
- (qq) I served as a panelist for “A View from the Bench” at the SC Association for Justice’s 2014 Annual Meeting;
- (rr) I served as a panelist for the 2013 “Ethics with the Judges” Sporting Clays CLE;
- (ss) I served as a panelist for “Tips from the Bench” at the 2013 SC Defense Trial Attorneys’ Summer Meeting;
- (tt) I served as a panelist for the 2013 SC Bar Program “Fast Break on Fast Track Jury Trials: How it will Work”;
- (uu) I spoke to law students attending the 2013 CSOL Professionalism Series on “Professionalism in the Courthouse”;
- (vv) In 2013, I presented a lunch program on “Mental Health Issues and the Courts” to the Historic Rotary Club of Charleston;
- (ww) I served as a trial judge and presenter at the SCDTAA’s 2012 Trial Academy;
- (xx) I spoke on “Ethics in the Courtroom” at the Charleston Lawyers Club’s 2012 “Tips from the Bench and Bar” CLE;
- (yy) I co-presented on “The Fairness in Civil Justice Act of 2011” at the 2011 SC Defense Trial Attorneys’ Annual Meeting;

- (zz) I served as a panelist for the 2011 “Ethics with the Judges” Sporting Clays CLE;
- (aaa) In 2010, I served on the faculty for a day-long CLE seminar on “The Mechanics of Civil Procedure”;
- (bbb) In 2006, I spoke at the Insurance Reserve Fund’s Law Enforcement Defense Seminar (CLE) on recent developments in constitutional law and the changing composition of the Fourth Circuit and United States Supreme Court;
- (ccc) At the 2004 South Carolina Conference of Countywide Elected Officials (SCACEE), I spoke about the operation of South Carolina’s Freedom of Information Act and provided an update on recent South Carolina cases impacting countywide elected officials;
- (ddd) In 2003, I taught a one-hour session at the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys’ Trial Academy. I believe it was on cross-examination;
- (eee) I presented the “Ethics” portion for the 2001 Charleston Lawyers Club Law Week CLE. The topic was “Ten Ways to Avoid the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and Tips for Handling that Dreaded Letter”; and
- (fff) At the 2000 Conference for Attorneys to Assist Disciplinary Counsel, I provided a sample checklist and spoke on conducting thorough investigations.

30. Provide, as a separate attachment, your continuing legal or judicial education report from the past five years.

Please see attached.

31. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each.

- (a) Co-author, Recent Developments in Government Operations and Liability Law: Annual Update on Public Official Immunities, The Urban Lawyer, 1997.
- (b) Author, Clerkships: A Foundation for Successful Private Practice, After the Bar (an ABA Young Lawyers Division Publication), 2020.

32. 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 and 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.)

Not applicable, but I am happy to provide these as needed.

33. 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.

I have not held public office other than judicial office, but in the past, I have been appointed by our Supreme Court to positions affiliated with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel. From 1999-2002, I served as an Attorney to Assist Disciplinary Counsel. From 2003-2011, I was an attorney member of the Judicial Conduct Commission. Since my election to the bench in 2011, I have timely filed my Rule 501 disclosure statement each year.

## Personal Conduct

34. 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 of the following: federal law or regulation; state law or regulation; 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.]

35. Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? If yes, explain.

Not to my knowledge.

36. 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.

I have never been sued by a client. A pro se plaintiff attempted to sue me in 1996 after I successfully defended his case against the Charleston County Sheriff and various other governmental defendants. The Honorable Robert S. Carr, United States Magistrate Judge, dismissed the case as frivolous on pre-screening and did not authorize service of process.

(a) I was the defendant in a Charleston County Magistrate's Court action, Luther Truesdale v. Stephanie Pendavis McDonald, Case No.: 2023CV1011500045, arising from an automobile accident for which I was at fault. The case settled for \$5000; it was dismissed with prejudice by consent pursuant to Rule 41(A)(1) on September 27, 2023.

(b) I am a plaintiff, through my homeowners' association, in the construction defect litigation, Palmetto Pointe at Peas Island Condominium Property Owners Association, Inc., and Kathy Milner, Individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, vs. Island Pointe, LLC, et al, Civil Action No. 2015-CP-10-995. Several defendant subcontractors settled prior to trial. Judge Jennifer McCoy presided over the jury trial of the remaining construction defect claims in May 2019, and the Charleston County jury returned a verdict for the plaintiffs. Much

of the case has now been resolved, however, litigation continues regarding the allocation of setoffs. See Palmetto Pointe at Peas Island Property Owners Association, Inc. v. Island Pointe LLC, 445 S.C. 543, 915 S.E.2d 501 (2025).

I have been named as a defendant in my capacity at the Court of Appeals. I am aware of the following cases, which have been dismissed:

(a) 6:18-cv-01576-HMH:

Lakessiah Henderson v. Darnell Fisher (West Greenville Summary Court Judge), Judge Stilwell (Court of Common Pleas Judge), Paul Allen, Claire Allen (Deputy Clerk), Court of Appeals, Paul White (Clerk, West Greenville Summary Court), James E. Lockemy, Thomas E. Huff, Paul Short, Jr., H. Bruce Williams, Paula H. Thomas, Aphrodite K. Konduros, John D. Geathers, **Stephanie P. McDonald**, and D. Garrison Hill

Filed: 6/8/2018  
Dismissed: 8/13/2018

(b) 3:15-cv-04870-MBS:

Glenda R. Couram v. South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles, Shirley Rivers (in her official and individual capacity), Lula N. Davis (in her official and individual capacity), Constance "Connie" Rhett (in her official and individual capacity), Marcia Adams (in her official and individual capacity), Dorothy Blankenship (in her official and individual capacity), Tosha Autry (in their official and individual capacities), Richardson Plowden Attorneys at Law, Eugene H. Matthews, Esq. (in his individual and official capacity), SC Office of Disciplinary Counsel, Lesley M. Coggiola (in their individual and official capacity), John Doe (in their individual and official capacity), Steven W. Lake (in his official and individual capacity), Judge James R. Barber, III (Court of Common Pleas, Richland County Circuit Court - District 5, in his individual and official capacity), Judge Casey L. Manning, (Court of Common Pleas, Richland County Circuit Court - District 5, in his individual and official capacity), Judge H. Bruce Williams (SC Court of Appeals, in his individual and official capacity), Judge John D. Gathers [sic] (SC Court of Appeals, in his individual and official capacity), and **Judge Stephanie P. McDonald** (SC Court of Appeals, in her individual and official capacity)

Filed (removed): 12/9/2015  
Dismissed: 8/10/2016 (by the United States District Court)  
1/5/2018 (mandate and dismissal of USCA – 4th Circuit)

(c) On November 4, 2021, a pro se couple filed an “Emergency’ Petition for Writ of Mandamus and/or in the Alternative for Writ of Certiorari” naming all nine Court of Appeals judges in Appellate Case Nos. 2021-001402 and 2021-001282. The petitions were captioned:

M. Eugene Gibbs, Esq., and Barbara A. Gibbs v. James E. Lockemy, in their [sic] official capacity as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and Judge Thomas E. Huff, Judge H. Bruce Williams, Judge Paula H. Thomas, Judge Aphrodite K. Konduros, Judge John D. Geathers, **Judge Stephanie P. McDonald**, Judge D. Garrison Hill, Judge Blake A. Hewitt.

The petitions arose from a Florence County foreclosure and judicial sale matter then pending in the Court of Appeals. The underlying appeal, Nationwide Mortgage, LLC, v. Barbara A. Gibbs and Melvin E. Gibbs, Appellate Case No. 2019-000486, was held in abeyance pending the Supreme Court's consideration of the petitions. On August 11, 2022, the South Carolina Supreme Court dismissed the petitions, and on September 21, 2022, the Court of Appeals issued an unpublished opinion affirming the circuit court. See No. 2022-UP-360. Our Supreme Court denied the Gibbs's subsequent petition for a writ of certiorari, and the remittitur issued on May 24, 2023.

37. 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.

Not applicable.

38. Have you ever, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, been cautioned, sanctioned, or disciplined for lawyer, judicial, or other professional misconduct with or with a finding of misconduct? 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.]

39. 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.

## Financial

40. Provide, **as a separate attachment**, a complete, current financial net worth statement that itemizes the below in detail. Note that a net worth statement form is provided with this questionnaire and you must use this format for submission of your financial statement.

(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 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.**

41. (a) Have you filed state and federal income tax returns for the last 5 years? If no, please provide details.

Yes.

(b) Have you or any business with which you are associated been delinquent in any local, state, or federal taxes? If yes, please provide details.

No.

(c) Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities? If yes, please provide details.

No.

42. Have you ever defaulted on a student loan? If so, please provide details.

No.

43. Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? If so, please provide details, along with proof of satisfaction of any liens or defaults.

No.

## **Conflict of Interest**

44. 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.

Not applicable.

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

Yes. In 2009, I was found to be qualified, but was not nominated, for the position of Circuit Court Judge (At-Large Seat 8).

In 2022, I was found qualified and was nominated as one of three candidates seeking Supreme Court Seat 4. I withdrew my candidacy, and the Honorable D. Garrison Hill of Greenville was elected to this seat.

46. 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, other than jobs in high school and college.

47. 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.

48. Are you now or have you ever been employed as a “lobbyist,” as defined by S.C. Code Section 2-17-10(13), or have you acted in the capacity of a “lobbyist’s principal,” as defined by S.C. Code Section 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.

49. 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 Section 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.

50. 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?

I have made no such expenditures. Should I make such expenditures, I will supplement this response and report the expenditures to the House and Senate Ethics Committees.

51. 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 4 years. If you participate in any employer-mandated contributions to a PAC or any other political entity, please describe and note your personal involvement in contributions. If you are a sitting judge, please include such contributions since your last screening.

Not applicable.

52. Have you or 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.

53. 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.

I have no such financial or business relationships. When I have a possible conflict of interest, I either recuse myself or review the applicable canons and follow the recusal provisions.

54. 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.

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.

Not applicable.

55. 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.

Not applicable.

56. 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.

Not applicable, other than as set forth in my judicial retirement account. In 2023, I became the attorney in fact and contact person handling my mother's accounts. Merrill Lynch and

Fidelity manage these for her. I am happy to provide the Commission with additional information about this should it be necessary.

57. 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.

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

No.

59. 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.

60. 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.

61. Are you familiar with the 12 days' rule as provided by Section 2-19-25, 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?

I am familiar with Section 2-19-25 (Supp. 2025), the "twelve days" rule and pledging provisions of Section 2-19-70(C) (Supp. 2025), and the current screening schedule as published by the Commission.

62. Since submitting your letter of intent to become a candidate, have you or 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.

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: s/Stephanie P. McDonald

August 19, 2025

Sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Notary Signature)

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