



**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION  
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR RETIRED JUDGES/JUSTICES**

1. Judicial placement for which you are applying:

Court: Seventh Judicial Circuit Court

Position: circuit court judge

Seat #: Active/Retired

2. Name: The Honorable Joseph Derham Cole

Name that you are known by if different from above

(Example: A Nickname): Derham

Home Address: [Redacted]

County of Residence: Spartanburg

Business Address: 180 Magnolia Street, Spartanburg

E-Mail Address: [Redacted]

Telephone Number: (home): [Redacted]  
(office): 864,596.2685  
(cell): [Redacted]

3. Date of Birth: [Redacted], 1952

4. 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

5. SCDL# or SCHD#: [Redacted]

6. Family Status:

- (a) Are you single, married, widowed, divorced, or separated? Married
- (b) If married, state the date of your marriage and your spouse's full name. August 10, 1974. Candace Linn Carlson Cole.
- (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. [Redacted]

7. List your positions of employment on and/or appointment to the bench chronologically. You are not required to list dates of employment or appointment prior to your last

screening. Resident Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit, Seat #1. Last screening in 2018.

8. Have you practiced law or served as a mediator or arbitrator since your retirement from the judiciary? If so, please describe. No.
9. Provide, as a separate attachment, your continuing legal or judicial education report from the past five years. Attached.
10. 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.
11. A net worth statement is provided with this questionnaire and you must use this format for submission of your financial statement. 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.

**Note: The Commission may require written confirmation that financial obligations have been satisfied or that the parties have agreed upon a payment schedule.**

12. Since your last screening:
  - (a) Have you filed state and federal income tax returns for the intervening years? Yes. If no, please provide details.
  - (b) Have you or any business with which you are associated been delinquent in any local, state, or federal taxes? No. If yes, please provide details.
  - (c) Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities? No. If so, please provide details.
  - (d) Have you defaulted on a student loan? No. If so, please provide details.
  - (e) Have you filed for bankruptcy? No. If so, please provide details, as well as proof of satisfaction of any liens or defaults.
13. For the last fully completed calendar year, itemize the income, expenses, fees, payments, or additional benefits exceeding \$500, in the aggregate, received by you or a member of your immediate family from South Carolina state and local entities. List the type, source, and amount or value of the benefit. Be sure to list any expense reimbursement you received separately from your income.

(a) Wages – State of S. C.	\$196,293.78
(b) Office expense – State of S. C.	10,000.00
(c) Taxable travel – State of S. C.	2,592.71
(d) Non-taxable travel – State of S. C.	3,950.09

(e) Retirement – SCJRS

193,662.30

14. Describe your personal policy for the acceptance of food, meals, beverages, lodging, transportation, entertainment, social hospitality, or other things of value from an attorney, a group of attorneys, or from other individuals.

I generally do not accept any gifts or favors from any person or entity that might be reasonably expected to come before me except those that might be described as ordinary social hospitality including those incidental and attendant to a particular bar related function or activity which is sponsored by an organization or an association or a group of lawyers such as those provided by the South Carolina Bar Association at the annual meeting; the South Carolina Association for Justice at their annual summer conference; The South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys Association at their annual winter meeting; the South Carolina Solicitors Association at their annual conference; or the South Carolina Public Defender Association at their annual conference. I have also accepted food, drink, and entertainment provided by a county bar association or a group of lawyers in conjunction with a bar related function and similar hospitality attendant to and in conjunction with the South Carolina Association of Circuit Judges annual meeting held in various venues around the State.

15. Have you ever accepted anything of value from an attorney or litigant in a matter currently or previously before you or your court? No. If so, please give the details, including the name of the attorney or litigant and the thing of value you received.

16. 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; None.
- (b) in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or that adjoins property in which there have been public improvements of \$200; None 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; None.
- (b) nature and value of any public improvements; None and
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property. None.

Attach a copy of any contract or agreement.

17. 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. None. Attach a copy of any contract or agreement.

18. Since your last screening, have you 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 for which a fine of \$125 or less was imposed.

[All answers have been received and considered by the Commission, and as noted above, any expunged matters are redacted from the record.]

19. Since your last screening, have you, to your knowledge, been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? No. If yes, explain.

20. Since your last screening, have you been sued, either personally or professionally? If so, give details. Yes. Civil Action Case No. 2024CP4001737. Alonzo C. Jeter, III v. The State of South Carolina, et al. The Plaintiff sued me, and joined others, for my dismissal of a post-conviction relief application that was successive to one already heard and decided. My decision was affirmed by the South Carolina Supreme Court.

21. Since your last screening, have you, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, in South Carolina or any other jurisdiction, been sanctioned for lawyer, judicial, or other professional misconduct or been found to have committed such misconduct? No. If so, give the details and describe any final disposition.

[Yes and no responses are redacted for all candidates unless there is a public discipline.]

22. Since your last screening, have you been criticized, whether informally or in a matter taken to a disciplinary authority, for the manner in which you treated litigants or attorneys before you on the bench? Yes. If so, give the details and the reasons why you believe you were the target of such criticism. See attachments for details. The reason I was the target was because I was the judge presiding and the defendant did not like the outcome.

23. Are you active on or a member of a social media or Internet site or have you, to your knowledge, been featured or depicted on a social media or Internet site, such as, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.? No. If so, how would your use of social media or other similar types of Internet sites be affected if you were serving in a judicial capacity?

24. Provide any other information which 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.

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 \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

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

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