



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

**Circuit Court**  
**(New Candidate)**

Full Name: William W. Wheeler, III

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Bishopville SC, 29010

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1. Why do you want to serve as a Circuit Court judge? I have actively practiced law in most practice areas Circuit Court judges encounter and have experience in service to the public. I enjoyed both immensely. Serving as a Circuit Court judge would allow me to combine a broad legal career with a desire to serve the State of South Carolina in a role I hold in the highest regard.
  
2. Do you plan to serve your full term if elected? Yes
  
3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day? No
  
4. Have you met the Constitutional 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?  
  
Beyond administrative, scheduling or matters provided for by rule, I would not tolerate any *ex parte* communications.
  
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? Would you grant such a motion?

If I disclosed something because I believed there may be an appearance of bias, I would recuse myself unless all parties affirmatively consented to me hearing the matter following the disclosure.

7. How would you handle the appearance of impropriety because of the financial or social involvement of your spouse or a close relative?

If there was appearance of impropriety because of financial, family or a close relationship I would recuse myself.

8. What standards would you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality?

Other than specific circumstances set forth in the Canons of Judicial Conduct, I would not accept any gift or social hospitality.

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?

I would, as required, report misconduct or infirmity of a lawyer or judge.

10. 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? If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis.

No

11. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any political, social, community, or religious organizations? Please describe.

I engaged in campaign fund-raising when I served in the Legislature. All contributions and expenditures were reported and the account closed.

In the past I have participated in fundraising activities (broom sales, chocolate bars, etc.) for organizations such as Lions Club, Cub Scouts, or school PTO but have not done so in several years.

12. Do you have any business activities that you would envision remaining involved with if elected to the bench? No.

13. If elected, how would you handle the drafting of orders?

I would issue a brief ruling and request counsel prepare a proposed order or, for simple matters or other instances where this would not be practical, I would not have an issue preparing orders myself.

14. If elected, what methods would you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?

I would maintain a calendar to keep deadlines and share this with an administrative assistant and law clerk.

15. What is your philosophy on “judicial activism,” and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy?

I do not believe judicial activism is appropriate. Lawmakers make the law, judges apply and/or interpret the law as it is enacted.

16. Canon 4 allows a judge to engage in activities to improve the law, legal system, and administration of justice. If elected, what activities do you plan to undertake to further this improvement of the legal system?

I would be happy to participate in CLE or other programs in addition to any activities the Judicial Branch may deem beneficial to the judiciary or profession.

17. Do you feel that the pressure of serving as a judge would strain personal relationships (i.e. spouse, children, friends, or relatives)? How would you address this?

Practicing law is stressful. For eight years, I practiced law while serving in the Legislature, while our children were growing from middle school through college years. I feel, as does my family, that the pressures of judicial services- while they will certainly exist- will be reduced in comparison to previous experience.

18. The following list contains five categories of offenders that would perhaps regularly appear in your court. Discuss your philosophy on sentencing for these classes of offenders.

- a. Repeat offenders: Repeat offenders would face the most severe sentences.
- b. Juveniles (that have been waived to the Circuit Court): Depending on the nature of the offense, I would keep in mind the rehabilitative nature of juvenile justice and options for sentencing that lend themselves to that goal.
- c. White collar criminals: Considering the intentional nature, term of the action, and impacts- these offenses sometimes represent a high degree of malice and deceit. Sentences should be imposed accordingly.
- d. Defendants with a socially and/or economically disadvantaged background: An individual's background does not justify commission of a crime and would not be among the considerations in determining a sentence.
- e. Elderly defendants or those with some infirmity: Assuming there was no actual capacity issue, the facts and circumstances of the offense would be considered without regard to a defendant's age or health.

19. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality?

No

20. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved?

No

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

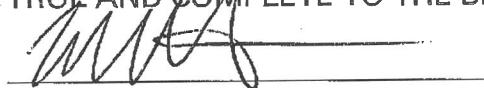
do these rules apply?

I believe a judge must be fair, impartial and decisive. To effectively carry out these principles judges must treat everyone in the court environment with respect, patience, courtesy and kindness. These same qualities apply outside of the courtroom. During twenty-five years of practicing law in a small community, I always kept in mind that everyone I encountered in a local store, restaurant or ball game- I may later meet in a courtroom, whether a party, witness, or juror. I never wanted a negative perception of me to prejudice my client or the legal system. I believe that applies the same in the position of a judge.

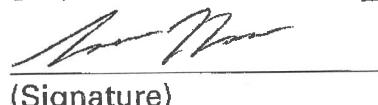
23. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public, especially with a criminal defendant? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or pro se litigants?

No. Anger invariably represents a loss of control or composure. While we are all human, there is no place for this on the bench. Displays of anger and impatience tend to undermine the perception of impartiality and fairness.

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



Sworn to before me this 13 day of August, 2025.



(Signature)

Connor Newsome

(Print Name)

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission Expires: 06/24/2034