



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

**Circuit Court
(Incumbent)**

Full Name: Harry Steven DeBerry, IV

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1. Why do you want to serve another term as a Circuit Court Judge?

I want to serve another term as a Circuit Court Judge in an effort to bring fair, transparent, and high confidence to our Judiciary so that the public can place trust in our system of justice.

2. Do you plan to serve your full term if re-elected?

Yes

3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?

Not at this time.

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?

My philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications align with the rules and canons that directly provide for use of such communications and for only the purposes for which such

communications are allowed. These are the only examples of when ex parte communications should be tolerated.

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?

Yes, I would and have granted motions for a continuance in these situations. I believe even the appearance of impropriety must be considered in such situations even if an actual bias or conflict doesn't exist. As such, and in an effort to be, and appear fair and transparent, a recusal in such circumstances would be warranted to instill and preserve trust and confidence in our judiciary and system of justice.

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

If such an issue arose that had any bearing on matters that were before the court then I would take any actions necessary to make all parties aware of the situation, either recuse myself from hearing the matter or continue the matter or hearing, or proceed with the full consent of all parties on the record.

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

I comply with the rules and canons that are in place with regard to the acceptance of gifts and 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?

In such an event I would consult all applicable rules and canons and respond accordingly in the event a response is mandated. If a response is not mandated but an opportunity presents itself in a way that I can be of assistance without violating any rules or canons then I would attempt to help resolve the situation if possible.

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

No

11. Do you have any business activities that you would envision remaining involved with if reelected to the bench?

I have invested in land and agriculture management businesses. My involvement is financial oversight and I do not participate in any day to day operations.

12. How do you handle the drafting of orders?

Depending on the matter that is before the court I often draft my own orders, sometimes ask for proposed orders from both parties, and sometimes make a decision on a matter, make the parties aware, and then request a proposed order from the prevailing party.

13. What methods do you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?

We calendar all terms of court, hearings of all kinds, and all other events, and deadlines that must be complied with. Our calendars are shared across all devices and are set to remind us of everything that is on the calendar.

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

I believe that judges should make decisions based on the law as it is written and the doctrine of stare decisis. Although decisions of the court can have the effect in some situations of setting or promoting public policy, that should never be the intended consequence of a judicial decision.

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

I believe that our judiciary needs to be more approachable and more available to those that we serve in the administration of justice. As such I routinely make myself available to hear motions, settlements, and other matters that litigants need to have heard on an expedited basis for any number of reasons. This not only helps to move cases through litigation without the necessity of backing up dockets, but it also helps resolve and bring finality to a great deal of litigation that help individuals move on in life, and often times brings closure to difficult situations.

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

No

17. 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 often face heightened possible punishment because of their criminal history. I consider the possible punishment allowed by law, the facts, the recommendation of the state, any victim statement or position, and consideration of their age in fashioning a sentence that is fair, just, and reasonable under the circumstances.

b. Juveniles (that have been waived to the Circuit Court):

When a juvenile has been waived to Circuit Court I consider the possible punishment allowed by law, the facts, the recommendation of the state, any victim statement or position, criminal history, and consideration of their age in fashioning a sentence that is fair, just, and reasonable under the circumstances.

c. White collar criminals:

With regard to white collar criminals, I consider the possible punishment allowed by law, the facts, the recommendation of the state, any victim statement or position, criminal history, and consideration of their age in fashioning a sentence that is fair, just, and reasonable under the circumstances.

d. Defendants with a socially and/or economically disadvantaged background:

With regard to defendants with a socially and/or economically disadvantages background, I consider the possible punishment allowed by law, the facts, the recommendation of the state, any victim statement or position, criminal history, and consideration of their age in fashioning a sentence that is fair, just, and reasonable under the circumstances.

e. Elderly defendants or those with some infirmity:

With regard to white collar criminals, I consider the possible punishment allowed by law, the facts, the recommendation of the state, any victim statement or position, criminal history, and consideration of their age and infirmity in fashioning a sentence that is fair, just, and reasonable under the circumstances.

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

No

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

No

20. Are you a member of any organization or association that, by policy or practice, prohibits or limits its membership on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin? If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis.

No

21. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses for the last reporting period?

Yes

22. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge and when do these rules apply?

I believe that all times a member of the judiciary should display a demeanor that includes kindness, humility, equal protection and application of the law, integrity, and a willingness to fully hear from all parties so that the public can have confidence in our system of justice.

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 a pro se litigant?

I do not feel that anger is an appropriate expression in the administration of justice. There are many other options in the discretion of the court to deal with unfortunate situations that arise in our court rooms that don't include the expression of anger.

Whether it be a criminal defendant, an attorney, a pro se litigant, court staff or otherwise, a member of the judiciary displaying anger does not impose public confidence in our system of justice.

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

H. Steven DeBeng

Sworn to before me this 29th day of July, 2025.

Stacey R. Minton
(Signature)

Stacey R. Minton
(Print Name)

Notary Public for South Carolina
My commission expires: 7/23/34