



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

**Administrative Law Court**  
**(New Candidate)**

Full Name: Barbara Wofford-Kanwat

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1. Do you plan to serve your full term if elected?

Yes, I plan to serve the full term if elected.

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

I have never been in private practice, and I do not intend to join private practice in the near future.

3. Have you met the statutory requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice?

Yes, I meet the statutory requirements.

4. What is your philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications? Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated?

I would follow the canons regarding *ex parte* communications. Generally, *ex parte* communications are not permitted. However, the canons permit communications regarding scheduling or other administrative matters. The communications must not involve substantive matters. Furthermore, I believe there are circumstances set forth in the law that permit *ex parte* communications. I would follow the law in those circumstances.

5. 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?

I would consider the canons in determining whether to grant the party's recusal motion. In terms of deference, I would consider both parties' positions equally. In terms of granting the motion, it would depend on how the facts apply to the rules governing recusal.

6. If elected, what standards would you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality?

Generally, I would avoid accepting gifts and encourage my immediate family to not accept gifts except for when permitted by the canons.

7. 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 rely on the canons to determine whether I am obligated to report this conduct to the appropriate authority.

8. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions that, if you are elected, would need to be re-evaluated?

I am on the University of South Carolina Women and Gender Studies Partnership Council. I do not provide any fundraising support to the council.

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

I have not actively solicited funds for any organizations recently. I have participated in fundraising walks and contributed to my family members' school fundraisers.

10. How would you handle the drafting of orders?

Generally, I prepare my orders if both or one of the parties are pro se. If both parties are represented by attorneys, I would have the prevailing party's attorney draft the order, permit the opposing party to review, and then edit accordingly.

11. What method would you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?

In order to meet deadlines, I would ensure that the staff and I regularly communicate and check in regarding our work load. I would also have a system to document and calendar all deadlines.

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

I do not believe in judicial activism. As a summary court judge, my job is to apply the law. In terms of promoting public policy, I do not believe that is a role for the judiciary. However, the courts might have to at times consider legislative intent of statutes that guide policies.

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

I currently serve on the S.C. Bar Publications Committee. I recently joined the S.C. Bar Legal Related Education Committee. I also present regularly on different legal topics to various audiences. I plan to continue with these activities.

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

I think there is an initial pressure when you join the bench because you have to establish new boundaries regarding what you can and cannot do in your personal and professional relationships. If elected, I would continue to enforce the boundaries that I have established as a summary court judge.

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

I am not involved in any active investments that could impact my ability to be impartial.

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

No, I would disqualify myself as required by the canons.

17. 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, I am not a member of any such organization.

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

Yes, I have met the minimum required hours for continuing education for summary court judges.

19. What percentage of your legal experience has dealt with cases that appear before the Administrative Law Court? Please describe to the Commission your experience in these areas.

Since I joined the summary court bench a few years after law school, I have not appeared before the Administrative Law Court. However, I assisted with administrative law court appeals while working as a staff attorney at the S.C. Court of Appeals.

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

A judge's demeanor must demonstrate impartiality, patience, and respect for the law. A judge's demeanor should embody those traits all the time – on and off the bench.

21. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public who would appear before you? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?

After serving on the summary court bench for more than a decade, I can envision times when a judge is frustrated with a party. However, the judge must convey that frustration in a respectful and professional manner. Furthermore, the judge must not allow that frustration to impact her decision.

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

Dawn Wofford-Kanwater

Sworn to before me this 21<sup>st</sup> day of August, 2025.

Isabella Osz

Notary Public for S.C.

My Commission Expires: 08/09/2033

