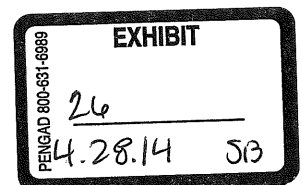


**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION  
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**

Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying:  
Family Court, Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Seat 1

1. NAME: Ms. Sara McMahon Bunge  
BUSINESS ADDRESS: 205 E. Main Street  
Lexington, SC 29072  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (office): (803)785-8352
2. Date of Birth: 1972  
Place of Birth: Columbia, SC
3. Are you a citizen of SC? Yes.  
Have you been a resident of this state for at least the immediate past five years?  
Yes.
5. Family Status: Married to Ricardo Bunge on June 13, 2009. Divorced on July 25, 2006, Charleston County, S.C. Court, Ms. Sara Ellen Cobb was moving party. One child.
6. Have you served in the military?  
I have never served in the military.
7. 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) College of Charleston, 8/1990 to 5/1992, left to move home to Lexington;
  - (b) USC, 8/1992 to 5/1994, BS Criminal Justice;
  - (c) USC, 8/1996 to 5/1999, JD.
8. 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. If you took the bar exam more than once in any of the states listed, please indicate the number of times you took the exam in each state.
  - (a) SC - 1999;
  - (b) Georgia - 2002.
9. List the significant activities in which you took part during your attendance at college, graduate, and law school. Give the dates you were involved in these activities and list any leadership positions you held.
  - (a) College of Charleston Honor Board, 8/1991 to 5/1992;
  - (b) Kappa Alpha Theta, 8/1991 to 5/1992;
  - (c) College of Charleston, Pre-Law Society, unsure of dates;
  - (d) USC, Reserve Police Officer, 8/1993 to 5/1994.
10. Describe your continuing legal or judicial education during the past five years. Include only the title and date of any continuing legal or judicial education course completed.
 

<u>Conference/CLE Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
(a) Forensic Science Series	5/29/09;
(b) Child Abuse & Sexual Assault Prosecution	7/24/09;
(c) Strategies for Justice	9/21/09;
(d) 7 <sup>th</sup> Annual SC Network of Children's Advocacy	4/13/10;
(e) Constitutional Limitations on Law	4/30/10;



- |     |  |           |
|-----|--|-----------|
| (f) | Competency Hearings and Mental Health Evaluations      | 5/21/10;  |
| (g) | Domestic Violence and the Criminal                     | 11/18/10; |
| (h) | Juveniles Who Sexually Offend                          | 5/20/11;  |
| (i) | Prosecuting Cases in Family Court                      | 8/19/11;  |
| (j) | 2011 S.C. Solicitors' Conference                       | 9/25/11;  |
| (k) | Sexual Assault Prosecutions                            | 7/20/12;  |
| (l) | Prosecuting Cases in Family Court                      | 8/24/12;  |
| (m) | 2012 S.C. Solicitors' Conference                       | 9/23/12;  |
| (n) | Competency to Stand Trial                              | 10/26/12; |
| (o) | Prosecuting in Family Court: Issues and Best Practices | 8/23/13;  |
| (p) | 2013 S.C. Solicitors' Conference                       | 9/22/13;  |
| (q) | Ethics for Government Attorneys                        | 2/7/14.   |
11. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs?
- I have made presentations to new Lexington County Arbitrators during their yearly training;
  - I have spoken to the Business Law Class at the Lexington Technology Center;
  - I have spoken to school administrators and guidance counselors regarding Truancy;
  - I have volunteered as a Judge for the Mock Trial program;
  - I have volunteered for the Kids in Court program through the Town of Lexington.
12. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each.
- I have not published any books or articles.
13. 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.
- State Courts of SC in 1999;
  - SC Federal Courts in 2000;
  - State Courts of Georgia in 2002.
14. Describe chronologically your legal experience since graduation from law school and include a list of all law firms with which you have been associated. Describe the general character of your practice and divide it into periods with dates if its character has changed over the years.
- 8/1999 to 6/2000: Judicial Law Clerk to the late Honorable Marc H. Westbrook: As a law clerk, I researched legal issues, wrote draft orders, prepared jury instructions, attended hearings and trials, scheduled conferences, and interacted extensively with attorneys. I assisted Judge Westbrook in his day-to-day responsibilities as needed.
  - 6/2000 to 10/2000: Assistant Solicitor, 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit:  
I, along with one other Assistant Solicitor, prosecuted all adult and juvenile cases in the County of Kershaw;
  - 10/2000 to 2/2002: Associate, Turner, Padgett, Graham & Laney, Florence, SC:  
As an Associate, I was assigned to assist one of the Partners in defending medical malpractice and employment law cases. It was my responsibility to investigate cases, speak with witnesses, request and analyze medical records, and write memoranda to the Partner regarding my opinion of the cases. I attended status

- conferences, drafted motions and briefs, attended oral arguments and drafted discovery;
- (d) 2/2002 to 7/2002: Georgia Bar Exam Candidate (passed and admitted 2002):  
During this time, my ex-husband and I moved to Georgia and I studied for and passed the Georgia bar exam. I never practiced in Georgia because we made the decision to move back to SC;
  - (e) 12/2002 to 1/2006: Assistant Solicitor, 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit:  
I prosecuted cases in Charleston County. My caseload was about 300-400 cases at any given time. I handled drug possession and distribution, assault and battery, property crimes, armed robbery, and criminal sexual conduct cases. I tried numerous cases both as lead counsel and co-counsel;
  - (f) 3/2006 to 3/2008: Associate, Whetstone, Myers, Perkins & Young:  
I handled medical malpractice, personal injury, and criminal defense cases. I prepared for and conducted mediation presentations on numerous personal injury cases. During this time, I was also a part-time Municipal Judge for the Town of Lexington presiding over jury trials;
  - (g) 8/2006 to 3/2008: Municipal Judge (part-time), Town of Lexington:  
I presided over jury trials for the Town of Lexington. Most of the cases that came before me were driving under the influence cases. I ruled on pre-trial Motions, conducted jury selection, heard witness testimony, charged the jury, and sentenced as the jury decided;
  - (h) 3/2008 to present: Assistant Solicitor, 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit:  
In 2008, I decided to return to the public sector because of the financial instability of private practice. I prosecuted various cases in General Sessions, including criminal sexual conduct, property crimes, assault and battery, and drug case. I tried numerous cases both as lead and co-counsel. I transitioned to Family Court in 2009 handling cases in Lexington, Edgefield, Saluda and McCormick counties.

If you are a candidate for Family Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience within each of the following Family Court practice areas: divorce and equitable division of property, child custody, adoption, abuse and neglect, and juvenile justice. Include information about cases you have handled in each of these practice areas, or if you have not practiced in an area, describe how your background has prepared you to preside over such matters as a Family Court Judge.

For the past four and a half years, I have handled juvenile cases for the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Solicitor's Office. I am assigned to all cases arising out of Edgefield, Saluda and McCormick Counties as well as half of the cases arising out of Lexington County. I have tried cases from shoplifting to criminal sexual conduct in Family Court, as well as in General Sessions. I have dealt with detention hearings, review hearings, adjudications, dispositions, and Form III interstate hearings. I requested to be assigned to Family Court from General Sessions temporarily in 2009 to gain experience in the juvenile justice area. My Supervisor indicated that if after two years I wanted to transfer back to General Sessions, I could. After the two year period, I wanted to stay in Family Court because I found an area of law where I feel like I make a difference.

DSS and DJJ matters overlap in many cases. Over the years, I have worked with DSS attorneys and case workers and have attended many DSS hearings regarding my

juveniles. While in private practice with Turner, Padgett, Graham & Laney, I was appointed as a Guardian Ad Litem and an attorney for GALs numerous times.

While I do not have experience representing others in divorce, equitable division of property and child custody, I have been through a divorce with those issues. I researched and studied the relevant statutes and case law at the time of my separation to the point that I could have represented myself pro se during my divorce; however, I chose not to represent myself only because of the inherent emotional factor in being a litigant in a divorce. There were property division issues, child custody issues, and child support issues. We were able to settle the case through mediation. Approximately three years after the finalization of my divorce, my ex-husband filed for a Modification of Child Support. I again had enough knowledge to represent myself, but chose not to because I was emotionally involved in the case. I know and can apply S.C. Code Section 20-3-620, et. seq. and applicable case law regarding apportionment of property. I am confident that I have the knowledge to preside over domestic issues competently and justly.

At the time that I was appointed as a Municipal Court Judge for the Town of Lexington, I had tried many criminal cases, but I had not tried any Driving Under the Influence cases. I was assigned to conduct trials, as another Judge heard the pleas. Most of the cases I heard as a Judge were DUIs which is a technical area. I was able to research and study the law to the point that I could preside over those cases with confidence and I know I can do the same with domestic issues.

The extent and variety of my experience as an attorney and a Judge should be considered. I have handled all of my cases with competence and diligence. In 2013, I won the Ernest F. Hollings Award for Excellence in State Prosecution for Family Court. I am an open, honest, courteous person with a demeanor suited for the bench.

15. What is your rating, if any, by any legal rating organization, such as, Best Lawyers, Chambers, Legal 500, Martindale-Hubbell, Who's Who Legal, Super Lawyers, etc.? If you are currently a member of the judiciary, list your last available rating, if any.

I am not rated to my knowledge.

16. What was the frequency of your court appearances during the past five years?

- (a) federal: 0;  
(b) state: 1 to 4 times a week, almost every week.

17. What percentage of your practice involved civil, criminal, domestic, and other matters during the past five years?

- (a) civil: 0%;  
(b) criminal: 100%;  
(c) domestic: 0%;  
(d) other: 0%.

18. What percentage of your practice in trial court during the past five years involved matters that went to a jury, including those that settled prior to trial?

- (a) jury: 0%;  
(b) non-jury: 100%.

Did you most often serve as sole counsel, chief counsel, or associate counsel in these matters?

Sole counsel.

19. List five of the most significant litigated matters you have personally handled in either trial or appellate court or before a state or federal agency. Give citations if the cases were reported and describe why these matters were significant.

- (a) In re Don Michael G.: I handled this case when I was in private practice. At 18 years old, Don Michael started working for a trash collection business where his father worked. He was assigned to a truck and on his very first day, he was struck by a car which was attempting to pass the stopped trash truck. The car was travelling at an estimated 45 miles per hour. Don Michael suffered a devastating brain injury. We filed a Workers Compensation claim against the trash collection business. We also attempted an action against the manufacturer of the trash truck for its failure to have proper signaling devices/lights on the trash truck itself. I traveled to Durham, North Carolina during this action to meet with Don Michael who lived in an assisted living facility. He is a remarkable young man and meeting him made a significant impact on me. It was a tough case to handle as I knew that no matter the amount of money we could recover for him, he would never be the same.
- (b) State v. Christian Bryson: This was a murder case I sat as second chair while I was in General Sessions in Lexington. The victim and defendant were acquaintances. The State believed that the defendant frequently bought drugs from the victim. After the victim failed to answer his cell phone for a couple of days, his family reported him missing to law enforcement. As law enforcement investigated, they were led to the defendant. There were many issues in this case, including cell phone tower records, tire impressions, handwriting authentication, and DNA evidence. The defendant ultimately gave multiple confessions, changing his story somewhat each time. He led law enforcement to the victim's body where it was found with the victim's hands and feet bound by duct tape. The defendant ultimately claimed that he killed the victim in self-defense; however, the State did not believe there was evidence of self-defense, especially with the body found the way it was. The jury found the defendant guilty. He was sentenced to 30 years for Murder, 10 years consecutive for Armed Robbery, and 5 years concurrent for Possession of a Weapon During a Crime of Violence.
- (c) State v. Curtis Charles Roosevelt Sims: This is another murder case I was involved in when I was with the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Solicitor's Office working in Kershaw County. At the same time, my father was a Deputy Solicitor for the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit working in Richland County. This case was conflicted out of Newberry County. The defendant broke into the elderly victim's house to rob him of cash he was rumored to have from selling illegal moonshine. There was an eyewitness who saw the defendant running from the scene. There was no forensic evidence as the State believed the defendant wore socks on his hands during the robbery and murder because a small white fiber consistent with a white sock was found on the victim's neck and a pair of white socks was found on the ground outside of the victim's trailer. The defendant was caught on video burglarizing a nearby business shortly before the murder. The medical examiner was unable to pin point the victim's time of death which gave the jury reasonable doubt as to whether the defendant was there at the time of the murder because he was committing the burglary around the same time frame. He used one crime to give him an "alibi" so to speak for another more serious crime. Although it was a not guilty verdict, it was an honor to try a case with my father

before he retired from being a prosecutor. The defendant pled to Burglary 2<sup>nd</sup> and Grand Larceny for burglarizing the business and received 7 years for the Burglary and 5 years concurrent for the Grand Larceny.

(d) State v. Carl G.: This was a criminal sexual conduct with a minor 1<sup>st</sup> degree case in which I sat first chair. The allegations were that the defendant molested his 9 year old step daughter after showing her pornography on his computer. The victim did not want to testify and it took some time and effort to get her used to the courtroom and ready. When the time came for trial, she testified as best she could. The main issue in the case became when the computer was actually in the home as the defendant's defense was that the computer was out of the home being serviced during the time that the victim alleged the abuse occurred. Law enforcement did not confiscate the computer to be analyzed at the time the victim disclosed. The defendant had it analyzed, however, it had been "wiped clean" and reset to the manufacturer's settings. Unfortunately, the jury found a reasonable doubt and found the defendant not guilty. I was proud of the victim for standing up for herself and testifying as to what happened. The Department of Social Services became involved in the case for the mother's failure to protect the victim.

(e) In re Joshua L.: Joshua was charged with Assault and Battery on a classmate. When he came into Court, he pled to the charge and received probation. As a part of that probation, he was to attend and complete the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School which is a 3 month program for juveniles. During the program, the juveniles are able to study for and take a test for their General Equivalent Diploma. Before a juvenile can start the Wil Lou Gray program he or she must get a physical exam and pay \$175 to be on deposit at the school for incidentals. Joshua's mother did not have the money to get him a physical exam or pay the deposit. His Department of Juvenile Justice caseworker paid for his physical exam. I along with his Public Defender and another Assistant Solicitor in Family Court donated money for his \$175 deposit. I drove the money to the Doctor's Care where he was waiting for his physical exam the day he was supposed to start. He did not seem pleased to be starting the program. I was concerned that he would not take advantage of the opportunity that he was given, but I hoped for the best. Six weeks later, I received a call from his DJJ caseworker informing me that Joshua requested that I, along with his probation officer, caseworker, and Public Defender, attend "Friends and Family Day" at Wil Lou Gray. Three of us were able to attend. The juveniles showed off their training and newly learned military skills. I never saw Joshua smile before that day. He finally had confidence in himself. He sat for and passed his GED test and it was his intention to apply for Lander University.

20. List up to five civil appeals you have personally handled. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision, and the citation if the case was reported.  
I have not personally handled any civil appeals.
21. List up to five criminal appeals that you have personally handled.  
I have not personally handled any criminal appeals.
22. 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.

I was appointed as a Municipal Judge for the Town of Lexington in August of 2006 and I held that position until February of 2008 when I left private practice to return to government service as an Assistant Solicitor. Jurisdiction was limited to criminal offenses which occurred in the Town of Lexington and for which the penalty was up to a fine of \$500 and/or up to 30 days in jail.

23. If the answer to question 22 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.

There are no significant orders or opinions during that time.

24. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? Also, state whether or not you have timely filed your report with the State Ethics Commission during the period you held public office?

I have not held public office other than Municipal Judge.

25. 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.

During the time that I was a Municipal Court Judge for the Town of Lexington, I was also an Associate with the firm Whetstone, Myers, Perkins & Young (now Whetstone, Perkins & Fulda). I was considered a "joint venturer" and did not have a supervisor. I joined the Whetstone firm in March of 2006 and left in March of 2008 when I returned to government service with the Solicitor's Office. While I was an Associate, I handled criminal defense cases, medical malpractice cases, and personal injury cases.

26. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office?

I have never been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office.

27. 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?

Yes. I began working at the age of sixteen as a cashier at a local fast food restaurant, Bird's, in Lexington in August of 1988. This restaurant is no longer in business. After working for the restaurant for a year, I worked as a cashier for a sewing supply/craft store, The Piece Goods Shop, through high school, during breaks while I was attending College of Charleston, and during my time at the USC. During my senior year at the USC, starting in August of 1993, in addition to attending classes and working at The Piece Goods Shop, I was also Reserve Police Officer with the USC Police Department. Upon graduating from USC in May of 1994 with a B.S. in Criminal Justice, I started with the State Law Enforcement Division in the Officer on Duty Quarters where I was a temporary employee. I started in a permanent position as an Administrative Specialist in 1995 in the Regulatory Department of SLED handling the concealed weapon, gun dealer permits, and precious metal dealer permits for SC until I began law school in August of 1996. I clerked for the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office beginning in May of 1997 until I graduated law school in May of 1999. In the summer of 1998, I clerked for the District Attorney's Office in Winston-Salem, North Carolina (Forsyth County) when my husband at the time was training with BB&T bank.

28. Are you now an officer or director or involved in the management of any business enterprise?

I am not an officer or director or involved in the management of any business enterprise.

29. A complete, current financial net worth statement was provided to the Commission.

30. 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.

I do not have any financial arrangements or business relationships that could constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest.

31. 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 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?

I have never been arrested, charged, or held for any violation or for suspicion of any violation of any law.

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

I have never been under investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute.

33. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities? Have you ever defaulted on a student loan? Have you ever filed for bankruptcy?

There has never been a tax lien or other collection procedure instituted against me. I have never defaulted on a student loan or filed for bankruptcy.

34. Have you ever been sued, either personally or professionally, that is, have you ever been named as defendant or respondent in any court of law?

Yes. In August of 2009, my ex-husband filed for a Modification of Child Support (Cobb v. McMahan, 2009-DR-10-3113). We settled and the Motion was dismissed on March 5, 2010.

36. Have you ever been investigated by the Department of Social Services? Has your name ever been enrolled on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect?

I have never been investigated by the Department of Social Services. My name has never been enrolled on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect.

37. If you are in private practice, are you covered by malpractice insurance and, if so, how long have you carried malpractice insurance?

Not applicable.

38. 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.?

Yes, I have a Facebook account through which I maintain contact with family and friends. I rarely post anything other than pictures of my son or a link to a story that I found noteworthy. If I were serving in a judicial capacity, my use would most likely not be affected because of the rarity that I use it now. I am prepared to deactivate my account if required.

39. Are you now or have you ever been employed as a "lobbyist," as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(13), or have you acted in the capacity of a "lobbyist's principal," as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(14)?

I am not now, nor have I ever been employed as a "lobbyist."



40. 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 § 2-17-10(1) from a lobbyist or lobbyist's principal?  
I have not accepted anything of value from a lobbyist or lobbyist's principal.
41. S.C. Code § 8-13-700 provides, in part, that "[n]o public official, public member, or public employee may knowingly use his official office, membership, or employment to obtain an economic interest for himself, a member of his immediate family, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated."  
I do not know of any such charges or allegations.
42. S.C. Code § 8-13-765 provides, in part, that "[n]o person may use government personnel, equipment, materials, or an office building in an election campaign." Please detail any knowledge you have of any formal charges or informal allegations against you or any other candidate for violations of these provisions.  
I do not know of any such charges or allegations.
43. 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.  
I have spent a total of \$441.57 on my campaign comprising of \$15.22 (legislative manual), \$5.96 (name tag), \$38.87 (business cards), \$296.81 (resumes, cover letters, envelopes, postage, ink and stationery), and \$84.71 (additional postage).
44. List the amount and recipient of all contributions made by you or on your behalf to members of the General Assembly since the announcement of your intent to seek election to a judgeship.  
I have made no such contributions.
45. 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? 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?  
I have not directly or indirectly requested the pledge of any member of the General Assembly as to my election. I have not received any such assurance.
46. Have you requested a friend or colleague to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf? Are you aware of any friends or colleagues contacting members of the General Assembly on your behalf?  
I have not requested anyone to contact members of the General Assembly on my behalf nor am I aware of anyone contacting members of the General Assembly on my behalf.
47. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy?  
I have not, nor has anyone on my behalf, solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of my candidacy.
48. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf contacted members of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission about your candidacy or intention to become a candidate?  
I have not, nor has anyone acting on my behalf, contacted members of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission about my candidacy.

49. 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) SC Bar, Member, 1999;
- (b) Georgia Bar, Member, 2002;
- (c) Children's Law Committee, SC Bar, Member, 2010 to present.

50. 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, any professional honors, awards, or other forms of recognition received and not listed elsewhere.

I have not been a member of such organizations in the past five years.

51. 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.

I have always been a hard working person. I have had a job since I was 16 years old. I pride myself in having a reputation of being an honest, dedicated, and fair person. When my ex-husband and I were together, we made the decision for his career to come before mine, which left me changing jobs as he earned promotions within his field. I took advantage of those opportunities to learn different areas of the law and to work with different people to improve my knowledge and understanding of the law. I have been a criminal defense attorney, a civil defense attorney, a plaintiff's attorney, a prosecutor and a Municipal Judge. All of these experiences have led me to where I am today and I am grateful for them.

My son was 8 months old when I filed for divorce in January of 2006 after 11 years of marriage. It was a painful time in my life. I know first hand what it feels like to be before a Family Court Judge as a litigant. I know the feeling of standing before a stranger with your personal life being in his/her hands. It was not an experience I will ever forget. I feel this would help me as a Family Court Judge myself because I know what parties are going through. My ex-husband and I have been able to put aside negative feelings towards each other for the sake of our son who is our main focus. I am proud of the way we have been able to put Tyler first and not ourselves.

The time that I have been an Assistant Solicitor in Family Court has opened my eyes to different areas of our community and to the realization that not all families have the resources that others do. As an Assistant Solicitor, I have learned that, at least in the juvenile area, my job is not so much to prosecute cases as it is to be a social worker, working with DJJ, parents, teachers, administrators, and sometimes DSS, to come up with a plan for a family. Even though it is a juvenile who is before the Court for a criminal or status offense, the juvenile may need services to help with an addiction, anger management, family counseling, or other services. It is my job to help him/her get the services that he/she needs.

Working in Family Court requires the ability to work with many different people from many different agencies for the benefit of families. The cases are not only divorce and custody cases. The cases also involve the Department of Social Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Mental Health, among others. A Family Judge really has to be a social worker in many cases to figure out what the best plan is for a family, regardless of whether it is a domestic case, a juvenile case, or an abuse and neglect case. A Family Court Judge must be able to hear all parties and be part of the process of managing

what is in the best interest of a family, not just a particular child. I know I have the temperament, compassion and skill to be an asset to the Family Court bench.

52. References:

- (a) The Honorable Donald V. Myers  
205 East Main Street  
Lexington, SC 29072  
(803) 785-8352
- (b) C. Frederick Shipley, IV  
Shipley Law Firm, P.C.  
445 Meeting Street  
West Columbia, SC  
(803) 794-7588
- (c) August Gustav Swarat, II  
Whetstone, Perkins & Fulda, LLC  
Post Office Box 8086  
Columbia, SC 29202  
(803) 799-9400
- (d) Flo Lester Vinson  
Folkens Law Firm, P.A.  
P.O. Box 6139  
Florence, SC 29502-6139  
(843) 665-0100
- (e) Lisa Butler  
SAFE Federal Credit Union  
P.O. Box 2008  
Sumter, SC 29151-2008  
(803) 359-5355, extension 3207

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

Signature: Sara M. Bunge

Date: 3/6/14