



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

Family Court
(New Candidate)

Full Name: Ms. Wanda L. Adams

Business Address: 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office
301 East North Street, Suite 325
Greenville, SC 29601

Business Telephone: (864) 467-8647

1. Why do you want to serve as a Family Court Judge?

I desire to continue serving as an instrument of justice, as I have attempted to do for the last 30 years. I believe my unique legal and social work experience would be an asset to the family court.

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 statutory 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 is to avoid *ex parte* communications, with the exception of administrative, scheduling or emergency situations, which is allowed under the Judicial Code of Conduct.

6. What is your philosophy on recusal, especially in situations in which lawyer-legislators, former associates, or law partners are to appear before you?

My philosophy on recusal is dictated by the canons of judicial conduct,

which mandates that a judge avoid the appearance of impropriety or bias. If the situation might reasonably cause my impartiality to be questioned, I would recuse myself. I have never been associated with a law firm, other than mine, so that would not be an issue for me. As to appearances by lawyer-legislators, the Judicial Code does not require recusal solely based on the lawyer/legislator's status.

7. 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, even if I felt I could be impartial. Judges must avoid the appearance of bias, so I would grant the motion.

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

I believe this is a situation that could reasonably raise questions of my ability to be impartial. Therefore, I would absolutely recuse myself.

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

I would not accept any gifts or hospitality from lawyers likely to appear before me. I would be receptive to social hospitality permitted under the Judicial Code. I would make sure that no favor is shown to any particular organization.

10. How would you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct of a lawyer or of a fellow judge?

I would report the misconduct to appropriate authority, but not before reminding the lawyer or judge of my duty to do so.

11. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions that, if you were elected, would need to be evaluated?

No.

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

No.

13. Since family court judges do not have law clerks, how would you handle the drafting of orders?

I would develop a tickler system, to ensure that orders are prepared in a timely manner.

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

The same system I noted in the above answer is one I utilized while in private practice, and proved to be very effective in my organization and case management. I would use a similar method, tailored for the family court.

15. If elected, what specific actions or steps would you take to ensure that the guidelines of the Guardian Ad Litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case?

Once appointed, I would require a brief appearance or proof that the Guardian Ad Litem is provided with the Guardian Ad Litem Order and understands his/her duties and has the ability to comply with said order. I would also direct that an interim report be provided to the court, within a few days of being appointed.

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

My philosophy on "judicial activism" is that it is the role of the legislature to make law and establish public policy. My duty, as a judge, is to apply said law to the facts before me.

17. 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 would accept invitations to at CLEs and similar forums.

18. 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 plan to address this?

I do not anticipate any adverse changes in my relationships. Having formerly served in a judicial capacity, my family and friends are respectful of my duties and confidentiality.

19. Would you give any special considerations to a *pro se* litigant in family court?

I believe that a *pro se* litigant must be given some leeway, within the limits of the law, in order to promote fairness.

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

No.

21. 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 avoid any appearance of bias.

22. Do you belong to any organizations that discriminate based on race, religion, or gender?

No.

23. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses?

Yes.

24. What percentage of your legal experience (including experience as a special appointed judge or referee) concerns the following areas? If you do not have experience in one of these areas, can you suggest how you would compensate for that particular area of practice?

a. Divorce and equitable distribution: 20%

b. Child custody: 15%

c. Adoption: 20%

d. Abuse and neglect: 20%

e. Juvenile cases: 25%

25. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge?

I feel the appropriate demeanor is one of respect and fairness for all parties, while maintaining control of the courtroom. This type of demeanor is necessary to instill the public's confidence in the court's integrity.

26. Would the rules that you expressed in your previous answer apply only while you are on the bench or in chambers, or would these rules apply seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day?

Yes, a judge is subject to public scrutiny and must always conduct oneself in a manner that is reflective of the court's integrity.

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

Anger is never appropriate, but sternness must be exhibited, when necessary, to maintain order in the courtroom.

28. How much money have you spent on your campaign? If the amount is over \$100, has that been reported to the House and Senate Ethics Committees?

None.

29. If you are a sitting judge, have you used judicial letterhead or the services of your staff while campaigning for this office?

N/A

30. Have you sought or received the pledge of any legislator prior to this date?

No.

31. Have you sought or been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening?

No.

32. Have you asked any third parties to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf before the final and formal screening report has been released? Are you aware of any friends or colleagues contacting members of the General Assembly on your behalf?

No.

33. Have you contacted any members of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission?


No.

34. Are you familiar with the 48-hour rule, which prohibits a candidate from seeking pledges for 48 hours after the draft report has been submitted?

Yes.

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

Wade L. Adams

Sworn to before me this 7 day of March, ²⁰¹⁶2015. 

Stephanie Cohens

(Signature)

Stephanie Cohens

(Print name)

Notary Public for South Carolina

My commission expires: March 1, 2022