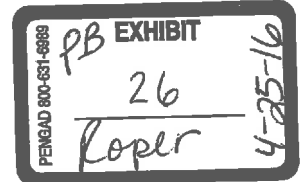


JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE



Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying: Family Court, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, Seat 4

1. Name: Mr.
Mrs. Karen Sanchez Roper
Ms.

Name that you are known by if different from above
(Example: A Nickname): N/A

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge?
(Includes Municipal, Magistrate, Etc.) No

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Business Address: 105 W. Cedar Rock St., PO Box 246, Pickens, SC 29671

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: (home): [REDACTED]
(office): (864) 878-1577

2. Date of Birth: [REDACTED] 1969
Place of Birth: Valdosta, GA
Social Security Number: [REDACTED]

3. Are you a citizen of South Carolina? Yes
Have you been a resident of this state for at least the immediate past five years? Yes

4. SCDL# or SCHD#: [REDACTED]
Voter Registration Number: [REDACTED]

5. Family Status: Married on 08/06/1994 to Kenneth Scott Roper.
Never divorced, two children.

[REDACTED]

6. Have you served in the military? If so, give the dates, branch of service, highest rank attained, serial number, present status, and the character of your discharge or release. 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) University of Georgia, 1987 – 1991, B.A.
 - (b) University of South Carolina School of Law, 1991 – 1994, J.D.

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) South Carolina, 1994

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) Alpha Delta Pi sorority, University of Georgia, 1987-1991
 - (b) Georgia Girl, UGA Athletic Department, 1987-1988
 - (c) UGA at Oxford program, 1990
 - (d) Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Athens, GA, 1987-1988
 - (e) Moot Court Bar, University of South Carolina School of Law, 1993-1994
 - (f) Finalist, J. Woodrow Lewis Moot Court Competition, University of South Carolina School of Law, 1993
 - (g) Team Captain, National Moot Court Competition, Region V, Atlanta, GA, 1993

10. Describe your continuing legal or judicial education during the past five years.

<u>Conference/CLE Name</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>
(a) Greenville County Bar Year End CLE	02/12/16;
(b) SC Family Court Bench/Bar	12/04/15;
(c) Representing Defendant Parents in DSS Abuse/Neglect	09/18/15;
(d) Pickens County Bar Ethics Seminar	08/20/15;
(e) Divorce Litigation from Start to Finish	08/17/15;
(f) Identifying Representation Issues: Strategizing Solutions	05/01/15;
(g) Greenville County Bar Year End CLE	02/13/15;
(h) OID Abuse & Neglect Contract Attorneys	09/05/14;
(i) OID Abuse & Neglect Contract Attorneys	02/21/14;
(j) 60 Tips for Small Firm Lawyers	02/17/14;
(k) Family Court Bench/Bar	12/06/13;
(l) SC Local Government Attorneys Institute	11/22/13;
(m) Cellphone Forensics: Call Me	02/18/13;
(n) Cellphone Forensics: Using Protection for Cell Phones	02/18/13;
(o) Estate Administration Procedures	12/17/12;
(p) SC Local Government Attorneys Institute	12/07/12;
(q) Dollars & Sense in Family Court	02/08/12;
(r) SC Local Government Attorneys	12/09/11;
(s) Lawyer Mentoring Second Pilot Program	04/13/11;

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| (t) | Hot Tips for the Solo/Small Firm Practitioner | 02/15/11; |
| (u) | Legal Ethics: Hot Topics | 12/13/10; |
| (v) | 2010 Hot Tips from the Coolest Domestic Practitioners | 10/01/10. |

11. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs? If so, briefly describe each course or lecture. Yes.
- (a) I have given presentations on Identifying Representation Issues, Representing Defendant Parents in DSS Abuse and Neglect Actions, and Strategizing Solutions, at CLEs sponsored by the Children's Law Center for attorneys representing DSS, guardians ad litem, and Defendant parents.
 - (b) I have given a presentation on the Trial of a Divorce Case in a Divorce Litigation from Start to Finish seminar sponsored by National Business Institute.
 - (c) I have given a presentation on Debt Collections Law in a seminar sponsored by National Business Institute.
 - (d) I taught a six-week legal education course for students enrolled in a paralegal studies program in the 1990s, but I do not recall the name of the sponsoring entity.
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.
- (a) South Carolina, 1994
 - (b) U.S. District Court for the District of SC, 1995
 - (c) U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, 1995
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.
- (a) Associate, Laddaga, Crout & Drachman, P.A., Charleston, South Carolina, 1994-1997. Handled general civil litigation, primarily focused on debt collection and domestic litigation.
 - (b) Owner/Partner, Roper Law Firm, LLC, 1997 – present. I handle primarily domestic litigation, probate matters, and local government representation.
15. Please answer the following (if you are a judge and are not seeking a different type of judgeship, this question is inapplicable):
- (a) 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.

1. Divorce and Equitable Division of Property: Over my years of practice, I have handled numerous divorce actions involving the equitable division of property. I have represented clients in contested divorce cases based upon the statutory grounds of adultery, physical cruelty, habitual drunkenness/drug abuse, and continuous separation for more than one year. I have experience preparing clients and other witnesses for the necessary testimony to establish grounds for divorce. I have also handled contested actions to establish a marriage by common law prior to seeking a divorce and equitable division of property. I have prepared numerous financial declarations for Family Court, and am familiar with reviewing tax returns and other financial documents necessary to establish accurate financial information where my client believed a spouse was attempting to hide income or other assets. I have successfully obtained alimony for clients, including periodic and lump sum alimony, as well as successfully defended clients who sought to preclude an award of alimony. I have prepared multiple Qualified Domestic Relations Orders (QDROs) regarding the division of retirement accounts, as well as handled cases involving military pensions. I have also drafted numerous marital settlement agreements detailing the terms of equitable division agreed upon by the parties and prepared any accompanying deeds or other legal documents necessary to accomplish the division of property as contemplated in the agreement.
2. Child Custody: I have handled contested custody litigation on behalf of parents, as well as served as guardian ad litem for children in contested custody matters. I have experience preparing a parent's testimony for direct and cross examination at trial. After the onset of mandatory mediation in Family Court, most of my contested custody cases are now able to resolve prior to trial. I became a Certified Family Court Mediator in 2006, and am an enthusiastic advocate of mediation. I believe that resolution through mediation, while not perfect, is usually preferable to a contested custody trial. I always advise my clients that mediation allows the client to decide what he or she can live with; but in a trial, the Family Court judge will decide what my client must live with. I have experience drafting detailed custody and visitation agreements addressing child support, insurance coverages, day care or after school care, educational expenses, restrictions on parental conduct, and many other terms. My approach is to tailor agreement terms specifically to the needs of the family involved, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Custody and visitation orders often need to incorporate flexibility that will accommodate changes as the child grows older. A visitation schedule that works well when a child is an infant may become impractical when the child is a teenager. In any custody or visitation matter, each family is unique, and the goal is to achieve a resolution that will serve the long term needs of that family.
3. Adoption: I have handled many adoption actions on behalf of step-parents and other relatives, including termination of parental rights actions. I have

prosecuted contested termination and adoption actions on behalf of private parties and DSS, and I have also defended these actions on behalf of biological parents. I have prepared many relinquishments of parental rights and am familiar with the process of obtaining an informed, voluntary relinquishment from a biological parent for the purpose of adoption. I am familiar with the statutory requirements for adoption and our state's policy regarding achieving permanency for the child.

4. Abuse and Neglect. I have extensive experience handling cases of abuse and neglect through the varied perspectives of a defense attorney, a prosecuting attorney, and a guardian ad litem. Since beginning to practice law, I have actively practiced in this area. As an associate at Laddaga, Crout, & Drachman, P.A., I handled all of the abuse and neglect appointments for the firm, as well as served as appointed guardian ad litem in these cases. I worked as a contract attorney with Berkeley County DSS and Greenville County DSS, handling emergency hearings, abuse and neglect hearings, and termination of parental rights hearings. I now focus my practice on defending parents involved in DSS actions, and work as contract attorney for the SC Commission on Indigent Defense. I regularly handle a large number of abuse and neglect cases on the Pickens County docket each week. These experiences have given me a strong knowledge base regarding the statutory requirements in abuse and neglect cases, as well as a familiarity with some of the challenges facing our court system in trying to administer these cases in a timely manner.
 5. Juvenile Justice: I have handled juvenile justice cases, but have not found a large client base seeking privately retained attorneys in these matters. Most of the juvenile cases in Pickens County are handled by the public defender's office. I do have experience handling a juvenile case through trial, where I was able to obtain a directed verdict on behalf of my client. The remaining juvenile cases I handled were successfully resolved through a juvenile diversion program. I have handled several DSS cases that arose out of an initial DJJ action; therefore, I am familiar with relevant statutes and DJJ policies and procedures. Through my representation of the School District of Pickens County, I also frequently deal with various juvenile issues related to expulsion hearings and truancy matters.
- (b) If you are a candidate for Circuit Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience in criminal matters, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Further, please provide a brief written description of your experience in civil matters, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the types of matters handled, issues involved, and procedural history. Please include information such as the primary areas in civil court in which you practice, whether you represent plaintiffs or defendants, or both. You may go back further than five years if you feel it would assist the Commission with its assessment of your experience. If you lack experience in an area, describe how your background has prepared you to preside

over such matters as a Circuit Court Judge, or how you would compensate for your lack of experience in this area. N/A

- (c) If you are a candidate for Master-In-Equity, please provide a brief written description of your experience in the Master's court, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Please include the frequency of your appearances before a Master-In-Equity. N/A
- (d) If you are a candidate for Administrative Law Judge, please provide a brief written description of your experience before an Administrative Law Judge, including any issues discussed and the frequency of your appearances before the Administrative Law Judge Court. N/A

16. 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 do not have a rating by any legal rating organization.

*** Retired justices/judges and justices/judges applying for reelection to their current position may omit Questions 17-22. If a candidate is seeking a judgeship different than his or her current position, Questions 17-22 should be answered based on experience prior to serving on the bench.**

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

- (a) federal: 0
- (b) state: 1-3 times per week

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

- (a) civil: 0%
- (b) criminal: 0%
- (c) domestic: 70%
- (d) other: 30% (Probate Court, local government representation)

19. 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

20. 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) *Galloway, et. al., v. SCDSS, et. al., Case No. 2003-CP-39-959*: This was initiated as a probate case for the purpose of bringing a wrongful death and survival action on behalf of the grandmother of a child who died while in the custody of SCDSS from injuries inflicted by the foster mother. This case presented the issue of whether a grandmother had standing to seek appointment as Personal Representative of her grandchild's estate, when the grandchild's parents had their parental rights terminated prior to the child's death, but without a final order of adoption. I filed the initial action in Pickens County Probate Court, seeking appointment of the grandmother as Personal Representative. DSS opposed the appointment, and after a contested hearing in Probate Court, the judge agreed with my client and found that the grandmother's right to serve as Personal Representative was not extinguished by the termination of the parents' rights. My client was appointed as Personal Representative of her granddaughter's estate, and I filed suit in the Court of Common Pleas for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit. The case proceeded through a protracted discovery phase, which included depositions of DSS employees and medical personnel. My client settled the portion of the case against the foster parents, one of whom had pled guilty to homicide by child abuse and was serving a prison sentence. The case against DSS was unable to settle and proceeded to jury trial in 2005. Due to the application of the SC Tort Claims Act, we faced a high burden of proof at trial, and would be unable to recover any damages against DSS unless we could prove gross negligence. Despite the evidence of escalating injuries to the child prior to her death, the jury decided that the gross negligence standard was not met. Although not successful, this case was an extremely important learning experience for me in conducting extensive discovery, deposing DSS witnesses, becoming informed on the DSS policies and procedures for the approval of foster parents, and preparing and presenting a case to the jury.
- (b) *Southern v. Mitchell, 1997-DR-10-0870*: This was a domestic action filed by my client (wife) seeking establishment of a common law marriage, divorce on the ground of adultery, custody, child support, alimony, and equitable division of assets and debts. The parties lived together for many years, had children together, and started a business together. At the temporary hearing, my client obtained custody and child support, and the remaining issues were bifurcated for trial. A contested trial was held solely on the establishment of marriage by common law, where we presented evidence that husband previously testified by deposition in a personal injury lawsuit that he considered himself married to wife. The Court found that a common law marriage had been established, and a final hearing was scheduled on the divorce and related relief. The final hearing involved complex issues surrounding the valuation and division of the family business, as well as multiple tracts of real property, including property that husband received by inheritance but that wife argued had transmuted into marital property. These issues were complicated by obstacles presented in the discovery process, eventually necessitating an Order to Compel Discovery. After the final hearing, my client was awarded a divorce, custody, child support, and an equitable share of the marital assets. This case was significant because it was my first experience proving a marriage by common law and the transmutation of non-marital property into marital

property. In addition, I gained knowledge on the unique issues sometimes presented by the valuation and division of a family business. Finally, this case was also a valuable learning experience in how to navigate challenging issues with opposing counsel to obtain answers to our discovery requests.

- (c) *SCDSS v. Shepherd*, 2005-DR-39-434 & -0115: This was an action by Pickens County DSS against my client, the mother of two children. The children had been removed from the mother and placed in foster care due to my client's substance abuse issues. My client was serving a prison term and sought to have her children moved from foster care to the home of relatives. DSS approved the relatives for custody, but this placement was inexplicably delayed for 15 months, while the children remained in foster care. During this time, the foster parents decided that they wanted to adopt the children. The foster parents filed a Motion to Intervene and Complaint for Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption on the grounds of diagnosable condition, failure to remedy the conditions that caused removal, failure to visit, and failure to support. The actions were consolidated and a two-day trial was held. In the intervening time, my client was released from prison and was complying with treatment services. Multiple witnesses, including an expert witness, testified regarding the custodial arrangement that would serve the best interest of the children. At the conclusion of trial, the court required all parties to submit post-trial briefs on the issues. Ultimately, the court determined that although the foster parents did prove sufficient grounds for termination of parental rights, the best interest of the children would be served by placement with the relatives, rather than adoption. The court ordered a gradual transition to the relatives' custody, with counseling for the children to aid in the transition. The court's decision also addressed the importance of ensuring that guardians ad litem conduct a balanced investigation before making recommendations regarding custody. This case was significant because it involved multiple witnesses, including the DSS caseworker, the guardian ad litem, the expert witness, and the relatives, all having conflicting opinions as to the best interest of the children. This case also underscored the importance of achieving a timely permanent plan for children, as delays in the system can have a significant impact on the children's lives.

- (d) *Joplin v. Joplin*, 2012-DR-39-1192: This was an action for divorce brought by the wife against my client, the husband. Wife sought a divorce on the ground of adultery, custody, child support, alimony, a share of husband's retirement account, award of the marital home, equitable share of other real properties, restraining order, and attorney's fees. This was a contentious situation between the parties, due to the adultery allegations and the vastly different opinions on husband's amount of income derived from self-employment and commissions. A contested temporary hearing was held, with multiple affidavits submitted by each party. The court determined that the parties would share joint custody, with primary placement to wife and secondary placement to husband. We were successful in persuading the court to accept husband's income as stated on his Financial Declaration and deny wife's request for temporary alimony. The case then proceeded to the discovery phase, where the attorneys attempted to achieve an amicable resolution for our

clients: however, the adultery allegations and other volatile situations between the parties continued to thwart our efforts. However, when we mediated the case with the Honorable Stephen Bartlett, we were able to successfully resolve all issues. We were able to negotiate a joint custodial arrangement, equitable division of the real property, with waivers of claims to alimony or retirement accounts. This case was significant because both parties were active, engaged parents who were determined to keep custody of their children. I do not think we would have resolved this case without mandatory mediation. With the assistance of the mediator, both parties realized that they could set aside their differences and reach an acceptable resolution that would keep both parents actively involved in their children's lives. Once the custody issue was resolved, all other issues resolved rather quickly.

- (e) *SCDSS v. Hitt, et al, 2015-DR-39-545 & 2014-DR-39-862*: This was initially a removal action brought by DSS based upon allegations of physical neglect to three children. The parents had a volatile marital history, including mutual accusations of violence and drug abuse, and separated shortly after the children were placed in foster care. At some point after the children were placed in foster care, one of the children (4 years old) allegedly disclosed past sexual abuse to the foster parents. DSS arranged for the child to undergo a forensic interview, during which the child denied any abuse occurred. Several weeks later, DSS arranged for a second forensic interview, where the child then repeated the abuse allegations and named the father as the perpetrator. DSS filed a second action based upon the allegations of sexual abuse, and I was appointed to represent the father. The father also faced pending criminal charges. My client adamantly denied the allegations. At trial, DSS sought to present the child's out-of-court statements through hearsay witnesses as provided under S.C. Code §19-1-180; namely, the forensic interviewer and the child's counselor, both of whom were licensed as Master Social Workers. We filed a motion to exclude this testimony because the parents were separated at the time the statements were made, and §19-1-180 provides that these statements are admissible only if made to "a licensed family counselor or therapist." We argued that according to SC LLR, the licensure requirements of a Master Social Worker are separate and distinct from the licensure requirements of a Professional Counselor or Marriage and Family Therapist, and as such, a Master Social Worker would not qualify as "a licensed family counselor or therapist" under the statute. We also sought to exclude the statements because they did not contain "particularized guarantees of trustworthiness" under the statute. After viewing both forensic interviews of the child, it appeared that DSS selectively offered only offered those statements that were consistent with the abuse allegations in its Complaint and disregarded multiple statements that denied the abuse allegations. In addition, the use of suggestive and leading questions in the child's interview also cast doubt upon trustworthiness of the statements. After arguments on the motion, the trial judge disagreed and ruled that as long as a witness holds a license with SC LLR and also conducts counseling, that witness should be considered "a licensed family counselor or therapist" under §19-1-180, and that the statements did have sufficient guarantees of trustworthiness to present at trial. During trial, we focused on pointing out the inconsistencies in the child's statements, as well as deficiencies in the forensic interviewer's process.

However, at the conclusion, the Court found that DSS did prove the allegations by a preponderance of the evidence, and a finding of sexual abuse was entered against my client. Despite the finding, my client continued to maintain his innocence and directed that I file an appeal. Since I do not normally handle appellate work, after filing my client's notice of appeal I arranged to substitute an appellate attorney with the Office of Indigent Defense, and his appeal is still pending. This case was significant for me not only because of the sensitive subject matter, but also because it required significant research into the current protocol and recommended techniques for interviewing children. Forensic interviews can present many challenges, several of which were present in this case – the young age of the child, the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, the presence of speech impediments, etc. I also consider this case significant because of the challenges presented by my own client. Unfortunately, he had negative experiences with DSS, law enforcement, court personnel, and even the previous lawyers appointed to represent him. I undertook this representation knowing that it would be essential to earn his trust in order to represent him effectively. During the course of my representation, I found that his past behaviors resulted from his feeling that no one in the system was listening to him or treating him with respect. We had a very respectful attorney/client relationship, and even though I did not win his case, he has repeatedly written me letters thanking me and stating that he was proud to have me as his lawyer. This was a valuable experience in diffusing a potentially volatile situation simply by listening to someone and treating them with respect.

21. 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.
(a) SCDSS, Respondent. v. Hitt, Appellant, Appellate Case No. 2015-002333, SC Court of Appeals. I filed the Notice of Appeal on behalf of my client, and an Order of Substitution was entered on 12/04/15, substituting Melinda Inman Butler as attorney for the Appellant.
22. List up to five criminal appeals that you have personally handled. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision and the citation if the case was reported.
None
23. 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 have not held judicial office.
24. If the answer to question 23 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.
N/A

25. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? If so, list the periods of your service, the office or offices involved, and whether you were elected or appointed. Also, state whether or not you have timely filed your report with the State Ethics Commission during the period you held public office. If not, were you ever subject to a penalty? If so, give details, including dates. I have not ever held public office.
26. 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. N/A
27. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates. No
28. 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? If so, give details, including a description of your occupation, business, or profession, the dates of your employment, and the name of your business or employer.
Yes.
- (a) Partner, Upstate Land Title, LLC, 2002 – present. Title insurance company co-owned with my husband, attorney Ken Roper. Served as a licensed title agent for issuance of title insurance policies in conjunction with real estate closings.
- (b) Partner, The Upstate Agency, LLC, 2009 - 2011. Insurance company co-owned with my husband, attorney Ken Roper. Served as a licensed broker/producer for issuance of property/casualty/life policies. Corporation was dissolved in August 2011.
29. Are you now an officer or director or involved in the management of any business enterprise? Explain the nature of the business, your duties, and the term of your service.
Yes
- (a) Partner, Roper Law Firm, LLC, 1997 – present. Law firm co-owned with my husband, attorney Ken Roper. Provides legal services.
- (b) Partner, Upstate Land Title, LLC, 2002 – present. Title insurance company co-owned with my husband, attorney Ken Roper. Ken serves as a licensed title agent for issuance of title insurance policies in conjunction with real estate closings. I do not have any duties with this company other than being a member of the LLC.
- (c) Partner, South Azalea, LLC, 2012 – present. Real estate holding company co-owned with my husband Ken Roper.
30. Provide, as a separate attachment, a complete, current financial net worth statement that itemizes in detail:
- (a) the identity and value of all financial assets held, directly or indirectly, including, but not limited to, bank accounts, real estate, securities, trusts, investments, and other financial holdings; and
- (b) the identity and amount of each liability owed, directly or indirectly, which is in excess of \$1,000, including, but not limited to, debts, mortgages, loans, and other financial obligations.
- (Your response to this question may state “see attached”). See Attached

(A net worth statement is provided with this questionnaire and you must use this format for submission of your financial statement.)

NOTE: The Commission may require written confirmation that financial obligations have been satisfied or that the parties have agreed upon a payment schedule.

31. 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. Explain how you would resolve any potential conflict of interest.
- (a) I am currently a partner in Roper Law Firm, LLC, with my husband, attorney Ken Roper. If I am elected to the Family Court bench, I would withdraw as a member of the firm and my husband would operate as a sole member LLC. He does not handle any family court cases; therefore, his continued operation of the firm should not present any conflict of interest. However, if any potential conflict of interest were to arise, I would disclose my relationship with the firm and recuse myself from hearing any matters which involve Ken, the firm, or matters that I handled when associated with the firm.
- (b) I am currently a partner in Upstate Land Title, LLC, with my husband, attorney Ken Roper. This is a title insurance company that issues title policies in connection with real estate closings. Ken serves as the licensed title agent. If I am elected to the Family Court bench, I would withdraw as a member and my husband would remain as sole member. I do not anticipate any situation where this LLC's interests could come before the Family Court. However, if any potential conflict of interest were to arise, I would disclose my relationship with the LLC and recuse myself from hearing any matters which involve Ken or the LLC.
- (c) I am currently a partner in South Azalea, LLC with my husband. This LLC owns parcels of real estate in Pickens County, one of which is currently leased to a barber. If elected to the bench, I would disclose my relationship with the LLC and recuse myself from hearing any matters which involve Ken, the LLC, or our tenant.
32. 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? If so, give details but do not include traffic violations for which a fine of \$125 or less was imposed. Yes. In 1989, when I was a 19-year-old college student at the University of Georgia, I was charged with driving under the influence. I had attended a debutant party in Gainesville, Georgia, where I wrongly participated in under-age drinking. After the party, my friend and I believed that we had waited the appropriate number of hours after consuming alcohol before driving home; however, I was pulled over for a failure to dim my headlights. I was truthful to the officer that I had been drinking earlier in the evening. I immediately told my parents and we decided to plead no contest in order to put the embarrassing incident behind us. I paid a fine and attended a safe driving course. I was deeply ashamed of my decision that night, and I learned a valuable lesson. I am grateful to God that no person was injured and no property was damaged. Since that time, I have disclosed this incident on every pertinent application, including submission of a provisional application to the Committee on Character and Fitness prior to applying for the SC Bar Exam. Thankfully, the Committee returned my provisional application to me.

stating that it was not necessary because the offense did not rise to a level that would adversely impact upon my character. I can assure this Commission that this offense was an isolated incident in my youth that has never been repeated.

33. Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? If yes, explain. No
34. 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? If so, give details. No
35. 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? If so, give details, including, but not limited to, dates and resolution. No
36. Have you ever, in South Carolina or any other jurisdiction, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, been sanctioned or disciplined for lawyer, judicial, or other professional misconduct or has any jurisdiction found that you committed any misconduct? If so, give the details and describe any final disposition. ■
37. Have you ever been investigated by the Department of Social Services? If so, give the details and the resolution. Has your name ever been enrolled on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect? If so, give the details. No
38. If you are in private practice, are you covered by malpractice insurance and, if so, how long have you carried malpractice insurance? If applicable, have you ever been covered by a tail policy? If so, please explain when you were covered by a tail policy. Also, if applicable, indicate your coverage and deductible for your current malpractice policy. Yes. I have maintained my own malpractice insurance since establishing Roper Law Firm in 1997; prior to that time, I was covered under the malpractice insurance policy provided by my employer, Laddaga, Crout & Drachman, P.A. I have never been covered by a tail policy. My current coverage is provided by CNA, with a \$5,000 deductible and policy limits of \$300,000/\$600,000.
39. 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.? If so, how would your use of social media or other similar types of Internet sites be affected if you were serving in a judicial capacity? I have a personal Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter account, as well as a Facebook and Twitter account for my law firm. If I were to serve in a judicial capacity, I would divest from any interest in my law firm, and therefore would not have any participation in my firm's social media accounts. I believe that I would continue to maintain my personal social media accounts, but would limit my participation to personal interactions with family and friends in compliance with the Judicial Canons.

40. 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)? If so, give the dates of your employment or activity in such capacity and specify by whom you were directed or employed. No
41. 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? If so, please specify the item or items you received, the date of receipt, and the lobbyist or lobbyist’s principal involved. No
42. 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.” Please detail any knowledge you have of any formal charges or informal allegations against you or any other candidate for violations of these provisions. Include the disposition, if any, of such charges or allegations. None
43. 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. Include the disposition, if any, of such charges or allegations. None.
44. 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.
- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|---------|
| (a) 10/09/15 – 11/15/15 | Postage | \$66.80 |
| (b) 12/11/15 | Nametags | \$35.49 |
| (c) 02/19/16 | Cards | \$64.20 |
45. 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. None.
46. 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? If so, give details.
- Note: Attached are (1) Section 2-19-70(c); (2) JMISC Rule 24, and (3) informal opinions and letters concerning pledging prohibitions, with which third parties acting on your behalf, as well as you, must comply.** No

47. Have you requested a friend or colleague to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf? If so, give details. Are you aware of any friends or colleagues contacting members of the General Assembly on your behalf? If so, give details. No
48. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy? If so, please specify the amount, solicitor, donor, and date of the solicitation. No
49. 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? No
50. 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) South Carolina Bar
 - (b) Pickens County Bar
 - (c) Family Law Section of SC Bar
 - (d) SC Lawyer Mentoring Program
51. 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.
- (a) Pickens Presbyterian Church, member 2002-present
 - Trustee, 2016 – present
 - Elder, 2006 – present
 - Clerk of Session, 2007 - 2009
 - Session, 2006 – 2009
 - Youth Leader, 2010 -- 2015
 - Co-chair, Christian Outreach Committee, 2007 – 2009
 - Co-chair, Christian Education Committee, 2006 – 2007
 - Foothills Presbytery Disaster Assistance Team, 2005
 - Habitat for Humanity team, 2009
 - CROP Hunger Walk coordinator, 2008
 - Co-chair, Vacation Bible School, 2002 – 2005
 - Sunday School teacher
 - (b) Pickens Women’s Association, member 2002-present
 - President, 2011 - 2012; 2005 - 2006
 - Vice-President, 2010 - 2011, 2004 - 2005
 - Treasurer, 2008 – 2010
 - Chair, Scholarship and Benevolence Committee, 2014 - present
 - Co-chair, Azalea Festival Race Committee, 2013
 - (b) Cannon Memorial Hospital Foundation Board, 2011 – present
 - Investments Committee, 2013 - 2015
 - (c) Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center Board, appointed by Governor Haley, 2014 – present
 - Programs Committee, 2014 - present

- (d) Pickens Chamber of Commerce, member 2015 – present
- (e) Liberty Chamber of Commerce, member 2001 – 2011
 - Board member, 2009 – 2010
 - Business of the Year, 2005
 - Nominee for Pickens County Businesswoman of the Year, 2003
- (f) Leadership Pickens County, graduate 2004
 - Board of Regents, 2005
- (g) Pickens County First Steps Board, 2005 – 2006
- (f) Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County Board, 2002 - 2006

52. 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. This information may include how your life experiences have affected or influenced the kind or type of judge you have been or plan to be.

I applied to law school with the intention of pursuing a career in family law. My life-long passion for issues surrounding children and families motivated me to seek a career in this area. Since my graduation from law school, I have intentionally focused my legal work and my community activities in areas that I feel have the most impact on children and families, whether through serving on boards for Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County and Pickens County First Steps, volunteering in children and youth programs at Pickens Presbyterian Church, or representing parents involved in a custody dispute. Through my representation of the School District of Pickens County over the past 10 years, I frequently consult with school personnel on student disciplinary matters and other issues that have a great impact on our children. My representation of indigent parents through the SC Commission of Indigent Defense has raised my awareness about the dire situation of many of the families in our community. My current service on the boards of Anderson-Oconee-Pickens Mental Health Center and Cannon Memorial Hospital Foundation has given me the opportunity to advocate for the health services that are necessary for so many of our families to raise healthy, well-adjusted children. As a result of these experiences, I would welcome the opportunity to further my involvement in children's and family's issues through service on the Family Court bench.

For most people, Family Court is their first introduction to our judicial system. Most of our citizens will have only limited experience with courts of General Session or Common Pleas; but even if an individual has not personally gone through a divorce, most likely each of us has a parent, child, or sibling involved in a Family Court case at some point in their lives. Family Court deals with extremely personal issues and as a result, the emotions in the courtroom can run very high. I have witnessed attorneys, and occasionally judges, fall into the trap of reflecting these emotions and unintentionally intensifying the anger and resentment that sometimes accompanies the dissolution of a marriage or the custodial arrangements for a child. I have seen litigants leave the courtroom feeling their position was ignored or disrespected. When litigants leave our courtrooms feeling overlooked and dissatisfied with the process, we lose an opportunity for the court's ruling to bring long term peace and resolution for that family.

In this highly charged atmosphere of Family Court, I believe it is vitally important to provide clear rules, clear boundaries, and clear expectations. Our adherence to the Rules of Evidence and the statutes set by the General Assembly establishes clear rules that can eliminate much of the "unknown" for parties entering the courtroom. Uniformly enforcing these rules and requiring persons to conduct themselves with decorum helps establish clear boundaries for all parties. Assuring litigants that each will have the opportunity to be heard, that all parties and witnesses will be treated with dignity and respect, and that all parties will have equal access to their rights and rules under our court system, will set clear expectations for the hearing. I firmly believe that if we abide by clear rules, boundaries, and expectations, we will see better long term outcomes for our litigants, higher job satisfaction among lawyers and courthouse staff, and most importantly, better public perception of our judicial system as a whole.

53. List the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five (5) persons, including your banker, from whom you are providing references. Also, provide the Commission with **original letters** of recommendation from each person listed herein, including their signature (preferably in blue ink). **The Commission will not accept a photocopy or electronic submission of a letter of recommendation and failure to include all five (5) original letters of recommendation in your packet when you submit it will render your packet incomplete.** Please **do not** have references mail your reference letters to the Commission directly.
- (a) Sheriff Rick Clark, Pickens County Sheriff's Office, 216 C. David Stone Road, Pickens, SC, 29671, Telephone (864) 898-5500
 - (b) Dr. Danny Merck, Superintendent, School District of Pickens County, 1348 Griffin Mill Road, Easley, SC, 29640, Telephone (864) 397-1029
 - (c) Mr. Norman G. Rentz, CEO, Cannon Memorial Hospital, 123 W.G. Acker Drive, Pickens, SC 29671, Telephone (864) 898-1133
 - (d) J. Hugh Ryan, III, Esq., Deputy Director and General Counsel, SC Commission on Indigent Defense, PO Box 11433, Columbia, SC 29211, Telephone (803) 734-1338

(e) Mrs. Lauren Murphy, Senior Vice-President, Pickens Savings and Loan, 205 E. Cedar Rock St., Pickens, SC 29671, Telephone (864) 878-2444

54. Describe any interest you or a member of your immediate family has in real property:
- (a) in which there is a potential conflict of interest with your involvement in a South Carolina state or local public agency; None
 - (b) in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or that adjoins property in which there have been public improvements of \$200; or None
 - (c) which was sold, leased, or rented to a state or local public agency in South Carolina. None

List the interest you hold and the value and location of the property. Identify as applicable the:

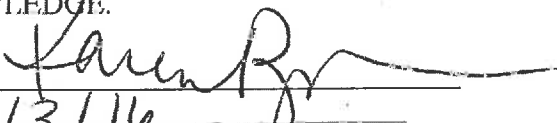
- (a) nature of any potential conflict of interest; N/A
- (b) nature and value of any public improvements; and N/A
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property. N/A

Attach a copy of any contract or agreement. N/A

55. Identify any personal property interest you or a member of your immediate family sold, leased, or rented to a South Carolina state or local public agency. Identify the property, its amount or value, and the name of the agency. Attach a copy of any contract or agreement. None

YOUR SIGNATURE WILL BE HELD TO CONSTITUTE A WAIVER OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ANY PROCEEDING BEFORE A GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE OR ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR CREDIT.

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

Signature: 
Date: 3/3/14