

JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

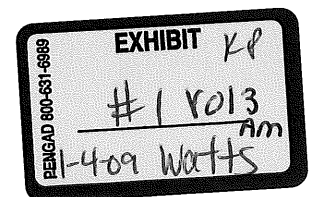
Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying:
Dorchester County Master in Equity

1. NAME: Mr. Patrick R. Watts
BUSINESS ADDRESS: 101 Ridge Street
St. George, South Carolina 29477
E-MAIL ADDRESS: patrowat@hotmail.com
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (office):843-832-0001
2. Date of Birth: 1950
Place of Birth: Enid, Oklahoma
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
5. Family Status: Married on June 5, 1976, to Judith Anne Stein Watts. Never divorced. Two children.
6. Have you served in the military?
January 1976 to December 1980; U.S. Air Force; Captain; XXX-XX-XXXX discharged; honorable.
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) Clemson University; 1968-72; B.A.
 - (b) University of South Carolina School of Law; 1972-75; J.D.
 - (c) Midlands Technical College; 1983-84; A.A.
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.

South Carolina; 1975
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.

Clemson University:

 - (a) Air Force Reserve Officer Training Course, 1968-72; commissioned 2d Lieutenant.
 - (b) Alpha Phi Omega, National Service Fraternity, 1969-72; President, 1971-72.
 - (c) Hall Monitor, 1969-71; Hall Supervisor, 1971-72.
 - (d) Tae Kwon Do Club, 1969-72; President, 1971-72.



- (e) Student Defense Counsel of Student Government, 1971-72.
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(s)</u>
(a) Master in Equity Bench/Bar	10/10/08;
(b) Annual Judicial Conference	08/20/08;
(c) Master in Equity Bench/Bar	10/12/07;
(d) Annual Judicial Conference	08/22/07;
(e) Master in Equity Bench/Bar	10/13/06;
(f) Annual Judicial Conference	08/23/06;
(g) Master in Equity Bench/Bar	10/14/05;
(h) Attorney ECF Training (USDCOC)	08/25/05;
(i) Annual Judicial Conference	08/24/05;
(j) SC Estate Planning (NBI)	04/11/05;
(k) SC Land Use (NBI)	03/01/05;
(l) Equity Court Council Annual Meeting	02/25/05;
(m) Revised Judicial Oath	12/10/04;
(n) Master in Equity Bench/Bar	10/15/04;
(o) Revised Lawyer's Oath	10/01/04;
(p) Equity Court Council Annual Meeting	02/06/04.

11. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs?

I taught Business Law I classes two semesters as adjunct instructor at Trident Technical College.

12. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each. None
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) Admitted to practice before the State Courts of South Carolina in 1975;
- (b) Admitted to practice before the Court of Military Appeals in 1976.

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) 1976 to 1980 - Assistant Staff Judge Advocate - United States Air Force -Captain. Prosecuted courts-martial. Conducted administrative hearings and investigations. Adjudicated small claims against the Air Force. Prepared and reviewed environmental impact assessments of base activities. Advised commanders on federal law and Air Force regulations. Advised individual members on personal legal matters.

Conducted seminars for base personnel on the military justice system and on the international law of war.

(b) 1984 to Present - Attorney at Law.

Practice general law with an emphasis on all matters related to real estate, to business and to estate planning and probate. Engage in business and real estate litigation. Close business purchases, commercial and residential real estate purchases and loans. Create and represent business and non-profit organizations.

(c) 1984 to 1990 - Associate with Rutherford P.C. Smith, Esq.

(d) 1990 to 1994 - shareholder of Smith and Watts, P.A.

(e) 1994 to Present - Dorchester County Master in Equity.

Hear and rule upon any civil case referred by consent of the parties, or by the Clerk of Court or by the rules. These generally include all cases involving real estate, for specific performance or to set the amount of damages in a default case. Schedule hearings, research law and write orders.

(f) 1995 to Present - Special Circuit Court Judge.

Review and sign orders for default judgment and administrative orders.

Hear and sign orders on minor's settlements.

15. What is your rating in Martindale-Hubbell? BV

22. Have you ever held judicial office?

(a) 1994 to Present – Dorchester County Master in Equity. Appointed by the Governor.

(b) 1995 to Present – Special Circuit Court Judge. Appointed by the Chief Justice.

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.

(a) Fred Ulfers v. Henry S. Capers et al; 2007-CP-18-0145.

Henry S. Capers filed an appeal on July 31, 2009.

(b) David Sojourner v. Town of St. George et al; 2008-CP-18-2072. S.E.2d, 2009 WL 1851378, Opinion No. 26680, S.C. June 29, 2009.

(c) Lowcountry Open Land Trust v. Charleston Southern University; 2005-CP-18-0571. 376 S.C. 399, 656 S.E.2d 775, (S.C.App. 2008).

(d) James A. Bell, Jr. v. Patsy G. Knight et al; 2005-CP-18-1754. 376 S.C. 380, 656 S.E.2d 393, (S.C.App. 2008).

(e) Charleston Trident Home Builders, Inc. v. Town Council of Town of Summerville et al; 2003-CP-18-1193. 369 S.C. 498, 632 S.E.2d 864, S.C. (2006).

24. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? No.

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.

February 1994 to Present – Private law practice. See Item 14 for details.

26. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? No.
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? .

1981 to 1984 – Trust Officer with Citizens and Southern National Bank of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina. Promoted pension and profit sharing plans to business owners. Managed trust assets for individual beneficiaries. Settled decedent estates.

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

Yes; private law practice. See Item 14 for details.

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. Explain how you would resolve any potential conflict of interest.

I have been practicing law in the Summerville area for over twenty-five years. Since I am a part-time Master in Equity I continue to practice law. I have many clients and I share some of these with other professionals such as accountants, bankers, investment counselors and trust officers. I would resolve a conflict of interest with these clients and professionals by recusing myself from any case to which they are parties.

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? No.
32. Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? No.
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? No to all questions.
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? No.
36. 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.)? No.
37. 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. No.

38. 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?

I know of no such charges, allegations or violations.

39. 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 know of no such charges, allegations or violations.

40. 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 no such expenditures. I know of none made on my behalf.

41. 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. I know of none made on my behalf.

42. 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?

No to both questions.

43. 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?

No to both questions.

44. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy? No.

45. 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.

46. 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.

South Carolina Bar

47. 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) 1992 to Present. Dorchester County Development Corporation Director.
 - (b) 1996 to Present. Bethany Endowment Fund, Bethany United Methodist Church. Director, counsel.
48. 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 already been serving as Dorchester Master in Equity for over fifteen years.
49. References:
- (a) Ronald L. Strawn
Senior VP, The Bank of South Carolina
100 North Main Street
Summerville, SC 29483
843-832-7100
 - (b) Robert L. Pratt
CCIM, RE/MAX Pro Realty
9209 University Blvd
Charleston, SC 29406
843-576-2705
 - (c) George L. Tupper
Tupperway Construction
141 White Fence Lane
Summerville, SC 29485
843-873-4894
 - (d) Ronnie M. Givens, CPA
Dixon Hughes PLLC
133 East First North Street
Summerville, SC 29483
843-937-9710
 - (e) Rev. Dr. Robert J. Howell, Jr.
Senior Pastor, Bethany United Methodist Church
118 West Third South Street
Summerville, SC 29483
843-873-1230

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: Patrick R. Watts
Date: August 8, 2009

Patrick R. Watts
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 2046
Summerville, South Carolina 29484
843-875-9086

October 6, 2009

Judicial Merit Selection Commission
P.O. Box 142
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Re: Amendment To PDQ

Dear Commission:

Regrettably, I must amend question 35 of my August 2009 Personal Data Questionnaire in connection with my reappointment as Dorchester County Master in Equity.

My answer to that question should now read,

No. However, on September 14, 2009, a litigant filed a complaint against me with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel alleging I disregarded a conflict of interest in her case. The Complainant is Jo-Ann Wilhelm and the Case Number is 09-DE-J-0247. I submitted my written response on September 25, 2009, and I removed myself from her case. That is all I know at this point.

Sincerely,



Patrick R. Watts

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

Master-in-Equity
(Incumbent)

Full Name: Patrick R. Watts
Business Address: 101 Ridge Street, St. George
South Carolina 29477
Business Telephone: 843-832-0001

1. Do you plan to serve your full term if re-appointed?
Yes.
2. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?
Since I am a part-time Master in Equity, I already maintain a private practice.
3. Have you met the Constitutional requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice?
Yes.
4. What is your philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications? Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated?
I am constantly diligent to avoid *ex parte* communications. I do permit *ex parte* communications about strictly procedural matters. I am careful to monitor what *pro se* litigants say to stop them when they begin to talk about substantive matters of their case when the other party is not present.
5. What is your philosophy on recusal, especially in situations in which lawyer-legislators, former associates, or law partners are to appear before you?
During the season when I am seeking re-appointment, I would recuse myself from any lawyer-legislator's case. There is only one lawyer with whom I was associated and was a partner. That relationship ended fifteen years ago. He comes before me very rarely. I no longer feel it necessary to recuse myself from cases he presents or advise his opponents of that relationship. I have never had an associate work for me. I recuse myself from cases in which private clients and friends are parties. I would recuse myself from cases affecting any property interest of mine. For any case in which I believed a party or attorney might have a problem with me as judge, I would discuss it with all the parties and their counsel together. After considering their concerns and the circumstances of the case I would decide whether to recuse myself or remain as judge.
6. If you disclosed something that had the appearance of bias, but you believed it would not actually prejudice your impartiality, what deference would you give a party that requested your recusal? Would you grant such a motion?
Yes. That would eliminate a basis for appeal.

7. What standards have you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality?
I would accept gifts and social hospitality only from family, friends and long time private clients, in other words, from people with relationships that would otherwise disqualify me as their judge.
8. How would you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct of a lawyer or of a judge?
I would make absolutely sure the facts were true, probably seeking independent corroborating information. I would consult an expert on legal ethics. If the expert agreed there was reportable misconduct I would report it to the appropriate commission.
9. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions that need to be re-evaluated?
No.
10. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any political, social, community, or religious organizations?
No.
11. How do you handle the drafting of orders?
I typically write orders myself. I file the original and mail a court certified copy to all parties. Sometimes I will ask the attorney for the prevailing party to draft an order. I will remind the attorney to send a copy of the proposed order to all parties contemporaneously with sending it to me. When I get it I wait a week for any other party to object or request changes. Hearing no objection or request, I will sign the proposed order, file it and send out certified copies. If I want changes to the proposed order I mail copies of the corrections to all parties, asking the proponent to make the changes.
12. What methods do you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?
We maintain two calendars, one on my desk and one on my assistant's desk. I carry a third one. As soon as we become aware of a deadline or set an appointment or hearing date, we write it into all three calendars.
13. What is your philosophy on "judicial activism," and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy?
Trial judges should just interpret what is already on the books. Thus, they do not set public policy, but promote current public policy. I leave public policy setting to appellate justices.
14. Canon 4 allows a judge to engage in activities to improve the law, legal system, and administration of justice. What activities do you plan to undertake to further this improvement of the legal system?
I intend to continue serving on the Dorchester County Development Corporation and Bethany Endowment Fund. This service to the community helps promote the image of the legal community as public servants on several levels. I intend to continue behaving evenly tempered and moderately both in and out of the courtroom. This helps promote the

image of lawyers and judges as reasonable people. I intend to continue avoiding any activity that does not comport with the legal profession. This helps promote the image that lawyers and judges are dedicated to their profession.

15. Do you feel that the pressure of serving as a judge strains personal relationships (i.e. spouse, children, friends, or relatives)? How do you address this?
I have never felt any such pressure. I have never felt my service as a judge has ever strained any relationship I have with anyone.
16. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality?
No.
17. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved?
No.
18. Do you belong to any organizations that discriminate based on race, religion, or gender?
No.
19. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses? Yes.
20. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge?
Even tempered, moderate and equally attentive to all parties to a case.
21. Would the rules that you expressed in your previous answer apply only while you are on the bench or in chambers, or do these rules apply seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day?
I believe these rules apply seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day.
22. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public who would appear before you? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?
Absolutely not to both questions.
23. How much money have you spent on your campaign? If it is over \$100, has that amount been reported to the House and Senate Ethics Committees?
I have not spent any money on my campaign.
24. While campaigning for this office, have you used judicial letterhead or the services of your staff for your campaign? I have not campaigned for this office. If I do, I will not use judicial letterhead or the services of my staff.
25. Have you sought or received the pledge of any legislator prior to this date? No.
26. Have you sought or been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening?
No.

27. 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 to both questions.
28. Have you contacted any members of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission?
No.
29. 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.

s/ Patrick R. Watts

Sworn to before me this 8th day of August, 2009.

Notary Public for S.C.

My commission expires: 10-02-2013

Sworn Statement.