

**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**

Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying:
Judge, Family Court, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, Seat 3

1. NAME: The Honorable Ronald Ray Norton
BUSINESS ADDRESS: P.O. Box 1147
Conway, SC 29528
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 843-915-8997
2. Date of Birth: 1952
Place of Birth: Bennettsville, 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 on August 18, 1973, to Sarah Lane Dowling Norton. Never divorced; two children.
6. Have you served in the military? No.
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) USC 1970-74, Bachelor of Arts;
 - (b) USC School of Law 1974-77, Juris Doctor.
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.
Admitted in SC, 1977.
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) Member Chi Psi Fraternity 1971-74;
 - (b) Fraternity Vice President 1973-74;
 - (c) Worked as legislative page in SC House of Representatives 1970-77.
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) Family Law Section SC Bar Convention	01/25/13;
(b) Horry County Family Court Seminar-Procedural	12/12/12;
(c) Family Court Bench Bar Seminar	12/07/12;
(d) Mandatory Family Court Judges	12/06/12;
(e) Annual Judicial Conference	08/22/12;
(f) Annual Convention SCAJ	08/02/12;
(g) Family Court Judges Conference	04/18/12;
(h) Family Law Section SC Bar Convention	01/20/12;
(i) Horry County Family Court Seminar-Procedural	12/08/11;
(j) SC Family Court Bench Bar	12/02/11;



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|------|------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| (k) | Fifth Annual Horry County Probate Court CLE | 11/18/11; |
| (l) | Annual Judicial Conference | 08/17/11; |
| (m) | SCAJ Annual Convention | 08/04/11; |
| (n) | Family Court Judges' Conference | 06/01/11; |
| (o) | Family Law Section | 01/21/11; |
| (p) | Horry County Family Court Seminar-Procedural | 12/09/10; |
| (q) | SC Family Court Bench/Bar | 12/03/10; |
| (r) | Mini Summit on Justice for Children | 12/02/10; |
| (s) | Judicial Conference | 08/18/10; |
| (t) | SCAJ Annual Convention | 08/05/10; |
| (u) | General Jurisdiction | 05/16/10; |
| (v) | Family Court Judges Conference | 04/22/10; |
| (w) | Child Welfare in SC: Problems | 01/23/10; |
| (x) | Family Law Update | 01/22/10; |
| (y) | Family Court Seminar-Procedural | 12/10/09; |
| (z) | SC Family Court Bench/Bar | 12/04/09; |
| (aa) | Annual Judicial Conference | 08/19/09; |
| (bb) | Annual Convention SCAJ | 08/06/09; |
| (cc) | Orientation School for New Family | 06/03/09; |
| (dd) | Family Court Judges' Conference | 04/22/09; |
| (ee) | Horry County Family Court Seminar-Procedural | 12/17/08; |
| (ff) | SC Family Court Bench/Bar | 12/05/08; |
| (gg) | Judicial Conference | 08/20/08; |
| (hh) | Orientation School for New Family Court Judges | 06/04/08; |
| (ii) | Family Court Judges Conference | 04/23/08; |
| (jj) | Children's Issues in Family Court | 03/20/08. |
11. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs?
- (a) Lectured at the annual Horry County Bar Association Seminar on the Family Court Rules and the rules of Civil Procedure which are applicable to the Family Court. 2008-12.
 - (b) Judge's Orientation School – spoke to the newly elected judges on experiences of a first year judge. April, 2009.
 - (c) SC Association for Justice - spoke at the Family Court Seminar on how to practice in family court. August, 2009.
 - (d) Family Court Bench Bar Seminar–spoke on mediating DSS cases. December 2011.
 - (e) Judicial Observation and Experience Program – have law students sit with me for two weeks each summer to observe the view from the bench. 2008-13.
 - (f) SC Supreme Court Docket Management Task Force – February 2011-November 2012.
12. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each. N/A

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) All SC Courts – municipal, county and state – admitted November 9, 1977;
 - (b) United States District Court for the District of SC – admitted March 17, 1978;
 - (c) United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit – admitted September 3, 1979;
 - (d) Supreme Court of the United States – admitted April 15, 1985.
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) Upon graduating from law school in 1977, I began my legal career with the law firm of Harvey, Battey, Macloskie & Bethea, P.A. I was employed in their satellite office located on Hilton Head Island. Their main location was Beaufort, SC. The practice was a general practice of law with the Hilton Head Island office concentrating on real estate transactions as well as construction litigation. As an associate, I assisted the partners in these areas. Approximately one year after becoming employed with this firm, the offices split with the Hilton Head Island office becoming the law firm of Bethea, Jordan & Griffin, P.A. William Bethea, a partner with the prior firm of Harvey, Battey, Macloskie & Bethea became the senior partner with the new law firm. This firm continued to focus and concentrate its business on real estate matters ranging from real estate closings and development to litigation involving real estate and development.
 - (b) I became a partner in the firm in 1983 with my practice focusing primarily in litigation dealing with construction law as well as contract litigation. I began developing a family law practice at this time, however the firm's primary focus again dealt with real estate related issues.
 - (c) In 1985, I relocated to Garden City, SC, and formed a partnership with Robert J. Barber. This firm was known as Barber & Norton, P.A. Mr. Barber handled real estate transactions and I handled litigation for the firm. This office also focused on real estate matters dealing with residential sales in Horry and Georgetown counties. In 1986, I joined the firm of Cross, Singleton & Burroughs and the firm became known Cross, Singleton, Burroughs & Norton, P.A. Here, I continued to deal with real estate issues, but began to focus on litigation in the court of common pleas as well as family court. The firm was a general practice firm however we did not deal with criminal issues, focusing primarily on civil matters. It was while employed with this office that I began to direct my focus to family law as the firm had a developing family law practice.
 - (d) I continued with this firm until 1994 and joined the law firm of Walker, Brehn & Norton, P.A., where I was a partner. In this office I dealt primarily with the family court area although I assisted the other partners in real estate matters as well as civil litigation and probate issues. I handled the family court matters for the firm.
 - (e) In 1997, I decided to leave the firm and become a sole practitioner. My office concentrated on family law issues with approximately 80% of the practice directed to that area. I continued to be involved in some civil litigation issues as well as real estate and probate matters. The firm did not engage in the practice of criminal law.

- (f) In 2005, I took a position as a part-time Assistant City Prosecutor with the City of Myrtle Beach. This was in addition to maintaining my law practice. As a part-time Assistant City Prosecutor, I prosecuted traffic and misdemeanor cases for the city of Myrtle Beach acting as a prosecutor for bench trials on Monday night and Tuesday night of each week and prosecuting jury trials 4 days every other month.
- (g) The city of Myrtle Beach had a full-time city prosecutor in addition to my position as an Assistant City Prosecutor however in 2007, based upon the case load the City of Myrtle Beach determined it was necessary to hire a second full-time city prosecutor at which time the position of part-time Assistant City Prosecutor was phased out. My law office continued to focus primarily on family law issues 10 years.
- (h) In 2008, I was elected to the Family Court Bench and have been serving as a Family Court Judge since.
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.
Prior to becoming a member of the judiciary my last rating in Martindale-Hubbell was BV.
22. Have you ever held judicial office?
Yes. I served as a Special Referee appointed by the Circuit Court Judge to hear cases involving timeshare homeowners association lien foreclosures for the Court of Common Pleas. I served periodically from 2000-2007 prior to being elected to the Family Court in 2008. I had jurisdiction consistent with that of the Circuit Court in foreclosure cases.
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.
Opinions generated while serving as a Special Referee involved lien foreclosures by homeowners' associations for fees. The homeowners failed to pay their monthly fees and the association filed liens and foreclosed same. My order resulted in the sale of the property to satisfy the lien. None of these have been reported.
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.
While serving as a Special Referee, I continued my law practice as a sole practitioner. I have had no outside employment since my election to the Family Court.
26. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office?
Yes, prior to being elected to the Family Court, I offered as a candidate for the Board of Trustees for Coastal Carolina University. I withdrew my candidacy when it became evident I could not receive enough votes to be elected.

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? No.
28. Are you now an officer or director or involved in the management of any business enterprise? No.
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.
None
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? No. Have you ever defaulted on a student loan? No. Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? No.
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.
1992-CP-26-353 PFS&L vs. Thelma Riddle, Ronald R. Norton, Robert J. Barber, Richard W. Strobel and Sea Watch Office Plaza Owners Association. Filed 1/23/92. Settled 7/14/93. Mr. Barber, Mr. Strobel and I co-owned an office condo and sold it to Thelma Riddle but as a condition of the sale had to remain obligated on the note and mortgage along with Ms. Riddle. Ms. Riddle defaulted on her note and mortgage and the Savings and Loan foreclosed. We settled with the Savings and Loan resolving the case.
36. Have you ever been investigated by the Department of Social Services? No. Has your name ever been enrolled on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect? No.
37. 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? N/A
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.? No.
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)? No.
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? No.
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." N/A
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." N/A

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. None
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. None
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? No. 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.
46. Have you requested a friend or colleague to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf? No. Are you aware of any friends or colleagues contacting members of the General Assembly on your behalf? No.
47. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy? No.
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? No.
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 – 1977 to present;
(b) Horry County Bar Association – 1985 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. None
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 had the honor and privilege of serving as a Family Court Judge since my election in 2008. While I feel I am qualified for this position, I have also grown in my appreciation for the difficulties facing the individuals appearing before me. I always try to be fair, compassionate, honest, and professional. I am committed to the position and will continue to work hard and give my all to the job.
52. References:
(a) Aaron McKnight
Banking Center Manager
3991 Hwy. 17 Bypass
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
843-946-3244
(b) Gini Ingram Abee
P.O. Box 213
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
843-65101224
(c) Sheriff Phillip E. Thompson
Sheriff of Horry County

P.O. Box 380
Horry County Judicial Complex
1301 2nd Avenue
Conway, SC 29528-0380
843-915-5450

(d) The Rev. Dr. Scott H. Wachter
Senior Pastor, Surfside United Methodist Church
800 13th Avenue North
P.O. Box 14386
Surfside Beach, SC 29587
843-238-2734

(e) John L. Weaver, Esquire
Thomas & Brittain, P.A.
Attorneys at Law
1314 Professional Drive
P.O. Box 1290
Myrtle Beach, SC 29578
843-692-2628

(Please note – while Mr. Weaver is an attorney, he does not practice Family Law
and does not appear before me.)

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

Signature: Ronald R. Norton

Date: July 26, 2013