

**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION  
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**



Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying:  
Circuit Court, At-Large, Seat 10

1. Name: Mr. Jerome P. Askins, III  
Name that you are known by if different from above: Romie  
Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge? No  
Business Address: PO Box 10  
Hemingway, SC 29554  
Telephone Number: (office): 843-558-2588
2. Date of Birth: 1952  
Place of Birth: Kingstree, SC
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 May 25, 1974, to Donna Wofford Askins. 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) University of South Carolina – Fall 1970 to Summer 1973, BS – Business Economics, cum laude;
  - (b) University of South Carolina Law School – Fall 1973 to Spring 1976, JD.
8. List the states in which you have been admitted to practice law and the year of each admission. Also list any states in which you took the bar exam but were never admitted to the practice of law. If you took the bar exam more than once in any of the states listed, please indicate the number of times you took the exam in each state.

South Carolina – November 1976.
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) USC Campus Cancer Fund Drive – Spring 1973;
  - (b) Chi Psi Fraternity – Fall 1972 through Spring 1973;
  - (c) Phi Beta Kappa – Spring 1973;
  - (d) Worked as a page in the SC Senate for 6 years during college and law school–Spring 1971 – Spring 1976. During the sixth year, I worked as a research assistant with the Senate Judiciary Committee.
10. Describe your continuing legal or judicial education during the past five years.

Conference/CLE Name	Date(s)
(a) Civil Court Mediation Certification	02/23/2006;
(b) Mandatory ADR Training	09/08/2006;
(c) Title Insurance Seminar	10/04/2006;
(d) Title Insurance Seminar	11/02/2007;

- (e) Title Insurance Seminar 11/07/2008;
- (f) Ethics Update 12/19/2008;
- (g) A Beacon You Can Count On-Title Insurance 04/21/2009;
- (h) Handling Social Security Disability 06/11/2009;
- (i) Introduction to Court-Annexed ADR 10/29/2010;
- (j) Florence County Bar-Ethics 12/10/2010;
- (k) Plaintiff's Personal Injury 02/28/2011;
- (l) Protecting Assets while Qualifying for Medicaid 12/21/2011;
- (m) 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Criminal Trial Practice in SC 02/24/2012.

(I am now exempt from CLE because I am over 60 years of age and I have practiced law for over 30 years.)

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.

I have served as moderator for these two CLE seminars sponsored by the Williamsburg Bar Association.

(a) Ethical Issues in Appointed Cases 03/06/2003;

(b) Recent Significant Ethical Issues 05/05/2004.

Note – I have also spoken on several occasions to students at Johnsonville High School and Hemingway High School, including Career Day, etc.

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) Admitted to practice before the State Courts of SC on November 5, 1976;

(b) Also admitted to practice before the Federal District Court on December 6, 1976 and Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on July 10, 1987.

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.

After graduation from USC Law School in May 1976, I took a study course to prepare for the SC Bar Exam, which I took in July 1976. After the bar exam, I was employed as an associate of my father, Jerome P. Askins, Jr., who practiced in Hemingway, SC. I was employed by him until the end of 1980. We were joined by my brother, Gregory B. Askins, in the summer of 1980. My father retired in 1980 (died 1981), and my brother and I began a partnership in 1981, practicing as Askins and Askins. In April 1984, our firm merged with another two person firm to form Askins, Chandler, Ruffin and Askins. C. B. Ruffin withdrew in 1985, and I practiced with my brother and William H. (Bill) Chandler (Askins, Chandler and Askins, LLP) from 1985 until December, 2006 when Bill Chandler died. My brother and I have continued the partnership through the present. My nephew, Carson J. Askins, was employed as an associate in 2011.

My practice has been a general practice. I have handled civil litigation representing mostly plaintiffs with some defense work, probate and estate matters, domestic relations cases, real property matters, contracts and some criminal cases. Most of my criminal defense

work was court appointed. I served as Assistant Williamsburg County Public Defender for about 3 years in the 1990's. I am a certified Circuit Court mediator.

15. 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.

Criminal Matters: I have handled mostly criminal defense, although I have prosecuted some cases in municipal court. Most of my criminal cases have been court appointed. I also served as Assistant Williamsburg County Public Defender for about 3 years in the 1990's. During this time, I handled numerous jury trials as well as guilty pleas. I am not certified to handle death penalty cases at present, but I have been appointed to defend two death penalty cases in the past. My last jury trial in a criminal case in General Sessions was as court appointed defense counsel in an armed robbery case where the defendant had a prior conviction for armed robbery and was facing life in prison upon conviction. In recent years, I was taken off the list for court appointments for indigents and minors, handling mostly DSS cases in Family Court and post conviction relief cases.

Civil Matters: When I began practicing law in 1976, I handled civil matters in the U.S. District Court, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Family Court, Court of Common Pleas, Probate Court and Magistrate's Court. More recently, I have not handled matters in the U.S. District Court or Bankruptcy Court, and I have handled only a few cases in Family Court, other than numerous Court appointed cases representing indigents and minors, and serving as a guardian ad litem. In the Court of Common Pleas, I have tried personal injury cases representing plaintiffs, contracts cases representing plaintiffs and defendants, and collection cases primarily representing lenders although I have occasionally represented defendants. I have also tried contested matters in Probate Court. I have not had a jury trial in Common Pleas Court recently, but I have had numerous non-jury matters.

In addition to my experience in the court room, I believe experience in dealing with people of all walks of life in a small town general law practice for over 38 years would be invaluable to me as a circuit judge. My clients have been a widely diverse group, including indigents and multi-millionaires; young and old; male and female; African-Americans, Caucasians, and Hispanics; individuals and large corporations. Also, I have chaired or presided over numerous organizations, serving in positions such as Chairman of the Florence County Planning Commission; Chairman of Hemingway First United Methodist Church Administrative Council and Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee; President of Williamsburg County Bar Association; President of Johnsonville/Hemingway Lions Club; past Master of Indiantown

Masonic Lodge #165. I am a certified Circuit Court mediator, and I have served as a special referee in non-jury cases.

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.  
Martindale-Hubbell 4.4 out of 5, BV Distinguished (Peer Review Rating)
17. What was the frequency of your court appearances during the past five years?
  - (a) federal: 0;
  - (b) state: Approximately 25.
18. What percentage of your practice involved civil, criminal, domestic, and other matters during the past five years?
  - (a) civil: 50%;
  - (b) criminal: less than 1%;
  - (c) domestic: less than 5%;
  - (d) other: less than 45%.
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: less than 5%;
  - (b) non-jury: over 95%.

Did you most often serve as sole counsel, chief counsel, or associate counsel in these matters? I almost always served as 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) State v. E. Douglas and K. Douglas. This was a night hunting case. It was my first jury trial in General Sessions Court.
  - (b) Smith, et. al. v. McClam, et. al. This was an action to set aside a deed from an elderly woman to her son. We had a jury trial in Common Pleas, appeal to SC Court of Appeals, remand and appeal to SC Supreme Court.
  - (c) State v. Bobby Gene Ellison. The defendant was charged with attempt to buy cocaine. We had a jury trial in General Sessions. The defendant was deaf and mute so it was necessary to have an interpreter from the SC Association of the Deaf.
  - (d) State v. Steven Hanna. Jury trial in General Sessions Court for armed robbery. The defendant had a prior conviction for armed robbery, and was facing mandatory life in prison upon conviction.
  - (e) State v. E. D. Wilson. This was a capital murder case. The defendant was charged with murdering two elderly people with an axe. Jury trial in General Sessions. After dealing with some constitutional issues, the defendant was allowed to plead guilty, and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.
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) Smith, et. al. v. McClam, et. al. SC Court of Appeals, 280 S. C. 398, 312 S.E.2d 260 (1984); SC Supreme Court, 289 S. C. 452, 346 S.E.2d 720 (1986)
  - (b) Ray Realty, Inc. v. Badger R. Bazen, Inc. SC Court of Appeals, 96-UP-161 (May 23, 1996). Sole counsel at trial, co-counsel on appeal

- (c) Anderson Brothers Bank v. EBT Property Holding Company, Inc., et. al. SC Court of Appeals, unpublished opinion – sole counsel at trial, co-counsel on appeal
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.  
No
25. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office?  
No.
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?  
(a) Unsuccessful candidate for mayor of Johnsonville, SC in November, 1998 (lost by 4 votes.)  
(b) Unsuccessful candidate for Circuit Court, At Large, Seat 15 in 2012-2013. (withdrew before election)  
(c) Unsuccessful candidate for Circuit Court, At Large, Seat 9 in 2014-2015. (lost by 3 votes)
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?  
Prior to finishing law school and practicing law, I worked part-time for Hemingway Warehouse, Inc. driving a fork lift 1966-1968, part-time for Hemingway Broadcasting Company, Inc. as a radio announcer 1968-1974, part-time for Export Tobacco Company as a laborer summer of 1971, and for the SC Senate as a page and research assistant 1971-1976.
29. Are you now an officer or director or involved in the management of any business enterprise?  
(a) I am one of two partners in Askins, Chandler and Askins, LLP, engaged in general law practice. I am actively engaged in practicing law and I share in the administrative duties with my brother/partner.  
(b) I am the sole member of LA LA Land Ventures, LLC, a limited liability company which owns a rental property. I am in effect the landlord. I hope to sell the last rental unit in the near future. I could turn management over to a realty company if it becomes a problem.  
(c) I am a 25% partner of Hemingway Warehouse, a general partnership owning a rental beach house and an undeveloped tract of land in Florence County. The beach house is managed by a realty company.
30. A complete, current financial net worth statement was provided to the Commission.
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.  
None.
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?

I was charged with a hunting violation in the 1970's. I believe I paid a fine of \$60.

33. Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? 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? 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. Yes.
  - (a) I was sued personally as a result of an automobile accident about 1995. There were no serious injuries and the case was settled after arbitration.
  - (b) In 1999 I was named as a third party defendant in a lawsuit that I filed as attorney for the plaintiffs against their former associate in a business venture, attorney Thomas E. Ruffin, Jr. Mr. Ruffin was represented by Craig Young, now deceased. Ultimately, I was dismissed as a party and Mr. Ruffin was required to pay me \$10,000 as part of the settlement. As a result of facts related to this case, Mr. Ruffin was suspended from the practice of law in South Carolina and Mr. Young was also sanctioned. (The case number was 99-CP-22-401.)
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? 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?

I am currently covered by malpractice (professional liability) insurance, and have been the entire time I have been practicing law. I have not been covered by a tail policy. My firm's coverage is \$2,000,000 with \$5,000 deductible.
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.? No.
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)? 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? 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. None.
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? No.
47. 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.
48. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy? 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) SC Bar Association;
  - (b) Williamsburg County Bar Association, President 2003 and 2004;
  - (c) Florence County Bar Association;
  - (d) Previously, SC Trial Lawyers Association;
  - (e) Appointed to SC Bench-Bar Committee by then SC Chief Justice David W. Harwell 1993-1994.
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) Johnsonville-Hemingway Lions Club – past president, board member, tail twister;
  - (b) Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society;
  - (c) Indiantown Masonic Lodge #165 – past Master and Shriner (not active in recent years);
  - (d) Hemingway First United Methodist Church – past Chairman of Administrative Council, Chairman of Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee, past Trustee, Head Usher, President of United Methodist Men;
  - (e) Florence County School District #5 Election Commission.

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.

I have aspired to be a circuit judge for some time. My father was an attorney and I was exposed to the legal profession at an early age. He was a country lawyer, as I am. I witnessed how he was as kind, respectful and patient with a poor uneducated sharecropper as he was with a wealthy businessman. I had good parents, good upbringing. Good grades and good behavior at school were demanded, not merely encouraged. Sunday school was mandatory. I decided as a boy that I wanted to be an attorney. During my years of practicing law, I decided that I wanted to be a judge someday. For me, the timing seems right – my wife has retired from teaching school and my children are adults. As far as I know, I am in good health and I intend to work indefinitely. In my thirty-eight plus years of practicing law, I have handled a wide array of cases for a vastly diverse group of clients. I believe the experience gained thus far during my career would be of great benefit – not just time in the courthouse, but time dealing with all kinds of people and all kinds of legal problems. Over the years, I have encountered outstanding judges – skilled and capable with the temperament to maintain order and decorum in the courtroom and control the proceeding while being patient, dignified, courteous and respectful to attorneys, parties, jurors and courtroom personnel. Unfortunately, I have also encountered judges who were rude, arrogant, impatient and inconsiderate of those around them. I very much want to serve and I am committed to being one of the good guys. I was an unsuccessful candidate for Circuit Court At Large Seat 9 a year ago, losing the election by three votes.

53. References:

- (a) David W. Harwell, Esquire  
Bell Law Firm,  
PO Box 2956,  
Georgetown, SC 29442  
843-546-2408
- (b) M. Duane Shuler, Esquire  
Whetstone Myers Perkins and Fulda, LLC,  
PO Box 980,  
Kingstree, SC 29556  
843-355-2800
- (c) E. Leroy Nettles, Esquire  
Nettles, Turbeville and Reddeck,  
PO Box 699,  
Lake City, SC 29560  
843-374-8511
- (d) Reverend Timothy J. Rogers,  
PO Box 543,  
Marion, SC 29571  
803-873-0131



- (e) J. Neal Anderson  
Anderson Brothers Bank,  
PO Box 400,  
Hemingway, SC 29554  
843-558-2511

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; None.
  - (c) which was sold, leased, or rented to a state or local public agency in South Carolina. None.
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.  
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: s/Jerome P. Askins, III

Date: 7/17/15