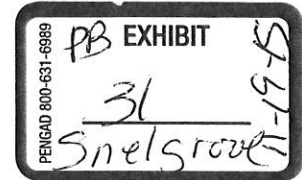


JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
Sworn Statement to be included in Transcript of Public Hearings

Family Court
(Incumbent)

Full Name: Vicki J. Snelgrove
Business Address: P. O. Box 1639
Aiken, SC 29802
Business Telephone: 803-642-1728



1. Why do you want to serve another term as a Family Court Judge? I have enjoyed my first term and believe that I have made a difference to the people that have appeared in my court. I enjoy preparing for court and doing everything in my power to be fair and even-handed.
2. Do you plan to serve your full term if re-elected?
Yes.
3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?
No.
4. Have you met the statutory requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice?
Yes.
5. What is your philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications? Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated?
I will allow *ex parte* communication only when necessary. I will not speak orally with any attorney or representative of an attorney. Any requests for *ex parte* relief must be in writing so that anyone can read the basis upon which I granted the *ex parte* relief. I grant such relief very sparingly, and prefer to grant emergency hearings. However, there are times that such relief is warranted – DSS Emergence Removals. I limit the relief to what is necessary to hold the case together until it can be heard by the court after proper notice to all parties. If an attorney is already involved for the opposing side, I will not grant any *ex parte* relief until that attorney is notified.
6. What is your philosophy on recusal, especially in situations in which lawyer-legislators, former associates, or law partners are to appear before you?
I do not recuse myself when a legislator appears in front of me. I do recuse myself if a former law partner or associate appears in front of me on any contested matter. I have had to hear probable cause hearing in DSS cases with a former associate (who now works for the Department of Social Services); we disclose the conflict and, if I find probable cause for the removal, I allow the party to request a second probable cause hearing in front of another judge. I just do this when I am the only judge holding court in Aiken and there is no one else who could conduct the hearing and still be in compliance with the statute on time restraints.

7. If you disclosed something that had the appearance of bias, but you believed it would not actually prejudice your impartiality, what deference would you give a party that requested your recusal? Would you grant such a motion?
I would recuse myself and work extremely hard to have it rescheduled as soon as possible in front of another judge.
8. How do you handle the appearance of impropriety because of the financial or social involvement of your spouse or a close relative?
I do not hear cases of persons with whom my family is social or church members unless both parties request and agree that I hear it, i. e. an uncontested adoption.
9. What standards have you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality?
I do not accept gifts and socialize only in large groups of attorneys- Bar social functions, etc.
10. How do you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct of a lawyer or of a fellow judge?
I have had to report an attorney to the Office of Disciplinary Counsel. I have not become aware of any misconduct of a fellow judge. If I were to become aware of such, I would follow my oath and make the report.
11. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions which, if you were re-elected, would need to be re-evaluated?
No.
12. Do you have any business activities that you have remained involved with since your election to the bench?
No.
13. Since Family Court judges do not have law clerks, how do you handle the drafting of orders?
When I take a case under advisement after a lengthy trial, I draft a memo with the order instructions and email that to all parties and GAL, if applicable. I instruct one attorney to prepare the Order, send it to any other attorneys and advise me in writing that this has been done when transmitting the completed order. If there is any dispute as to the contents of the order, I instruct that attorney to communicate to me those disputes (with copies to all other counsel) referencing page and paragraph number. If I rule from the bench, I instruct an attorney to prepare an order and confirm that the other attorney has seen the order and approved of its form when sending to me for signature.
14. What methods do you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?
We keep a notebook of all dockets and daily check for outstanding orders. My assistant calls or emails attorneys when a deadline is approaching and follows up daily until the order is submitted.
15. What specific actions or steps do you take to ensure that the guidelines of the guardian ad litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case?
I verify affidavits and reports to make sure that all parties had access to the GAL and were afforded similar treatment. I had had to remove GAL's on rare occasions, but when it was warranted.
16. What is your philosophy on "judicial activism," and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy?

Judges do not create law, they only interpret law. I follow the mandates and precedents of our appellate courts when case law exists.

17. 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 participate in as many panes, tasks forces or committees that review proposed legislation, proposed forms or that have any input on improving our service.
18. 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 do not find a strain on my family, but do find that I must isolate myself from certain social activities. Since my family is full of attorneys, I still have the enjoyment of discussing the law with persons who will not appear in front of me.
19. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality?
No.
20. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved?
No.
21. Do you belong to any organizations that discriminate based on race, religion, or gender?
No.
22. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses?
Yes.
23. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge?
Firm, but even-handed. I make every effort to treat everyone with respect and hear what he/she is saying so that even if I rule against him/her, he/she will know that he was heard. I find that so often, people need to know that the judge heard what they wanted to say.
24. Do 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 that they apply to my behavior all of the time. Off of the bench behavior reflects on my ability to be effective when I am on the bench.
25. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public, especially with a criminal defendant? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?
Not so much anger, but firmness. I do not believe that yelling to a litigant will accomplish anything. However, when a pro se litigant wants to continually talk over me or a witness, I may be a little louder and slower (and emphatic) on how the procedure works.
26. How much money have you spent on your campaign? No If it is over \$100, has that amount been reported to the House and Senate Ethics Committees?
N/A.
27. While campaigning for this office, have you used judicial letterhead or the services of your staff for your campaign?

- No.
28. Have you sought or received the pledge of any legislator prior to this date?
No.
29. Have you sought or been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening?
No.
30. 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.
31. Have you contacted any members of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission?
No.
32. 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/ Vicki Snelgrove

Sworn to before me this 28th day of July, 2015.

Paige Weeks Johnson

Notary Public for South Carolina

My commission expires: 06/15/2019