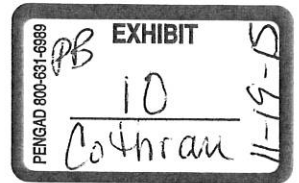


**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**



Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying: Third Judicial Circuit, Seat 1

1. Name: The Honorable Ralph Ferrell Cothran, Jr.
Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge? Yes
Business Address: 16 South Brooks Street
Manning, SC 29102
Telephone Number: (office): (803) 435-2450
2. Date of Birth: 1952
Place of Birth: Clarendon County
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 April 12, 1985 to Deborah Jean Brakefield. Divorced on October 30, 1983, Ralph Ferrell Cothran, Jr. was the moving party, The Family Court of the Third Judicial Circuit, One Year's Continuous Separation; Three 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 1970-1974, BA;
 - (b) University of South Carolina, School of Law 1974-1977 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-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.
Page in the State House 1970-1977.
10. Describe your continuing legal or judicial education during the past five years.

<u>Conference/CLE Name</u>	<u>Date (s)</u>
(a) SC Circuit Court Judges Association	05/05/2010;
(b) SCAJ 2010 Annual Convention	08/05/2010;
(c) 2010 Judicial Conference	08/18/2010;
(d) 43 rd Annual Meeting	11/11/2010;
(e) Criminal Law Section	01/21/2011;
(f) Trial and Appellate Advocacy Section	01/21/2011;
(g) SC Circuit Court Judges' Conference	05/04/2011;
(h) 2011 SCAJ Annual Convention	08/04/2011;
(i) 2011 Annual Judicial Conference	08/17/2011;
(j) Part 2 Criminal Law Section	01/20/2012;
(k) Trial and Appellate Advocacy Section	01/20/2012;

- | | | |
|------|---|-------------|
| (l) | Annual Circuit Court Judges Conference | 05/02/2012; |
| (m) | 2012 Annual Convention | 08/02/2012; |
| (n) | 2012 Annual Judicial Conference | 08/22/2012; |
| (o) | Annual Meeting | 11/08/2012; |
| (p) | Trial and Appellate Advocacy Section | 01/25/2013; |
| (q) | Part 2: Criminal Law Section | 01/25/2013; |
| (r) | Lawyer Mentoring Program | 03/01/2013; |
| (s) | Spring Conference CLE | 05/01/2013; |
| (t) | 2013 Annual Convention | 08/01/2013; |
| (u) | 2013 Annual Judicial Conference | 08/21/2013; |
| (v) | Fall Sporting Clays: Ethics with the Judges | 10/17/2013; |
| (w) | Criminal Law Section – Part 2 | 01/24/2014; |
| (x) | Trial and Appellate Advocacy Section Civil Law Update | 01/24/2014; |
| (y) | 2014 Circuit Court Judges Conference | 03/24/2014; |
| (z) | Sporting Clays CLE: Ethics with the Judges | 04/24/2014; |
| (aa) | 2014 Annual Convention | 08/07/2014; |
| (bb) | 2014 Annual Judicial Conference | 08/20/2014; |
| (cc) | SCDTAA Annual Meeting | 11/16/2014; |
| (dd) | Trial and Appellate Advocacy Section: Lessons from the
“Fly on the Wall: What You Can Learn from the Buzz”
Civil Law Update | 01/23/2015; |
| (ee) | Part 2: Criminal Law Section | 01/23/2015. |
11. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs?
- (a) I conducted a course at the Criminal Justice Academy over a five year period regarding Auto Theft and Chop Shop Law;
- (b) I have conducted classes on Search and Seizure to local law enforcement and the local bar, as well as a presentation to the Circuit Court Judges.
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) SC, 1977;
- (b) Federal District Court, 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) Cothran, Chandler and Cothran - 1977-early 1979;
- (b) Cothran and Cothran - 1979-1997;
- (c) Cothran and Robinson – 1997–2000;
- (d) Clarendon County Attorney, 1979–September 2006;
- (e) Assistant Solicitor for the Third Judicial Circuit - 1983–September 2006;
- (f) Circuit Court Judge of the Third Judicial Circuit - September 2006–present.

- My practice consisted of real estate, probate, family, civil and criminal matters.
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 – BV.
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.
Yes.
(a) February 15, 2006 to fill unexpired term of Thomas W. Cooper, Jr. (Elected);
(b) October 1, 2006 to present (Elected).
General civil and criminal jurisdiction throughout the state.
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.
(a) Homeowners Services vs. Donald J. Hatcher, et al (2006-CP-43-1688);
(b) Oka Deas Gilliard, et al vs. Darci Strickland, et al (2008-CP-43-1384);
(c) W.A. Berry, et al vs. Lee County Landfill SC, LLC, et al (2011-CP-31-166);
(d) Janice H. Smith, et al vs. Rebecca Baird, J.D., et al (2012-CP-10-04064);
(e) Gunner Palm, Jr. vs. Atlantic Pools & Water Features, Inc. (2014-CP-43-00643).
(See attached Orders)
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.
Yes.
(a) Chairman, Election Commission, 1979–1990, appointed by John C. Land, III;
(b) Assistant Solicitor, 1983-September 2006, appointed by Wade S. Kolb, Jr.
These positions did not require me to file a report with the State Ethics Commission.
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.
None.
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?
No.
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.
No.
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?
No.
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?
When I was a partner at Cothran and Cothran, I was sued by Ken Branch who claimed that I was not watching out for his interest, while in fact, I was representing the opposing party. This matter was dismissed prior to trial. While I was a Deputy Solicitor, by association, I was sued by numerous Pro Se Litigants, all of which were subsequently dismissed. Since I have been a Circuit Court Judge, Joshua Latron Gallishaw filed a lawsuit which included me as a Defendant. This matter involved a claim filed by a pro se prisoner alleging that he was improperly prosecuted and convicted by the Attorney General's office and me by denying his PCR application. This matter was dismissed.
37. Have you ever been investigated by the Department of Social Services? 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? 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.
N/A.
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?
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? If so, give details. 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;
- (b) Clarendon County Bar Association.
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.

First Presbyterian Church of Manning, Clerk of Session/Chairman.

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.

In my judgeship, I have enjoyed serving the people of SC. I am aware of the importance of how each litigant feels about their case and I have tried to treat everyone with respect and in the same manner that I would want to be treated.

53. References:

- (a) Beulah Roberts
P.O. Box 136
Manning, SC 29102
(803) 435-4443
- (b) James C. Campbell
215 North Harvin Street
Sumter, SC 29150
(803) 436-2232
- (c) David Epperson
1380 Doral Drive
Manning, SC 29102
(803) 410-2771
- (d) Barry Ham
P.O. Box 520
Manning, SC 29102
(803) 433-4451
- (e) George Wilkes
P.O. Box 207
Manning, SC 29102
(803) 435-8157

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. Office space rented to Clarendon County (\$833.33 per month).

List the interest you hold and the value and location of the property. Identify as applicable the: 100%

- (a) nature of any potential conflict of interest; (none)
- (b) nature and value of any public improvements; and (none)
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property. Clarendon County (renting)
See attached copy of Lease.

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.

Chadmoss Village Water System (Hwy 260, Manning, SC) to Clarendon County Water and Sewer Department \$4,675.00. See attached copy of Contract of Sale.

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/Ralph Ferrell Cothran, Jr.

Date: July 31, 2015