



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

Master-in-Equity
(New Candidate)

Full Name: Joseph King Coffey
Business Address: 2 North Brooks Street, Manning, SC 29102
Business Telephone: 803-435-8847

1. Do you plan to serve your full term if appointed?
Yes.
2. If appointed, do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?
Yes. The population of Clarendon County is low enough so that the Master in Equity is permitted to maintain practicing.
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?
As a general rule, I don't favor *ex parte* communications. There would be limited circumstances where they may be permitted and in no way should relate to a suit's merits.
5. What is your philosophy on recusal, especially in situations in which lawyer-legislators, former associates, or law partners are to appear before you?
I feel recusal is absolutely required where dictated by the rules and in circumstances mentioned herein, recusal may be waived only if consent is obtained from the parties after full relationship disclosure.
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?
If something warranted disclosure and a party requested recusal it would likely be granted.
7. What standards have you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality?
Our firm, with others in the area exchange holiday gifts. I would continue this tradition and not accept anything beyond the scope of typical giving which has been established.
8. How would you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct of a lawyer or of a fellow judge?
I would inform the aggrieved the appropriate course of action thereafter would be to file a complaint against the individual.
9. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions that would need to be evaluated if you are appointed?
No.

10. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any political, social, community, or religious organizations?
I have participated in fundraising activities with my church, Rotary and The Citadel.
11. If appointed, how would you handle the drafting of orders?
In the majority of circumstances, the prevailing attorney would be requested to draft an Order for review and provided it is suitable, adopted.
12. If appointed, what method would you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?
The assistant employed by the County would primarily be tasked with observing deadlines under the direction and supervision of the Master in Equity.
13. What is your philosophy on “judicial activism,” and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy?
I would not engage in judicial activism and feel judges should have at most a limited role in it if they feel compelled.
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 would seek to maintain the highest integrity of this office by requiring respect of the rules and other parties in all matters before me.
15. Do you feel that the pressure of serving as a judge will strain personal relationships (i.e. spouse, children, friends, or relatives)? How would you plan to address this?
It would not strain personal relationships.
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?
I would not hear such a case.
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?
I feel a judge should be detached yet respectful of the parties, evaluate carefully the facts and applicable law relevant to a matter and ensure the parties understand the basis of decisions rendered.
21. 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?
At all times.

22. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public appearing before you? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?
I don't feel anger would ever be an appropriate emotion to be displayed by a Judge. Circumstances would dictate firmness be shown when a party is not demonstrating appropriate decorum.
23. How much money have you spent on your campaign? If the amount is over \$100, has that been reported to the House and Senate Ethics Committees?
None.
24. If you are a sitting judge, have you used judicial letterhead or the services of your staff while campaigning for this office?
I am a new candidate, this question is not applicable.
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? No
Are you aware of any friends or colleagues contacting members of the General Assembly on your behalf?
No.
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/ Joseph K. Coffey

Sworn to before me this 30th day of July, 2015.

Holly Sutton

Notary Public for S.C.

My Commission Expires: 12/21/2016