



**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION  
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**

Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying: Master-in-Equity, Dorchester County

1. Name: The Honorable James E. Chellis  
Name that you are known by if different from above:  
Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge? Yes  
Business Address: 5200 East Jim Bilton Blvd.,  
St. George SC 29477  
Telephone Number: (office): 843-832-0001
2. Date of Birth: 1951  
Place of Birth: Summerville, 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 August 3, 1974 to A'delle H. Chellis. 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.  
College:
  - a) University of SC, September, 1970 through December 31, 1973, BA (Major: Intensive English);
  - b) Baptist College at Charleston, Spring, 1972 (February, 1972 through May, 1972) (I took 2 courses in the spring of 1972 while convalescing from a gunshot wound suffered while hunting), No degree;Law School:
  - c) University of SC, September, 1974 through May 14, 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.  
SC
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) Athletic scholarship: member of the USC Swim Team 1970 through 1971, and 1972 through 1973
  - b) Member: Kappa Alpha Order, September 1970–December 1973.
10. Describe your continuing legal or judicial education during the past five years.

<u>Conference/CLE Name</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>
(a) 26th Annual Title Insurance Claims and Underwriting	11/11/10;
(b) 32nd Annual Duke University Estate Planning Conference	10/14/10;
(c) Handling Real Estate Transactions	11/09/10;
(d) Title Insurance Claims & Underwriting	11/10/10;

- (e) Cir/Ct Civil Mediation & Advanced Negotiation of Advocates 08/25/11;
- (f) 2013 Annual Judicial Conference 8/21/2013;
- (g) 2013 Masters-in-Equity Bench Bar 10/11/2013;
- (h) Elder Law Committee 1/24/2014;
- (i) Construction Law Section 1/24/2014;
- (j) Substance Abuse/Mental Health 1/25/2014;
- (k) Real Estate Practice Section 1/25/2014;
- (l) 2014 Circuit Court Judges Conference 3/24/2014;
- (m) 2014 Annual Judicial Conference 3/2014;
- (n) Masters-in-Equity Bench Bar 10/10/2014;
- (o) Law Office Technology: iPractice on an iPod 1/22/2015;
- (p) Trial and Appellate Advocacy Section:
- (q) Lessons from the "Fly on the Wall":
- (r) What You Can Learn from the Buzz"
- (s) Civil Law Update 1/23/2015;
- (t) Torts and Insurance Practices Section:
- (u) Lessons from the "Fly on the Wall":
- (v) What You Can Learn from Buzz 1/24/2015;
- (w) SC E-Filing 1/24/2015;
- (x) Breakfast Ethics with a  
Side of Substance Abuse and Mental Health 1/25/2015.

11. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs?

I have lectured and written the materials for the following continuing legal education seminars in the real property and probate law:

- (a) Legislative Update (SC Real Estate Law)" Written Text & Lecture (National Business Institute, 2010);
- (b) "Financing Commercial Property Acquisitions, Written Text & Lecture (National Business Institute, 2009);
- (c) "Transfers of Title to Real Property in South Carolina (Deeds and Warranties, Confidential Relationships and Undue Influence; Suing on the General Warranty and Recovery of Attorneys Fees)" Written Text & Lecture (National Business Institute, 2009);
- (d) "The Quiet Title Suit and Other Actions" Written Text & Lecture (National Business Institute, 2006 & 2009) --- focused on proof of the heirs & devisees utilizing web based researching; procedural requirements; proposed methods of calculating the property interest to plead the chain of title using spreadsheet software;
- (e) "Monetary Settlements and Escrow Agreements" Written Text & Lecture (National Business Institute, 2006);
- (f) "Tips for Drafting Estate Planning Documents" Lecture (National Business Institute, 2006);
- (g) "How to Administer Trusts & Estates to Anticipate and Avoid Litigation" written text & lecture (National Business Institute, 2006);
- (h) "Party Wall, Driveways/Roads, Agreements and Other Party Agreements" Written Text & Lecture (National Business Institute, 2006);

- (i) “Access and Road Issues” Written Text & Lecture (National Business Institute, 2006);
  - (j) I have lectured at the American Society for Engineering Educators, Southeastern Section; the topic: “Business Planning for Engineering Firms” Lecture Annual Meeting, Charleston, SC, 2001;
  - (k) I have lectured, and conducted question and answer seminars, through the South Carolina Pro Bono Program in Estate Planning: Wills, Trusts & General Durable Power Of Attorney; and the Probate Administration Process (Spring 2009 & 2012);
  - (l) I have lectured, and conducted question and answer seminars, through the Senior Adults Program at Bethany United Methodist Church Summerville, South Carolina in Estate Planning: Wills, Trusts & General Durable Power Of Attorney; and the Probate Administration Process.
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) Supreme Court of SC and all Courts of the State of SC, November 9, 1977;
  - (b) Federal District Court for the District of SC, approximately 1980 and Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit, approximately 1980.
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) November 9, 1977-July, 1978: Prettyman, Chellis & Cordray;
  - (b) July, 1978-August, 1980: James E. Chellis, Attorney at Law;
  - (c) August, 1980-Fall, 1983: Chellis & Mortimer, P. A.;
  - (d) Fall, 1983-May, 1995: Chellis, Mortimer & Frampton, P.A.;
  - (e) May, 1995-June 30, 2013: Chellis & Frampton, P.A.;
  - (f) July 1, 2013-Present Master in Equity, Dorchester County.
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 AV
23. Have you ever held judicial office? Yes. 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. July 1, 2013–June 30, 2016; appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the General Assembly as Master-in-Equity, Dorchester County, SC; Jurisdiction: power and authority of the Circuit Court sitting without a jury, to regulate all proceedings in every hearing before it, and to perform all acts and take all measures necessary or proper for the efficient performance of judicial duties under the order of reference. This includes the power to rule on all motions, require the production of evidence, rule upon the admissibility of evidence, and call witnesses and examine them under oath. Masters may also conduct sales under certain circumstances.

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) Amended Order Civil Action No.: 2011 CP 18-00508; 514 JUMP Amusements, LLC, Plaintiff v. Sarah Rangel, individually and Sarah Rangel d/b/a/ Wild Jumps, Paisley's LLC, and Michael Dever, Defendants. (Appeal Pending);
  - (b) Order Civil Action No.: 2013CP1800074; Stephen Dudek, Doreen Cross, Plaintiffs v Thomas M Ferro, and Lorraine B Ferro, Defendants AND Molly M Mophew, Plaintiff, v Stephen Dudek, Doreen Cross, Thomas Ferro and Lorraine Ferro, Defendants (Appeal Pending);
  - (c) Final Order Civil Action No.: 2010-CP-18-1801; Companion Property & Casualty, Plaintiff v Gabriel Cervantes Flores, Defendant;
  - (d) Order Civil Action No.: 2014-CP-18-02237; Jane L. Todd, f/k/a Jane L. Rife, Plaintiff, v Michael Kirkham and Harriet Kirkham, Defendants;
  - (e) Order Civil Action No: 2012-CP-18-0376; IN RE: JP Morgan Chase Bank, National Association, Plaintiff, vs. Florinda Ravenel, Household Finance Corporation, II, Defendants, and Waypointe, LLC, Third Party Bidder.
25. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? Also, state whether or not you have timely filed your report with the State Ethics Commission during the period you held public 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.
- None
27. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office?
- Yes
- (a) 2007 Circuit Court, at Large Seat 13; reported qualified but not nominated;
  - (b) 2009 Circuit Court, First Judicial Circuit, Seat 1; reported qualified but not nominated.
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?
- Yes
- (a) Town Square Abstract, General Partnership, 1978 to June 30, 2013  
This company was a title insurance agency. We were agents of Chicago Title Insurance Company and Ticor Title Insurance Company. I was a partner. The Company is dissolved;
  - (b) Jurisprudence, LLC, 1981 to present  
This business is a real estate investment company my former law partner, John Frampton, and I formed. The Company is the entity that owns the office building that housed my law practice. The property of the company has been converted into three (3) office suites that the Company leases. I am a member of Jurisprudence, LLC;
  - (c) South Main Partners, LLC, 1988 to 2014  
This business was a real estate investment company. I formed this company in 1988 with two persons. We acquired a mobile home park and remained in this business

until 2006. We sold the park in exchange for 4 commercial buildings in December 2006. All of these buildings have been sold. South Main Partners has been dissolved;

(d) Stego, Inc., 1981 -1982

This business was a venture in the wholesale brokerage of knit shirts. The Company is dissolved.

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.

Jurisprudence, LLC,

See 28 (b) above. I am one of two active members that member manage the 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.

John G. Frampton is currently in house counsel for Dorchester County. If a case involves factual issues that arose prior to July 1, 2013, then I recuse myself. Post June 30, 2013 cases involving Dorchester County in which the facts in dispute arose after June 30, 2013, I would advise participating attorneys of my prior relationship with Mr. Frampton (in the 2 case where this issue arose, Mr. Frampton, had previously disclosed our relationship) and ask if they object to my hearing the case, and if not, do they believe that I can be fair and impartial. If a party were to object or were to believe I could not be fair and impartial, I would recuse myself.

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?

I have been sued two times professionally:

(a) The first instance was when I was a young lawyer (approx. 1980). I handled a real estate transaction for a young married couple who were buying a lot on which they were going to build their home. The Seller was a friend of theirs, and a client of mine, a utilities (water and sewer) construction contractor. The Seller represented at closing that the lot had access to public water utilities. The Buyer asked for proof. The Seller told the Buyer the paperwork approving the public water system was at his house on his dresser. He further stated he would get the paperwork after the closing. I closed the sale. My client's statement was not true as the water system had not been constructed such that it connected to the public water system. The

Buyer brought suit against me and the Seller. The case was settled by my insurance carrier for about \$3,000.00, as I recall.

- (b) The second occasion was in 2005. A lawsuit was brought by the Estate of and members of a family who inherited their membership interest in an LLC that operates a successful golf course in Mt. Pleasant, SC, against their first cousin, who was the manager of and later became, based on performance criteria, an equity owner in the LLC.

Before the father of the plaintiffs died, I represented him in a mortgage foreclosure action. This claim evolved into a business work-out between disputing principals of the golf course and residential development. I represented the Plaintiff's father by organizing an LLC, and assisting in the negotiations of the work-out solution with his partners. My client acquired the golf course and amenities and the other principals acquired the developable lands around the golf course.

The plaintiffs' father and their first cousin had negotiated a management agreement in Ohio (where the cousin lived) and Michigan (where the father lived and conducted business). The terms of the management agreement provided for an exchange of equity in the golf course operating entity, the LLC I organized, after my client had been paid back around \$4,200,000.00. The agreement was amended at least once but the general concept of a transfer of equity in the LLC based on performance milestones remained. Please note that I did not represent the first cousin in negotiating his "management agreement" as this was done between the parties. I did draft an employment agreement for my client setting forth the scope of the employment of his nephew, a CPA and retired GM executive, as manager.

The father died before the "equity" in the LLC transferred although, as I recall, the performance markers had been met. My client's personal representative was his long time friend, a retired Michigan judge (as a practicing lawyer he had dealt with Henry Richardson, who referred this case to me when he was in private practice). He tried making the equity transfer during his administration of the estate. Also, during this period, the plaintiff's first cousin acquired a tract of land on behalf of the LLC from the residential developers for the purposes of developing a golf academy. The Personal Representative had me give him an opinion of transaction, which I did. In other words I was retained by the Estate to assist it in the acquisition of the parcel for the golf academy. The LLC bought the parcel. I did not close the acquisition transaction.

During this timeframe, the first cousin asked if I could assist him in enforcing his rights under the management agreement. I replied that I could not as I had a conflict of interest since I had represented the decedent and his estate. I also sent a letter to the first cousin, the manager of the LLC, explaining that I had a conflict of interest. Sometime after that I received a letter, which I think was addressed to the first cousin, from the Personal Representative advising he would get with me concerning the transfer of membership in the LLC. He never did.

Some time shortly thereafter the former Judge and Personal Representative died. One of the children was subsequently appointed the successor Personal Representative.

At this point (late Fall, 2000), my correspondence with the Personal Representative ended. I had been informed that the first cousin had retained a tax attorney in Charleston.

In 2005, the Personal Representative and children filed suit against their first cousin alleging malfeasance, misrepresentation, fraud, conspiracy, etc. The first cousin defendant hired an attorney to defend him. I received requests from the attorney and his client to turn my file, or a copy of it, over to them. I declined, citing attorney-client privilege. I called the Plaintiff's attorney and sought permission to give copies of the file to the defendant, but was told not to because they were asserting attorney-client privilege.

Within several weeks, I received a Summons, Answer, Counterclaims, Cross-claims and Third Party Claims alleging, as it related to me, professional malpractice and negligence, negligent misrepresentation, breach of fiduciary duty and breach of contract.

After written discovery responses from the plaintiffs, which included a copy of my file, written discovery responses from me, and the deposition of the plaintiff's representative, the third-party claims brought against me were dismissed with prejudice.

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.

The insurance industry defines the word "tail" as an extended reporting period. The purchase of tail coverage adds an extended reporting endorsement (ERE) to an existing policy that extends the time in which a claim may be reported to the insurance carrier. On June 30, 2013, Mr. Frampton and I closed Chellis & Frampton, PA. At that time we procured an extended reporting endorsement through ALPS, our malpractice carrier. The Policy has been successfully extended and is currently in effect. Its primary features are:

- (a) Limit of Liability: \$ 2,000,000;
  - (b) Each Claim \$ 4,000,000 Aggregate;
  - (c) Deductible: \$ 2,500 Each Claim;
  - (d) Our Annual Premium for July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 was : \$10,091.00. It is paid in full;
  - (e) Endorsements:
    - a. Limited Coverage -Multiple Policies Optional Coverage Endorsement
    - b. Special Endorsement Title Insurance Agent Endorsement
    - c. First Dollar Defense Endorsement.
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?
- At the present time I do not participate in Facebook, or LinkedIn. I have a Twitter account, which I use primarily to follow Carolina football games that I do not attend.

Occasionally, I receive request from LinkedIn to connect to a person. I advised LinkedIn, as I had an account when I practiced law, to discontinue my profile. I ignore requests to connect. If I know the person seeking a connection, I have sent a letter advising that I do not participate in LinkedIn. I have an Instagram account. I follow family and a number of friends. I have liked a number of pictures, and occasionally made a comment. I think I've posted 4 pictures, including a video of a bird at my feeder, and three of cloud formations over Edisto Beach. I have an Ancestry.com account. I have a very small circle of friends on Google+. I follow a number of stamp collectors but only occasionally look at this account. I do not receive notices from people (about a dozen) who are in my friends circle. I very seldom look at Google+. I do not believe my limited use of social media affects my judicial ability.

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) Dorchester County Bar Association;
  - (b) SC Bar Association;
  - (c) American Bar Association;
  - (d) American Association for Justice.
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) Active Member of Bethany United Methodist Church, Summerville,
    - i. Member of the Daily Bread Sunday School Class;
    - ii. Member of Disciple Classes Committee;
    - iii. Confirmation Mentor (1997–2014);
    - iv. Ushers' Committee (1997–2013);
    - v. Delegate to SC Annual Conference (2012-present);
    - vi. Member, Church Council (2012-present);
    - vii. Facilitator of Disciple II (2008), III (2009), IV (2010) and Jesus and the Gospels (2011);
    - viii. Past-Stewardship Chairman (1998);
    - ix. Past-Member, Church Mission Statement Committee (1997);
    - x. Past-Member 3 X Building Committees, 2 X Long Range Planning Committee; Pastor Parish Relations Committee (member, and Presiding Member); Trustees.
  - (b) Mentor: Helping One Student at a Time (HOST) program, a public school reading program at Summerville Elementary School;
  - (c) SC Gamecock Club (1974-present);
  - (d) USC Association of Lettermen (1974-present);
  - (e) Member Open Grants Committee-Coastal Community Foundation (2012).
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.
53. List the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five persons, including your banker, from whom references could be obtained.
- (a) Cheryl L. Graham,

Clerk of Court, Dorchester County,  
5200 East Jim Bilton Boulevard,  
St. George, SC 29477

- (b) George H. Bailey,  
Vice Chairman of County Council, Dorchester County,  
P.O. Box 633,  
St. George, SC 29477
- (c) Jason L. Ward,  
County Administrator, Dorchester County,  
201 Johnston Street,  
St. George, SC 29477
- (d) Maggi Bryant,  
First Citizens Bank,  
129 N Parler Avenue,  
St. George, SC 29477
- (e) Penny M. Merriman,  
115 Dorchester Avenue,  
Summerville SC 29483  
(843)-875-9299

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;
  - (b) in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or that adjoins property in which there have been public improvements of \$200; or
  - (c) which was sold, leased, or rented to a state or local public agency in South Carolina.
- None.

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

- (a) nature of any potential conflict of interest;
  - (b) nature and value of any public improvements; and
  - (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property.
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/James E. Chellis  
Date: August 10, 2015