



**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**

Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying:

SC Family Court Judge, At-Large Seat # 8

1. Name: Ms. Martha M. Rivers Davisson

Name that you are known by if different from above
(Example: A Nickname):
Martha M. Rivers

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge?
(Includes Municipal, Magistrate, Etc.)

No

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Business Address: 12923 Main St, Williston, SC 29853

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: (home): [REDACTED]
(office): (803) 266-2290

2. Date of Birth: [REDACTED], 1972
Place of Birth: Augusta, GA
Social Security Number: [REDACTED]

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

4. SCDL# or SCHD#: [REDACTED]
Voter Registration Number: [REDACTED]

5. Family Status: In the space below, (a) state whether you are single, married, widowed, divorced, or separated; (b) if married, state the date of your marriage and your spouse's full name; (c) if you have ever been divorced or are in the process of obtaining a divorce, state the date, name of the moving party, court, and grounds; and (d) state the names of your children and their ages. If your children are old enough to work, include the occupation of each child.

Family Status: Married on August 5, 1995, to Douglas R. Davisson
Never divorced, three children.

[REDACTED]

6. Have you served in the military? If so, give the dates, branch of service, highest rank attained, serial number (if applicable), present status, and the character of your discharge or release.
I have not served in the US military.
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) Furman University August 1989 to May 1993 B.A. in History/English
 - (b) University of South Carolina August 1993 to May 1996 J.D.
School of Law
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.
- (a) South Carolina, November 18, 1996.
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) Furman University Marching and Concert Bands (1989-1993)
 - (b) Mu Phi Epsilon Music Fraternity (1994)
 - (c) Furman University Foreign Study in England (Fall 1992)
 - (d) USC Student Pro Bono Program participant as an intern with SC Legal Services Association summer 1995 and Richland County Volunteer Guardian ad Litem (1995)
 - (e) Mock Trial Competition (April 1996, 1st Place)
10. Describe your continuing legal or judicial education during the past five years.
- (a) SCAJ Annual Convention 08/04/2011
 - (b) Hot Tips from the Coolest Domestic 09/16/2011
 - (c) RPWB Litigation Seminar 04/30/2011
 - (d) SCWLA Ethics 01/05/2012
 - (e) Family Court Bench Bar 12/07/2012
 - (f) SCAJ Annual Convention 08/02/2012
 - (g) Family Court Mediation Training 07/11/2013
 - (h) 2013 SCAJ Annual Convention 08/01/2013
 - (i) SCWLA US Supreme Court Case Update 07/10/2014
 - (j) Solo & Small Firm Conference & Tech Expo 09/19/2014
 - (k) Abuse & Neglect Contract Attorney CLE Childrens Law Ctr 09/05/2014
 - (l) Techonlogy Tips for Lawyers from the Basics to Cyber Security 04/09/2015
 - (m) Highlights of the Current Term of the Supreme Court of the United States 07/09/2015

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 never taught at a continuing education program. When I was a contract attorney with legal services, I presented seminars at senior centers in the midlands. This was a grant to provide elder law information to senior citizens. The seminars included discussions regarding deeds, wills, and powers of attorney.
12. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each.
(a) "The Leaner and Meaner Youthful Offender Act," South Carolina Lawyer, Volume 9, Number 3, November/December 1997.
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) South Carolina, 1996;
(b) U.S. District Court for the District of SC, 2000.
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) Judicial Clerk for the Honorable Thomas L. Hughston, Jr.
of the Eighth Judicial Circuit from August 1996 to August 1997
(b) Associate Attorney at Bedingfield & Williams, Barnwell, SC, 1997 to 2000
At Bedingfield & Williams, I assisted in civil and criminal litigation, managed family court litigation and some civil and criminal litigation, supervised real estate closings, and prepared wills
(c) Solo practitioner, Martha M. Rivers Attorney at Law 2001-present
Today, my practice is a majority of real estate work and domestic litigation in Aiken, Bamberg and Barnwell counties. I handle criminal cases, by appointment and through my private practice. I also maintain a small plaintiff's practice in the Second Judicial Circuit. Being a small town lawyer, I often prepare simple wills and other estate planning documents. For the past three years, I have been a 608 contract attorney, defending families in DSS abuse and neglect cases. I am in the courtroom regularly with my Family Court practice.
15. Please answer the following (if you are a judge and are not seeking a different type of judgeship, this question is inapplicable):
(a) If you are a candidate for Family Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience within each of the following Family Court practice areas: divorce and equitable division of property, child custody, adoption, abuse and neglect, and

juvenile justice. Include information about cases you have handled in each of these practice areas, or if you have not practiced in an area, describe how your background has prepared you to preside over such matters as a Family Court Judge.

I have substantial experience in the areas of divorce, equitable distribution of property, child custody and visitation matters. I find that this type of law practice largely involves educating your client throughout the process of division of their former life. Early in my career, a client brought before me notebooks of letters between the two parents. A judge had gotten frustrated with their constant trips back to court and telephone communication, so he ordered all communication to be in writing. Because this was before smartphone days, written communication resulted in several notebook binders. The communication was meaningless as the parties had simply transferred their inability to communicate verbally to paper. That taught me that well intentioned and expedient rulings do not always lend positive results. As a Family Court judge, I want to craft a solution to the problem presented before me rather than creating future problems.

In matters of equitable distribution, I have handled a full range of issues. I have advocated for clients whose main asset was a home with negative equity. I have also been involved in distribution disagreements where the parties argued over every item of personal property, including cast iron pans. It is my common practice to verify property valuations, provide proof of valuations in cases as feasible, and to require my clients to produce documentation to me regarding the values of property. This helps my client make an informed decision during an emotional process. It helps me to explain the division of assets to my client and in negotiating with the opposing attorney. Another key element in representing clients in divorce actions is to identify all assets. Parties often do not think of retirement assets or know how to differentiate between pre-marital and marital assets.

I regularly handle matters of child custody and visitation as an advocating attorney and as a guardian ad litem. When child custody and visitation are issues in a case, I often remind clients that the end of litigation does not end their responsibility to their child or their interaction with the other parent. There will be graduations, school ceremonies, and weddings. Unless this is a situation of abuse or neglect, it is in the best interests of that child to feel the love and care of both parents. I express to my client that I hope I can help them structure a custody and visitation arrangement to make that possible for their child.

As a guardian ad litem, I routinely conduct home visits and interview relatives and friends regarding custody and visitation issues. I believe this work has given me invaluable experience that I can bring to the judiciary. As a guardian, I am not advocating for either parent. I am reviewing the evidence presented by both parents. My guardian work has made my legal practice stronger. Parents share with guardians very practical barriers they do not always relay to their attorneys. I have been able to apply this knowledge to my legal practice in advocating for parents.

I have some experience in the field of adoption. When approaching an adoption, I try to proceed with extreme caution. I do not want any procedural questions to prevent the adoptive family from having a wonderful family life. For example, I represented a young couple adopting their biological nephew. The biological mother relinquished her rights voluntarily and asserted that she had no

knowledge of the identity of the father. Extensive questioning by me and the adoptive parents failed to change her response. Although it appeared we may be able to get by with a publication notice in South Carolina, I also published notice in the city and state where conception may have occurred. I want to make it as difficult as possible to raise any issue that would question the procedure of an adoption case. As a judge, I would scrutinize these cases with extreme care.

For the past three years, I have worked as what is commonly referred to as a 608 attorney with the Office of Indigent Defense (OID). As a 608 attorney, I am appointed to represent defendants in actions of abuse or neglect brought by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS). This can be heartbreaking work as you see families suffering from the effects of drug addiction, alcohol addiction, domestic violence, general poverty, and mental health issues. With this work, I am in the courtroom several times a month handling multiple cases a day. My clients typically have poverty issues such as lack of employment and lack of transportation. They are not always responsive to me or to DSS. They may be hostile to the judicial system. All of my clients want to have their children back in their homes, although this is not always possible. I continue to volunteer as a guardian ad litem in abuse and neglect cases as I am able. Abuse and neglect litigation is a unique practice. I have enjoyed my work in this area and hope that I am helping these families navigate the judicial system.

Finally, I also have experience in the realm of juvenile justice. My experience in General Sessions court has given me a general knowledge of criminal law. Juvenile justice differs in the status offenses applicable to minors and the pre-trial procedure. Once, I represented a juvenile charged with armed robbery. I saw no logical reason a young man like him should be in the juvenile justice system as much as he had been. He was intelligent, had a caring family, and had the opportunity to excel in school. For the armed robbery charge, we reached a reasonable plea deal given the severity of the crime and the evidence presented. In this case, I saw how the juvenile justice system tries to rehabilitate juveniles to avoid adult criminal activity.

- (b) 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.
- (c) If you are a candidate for Master-In-Equity, please provide a brief written description of your experience in the Master's court, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Please include the frequency of your appearances before a Master-In-Equity.

(d) If you are a candidate for Administrative Law Judge, please provide a brief written description of your experience before an Administrative Law Judge, including any issues discussed and the frequency of your appearances before the Administrative Law Judge Court.

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.

I have a Distinguished rating by Martindale-Hubbell. I do not know of any other ratings.

* **Retired justices/judges and justices/judges applying for re-election to their current position may omit Questions 17-22. If a candidate is seeking a judgeship different than his or her current position, Questions 17-22 should be answered based on experience prior to serving on the bench.**

17. What was the frequency of your court appearances during the five years prior to your election to the bench?

(a) federal: None

(b) state: Civil or Criminal appearances on occasion
Family Court appearances every other week

18. What percentage of your practice involved civil, criminal, domestic, and other matters during the five years prior to your election to the bench?

(a) civil: 5%

(b) criminal: 5%

(c) domestic: 45%

(d) other: 45%

19. What percentage of your practice in trial court during the five years prior to your election to the bench involved matters that went to a jury, including those that settled prior to trial?

(a) jury: 10%

(b) non-jury: 90%

Did you most often serve as sole counsel, chief counsel, or associate counsel in these matters? I serve as sole counsel for the majority of my work.

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, prior to your election to the bench. Give citations if the cases were reported and describe why these matters were significant.

(a) Deloach, et al. v. Norfolk Southern (2005). In January 2005, a collision of Norfolk Southern trains in Graniteville, South Carolina, caused the release of toxic gas in an area known as the Valley. I represented a resident of the area for his own injuries, as an heir to his father who passed away from the exposure, and on behalf of his infant daughter who was in the house with them. I served as co-counsel with the Hulsey Litigation Group and with Lawrence Brown who represented other family members

of the Deloach family. I was involved in the preparation of litigation documents, negotiations with the defendants and managed the state court proceedings. This case is significant because it involves mass tort litigation and because of the facts presented. A case of this type requires a significant commitment from the representing attorneys in both time and preparation. All of my cases involving the Graniteville train wreck were settled without trial.

- (b) Baltzegar v. Baltzegar (2004). This case involved the separation and divorce of a thirty-six year old marriage. Although the property division was important, the significance of the case was that Ms. Baltzegar had medical conditions that were potentially very serious in the future. The uncertainty of her medical needs made health insurance imperative for her. Mr. Baltzegar had medical issues as well, making retirement seem more appealing. Neither party was close to social security age at the time of the litigation and all non-employer based health insurance was not financially possible due to the wife's medical condition. Both parties wanted a divorce. This case demonstrated that the most important asset may not be a physical asset held by either party. Furthermore, the court is often limited in how it can assist. A settlement was reached with an attempt to address the health insurance issue. Ten years later the matter came up again and was resolved with finality. The Family Court is a court where litigated matters are not final in all circumstances. It is important to be thoughtful and purposeful in these matters as the issues may continue for many years.
- (c) Pennicuff v. Pennicuff (2005). I served as the Guardian ad Litem for two minor children who were in the physical custody of their mother. The mother moved from Georgia to Ohio without making provisions for father's visitation. The father brought an action for change in custody or to address his visitation. During the investigation, questions arose regarding the stability of the children in mother's custody. With the assistance of an attorney in Ohio, we were able to present a full and accurate report of the status of these children to the South Carolina court which led to a change in custody. As the guardian, I pushed for court time to bring this matter to a hearing and brought out issues that neither attorney addressed for the mental and physical health of the children. The parties were limited financially and the docket was very limited. This case demonstrated the need for a Guardian advocate for the minor children to move the case forward for the benefit and protection of the children. The attorneys are representing their individual clients and may have other issues to consider.
- (d) Thomas v. Thomas (2004) I represented the plaintiff/wife in this action for divorce. The parties were married in 1971. Defendant/husband had been employed and managed the family farm. There were allegations of psychological and physical spousal abuse by the defendant who appeared in court claiming to have several physical disabilities. With the help of local law enforcement, we were able to prove that defendant's physical condition did not prevent the stalking and harassment that plaintiff continued to allege. This was essential in reaching a favorable settlement that involved support and a marital property settlement. I believe my client's physical safety was seriously threatened. The defendant/husband was presenting himself to the court and his attorney as unable to accomplish the acts he was accused

of. Thankfully, my client remained physically safe during the time it took to prove her husband's deceit to the court.

- (e) State v. David M. McClure, Jr., SC Opinion No. 25193, 537 SE 2d 273 (2000). While I was an associate at Bedingfield & Williams, Walter Bedingfield was appointed lead defense counsel for the first death penalty trial in Barnwell County. As his associate, I assisted in all pre-trial matters, met with expert witnesses, met with the client, conducted research, and assisted in trial preparations. Even though I was not a named attorney on this case, I cannot think of a more significant case in my career. David was a young man convicted of killing his father and his father's girlfriend. As a litigator, this case was significant for me in learning the preparation required for such a case and the voluminous legal issues presented. Mr. McClure had confessed and was convicted by the jury. During the death penalty phase, he was sentenced to death. As an associate, I attended all client meetings, conducted research, prepared motions, attended all hearings, and assisted at trial. I met with experts and reviewed all evidence in this case. The penalty verdict was later overturned for improper comment upon the defendant's right to remain silent. Several years later, the appeal was resolved with Mr. McClure sentenced to life without parole. I did not work on the appeal in any manner.

21. List up to five civil appeals you have personally handled, prior to your election to the bench. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision, and the citation if the case was reported.
- (a) None
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)
 - (e)
22. List up to five criminal appeals that you have personally handled, prior to your election to the bench. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision and the citation if the case was reported.
- (a) None
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)
 - (e)
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.
I have not held judicial office.
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)
 - (b)

- (c)
- (d)
- (e)

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.

I have not held any public or judicial office.

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.

27. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.

I ran for the South Carolina House of Representatives District 91 seat in the special election held in April 1999. I lost to the Honorable Lonnie Hosey, who still serves in that seat. In 2014, I ran for Barnwell School District #29 school board and was defeated by Ms. Ferlecia Cuthbertson.

I was a nominated candidate for SC Family Court At Large #5 in January 2013 following the Fall 2012 judicial screening. I withdrew as a candidate. The seat went to an election between the Hon. Melissa Buckhannon and Hon. Randall E. McGee. Judge McGee still holds that seat.

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? If so, give details, including a description of your occupation, business, or profession, the dates of your employment, and the name of your business or employer.

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. Provide, as a separate attachment, a complete, current financial net worth statement that itemizes in detail:

(a) the identity and value of all financial assets held, directly or indirectly, including, but not limited to, bank accounts, real estate, securities, trusts, investments, and other financial holdings; and

(b) the identity and amount of each liability owed, directly or indirectly, which is in excess of \$1,000, including, but not limited to, debts, mortgages, loans, and other financial obligations.

See Attached

(A net worth statement is provided with this questionnaire and you must use this format for submission of your financial statement.)

NOTE: The Commission may require written confirmation that financial obligations have been satisfied or that the parties have agreed upon a payment schedule.

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.

I practiced as an associate with Bedingfield & Williams until 2000. Mr. Dan Williams, who was a partner, practices law in Barnwell County and the surrounding area. Mr. James D. Mosteller was another associate attorney with the firm at the same time I was. I do not know of any active cases from my time at Bedingfield & Williams. If elected to this seat, I would recuse myself from any action involving cases in that firm during my time of employment (August 1997 to August 2000). I have referred clients to Mr. Williams and would treat these clients as my own for purposes of recusal in Family Court.

My husband has worked for several large corporations. He currently works at Crane, Inc., headquartered in Williston, South Carolina. I would not preside over any action involving his immediate co-workers or persons for which he has supervisory responsibilities. I also would not preside over any action involving his superiors.

I currently am a private attorney for referrals from South Carolina Legal Services which serves indigent clients in certain civil cases. In this arrangement, the legal services office refers cases to me and pays for my services as an independent contractor according to its pay scale. I do not foresee a particular conflict of interest presented by this referral contract.

I am also a 608 attorney paid by the Office of Indigent Defense on a per case basis. I would not preside over any matter involving these clients.

As a sole practitioner, I have personally handled all cases in my office. I would not preside over any actions involving former clients.

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? If so, give details but do not include traffic violations for which a fine of \$125 or less was imposed.

No

33. Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? If yes, explain.

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? If so, give details.

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.

No

36. Have you ever, in South Carolina or any other jurisdiction, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, been sanctioned or disciplined for lawyer, judicial, or other professional misconduct or has any jurisdiction found that you committed any misconduct? If so, give the details and describe any final disposition.

[Yes and no responses are redacted for all candidates unless there is a public discipline.]

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? If so, give the details.

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.

While at Bedingfield & Williams, I was covered by the firm's malpractice insurance. I do not know the particular coverage limits of that policy. Since 2001, I have maintained annual coverage for Martha M. Rivers Attorney at Law. I have a \$500,000 per claim and \$1,000,000 aggregate claim limit. There is a \$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.? 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?

I currently have a personal and office Facebook site. I also have a LinkedIn page. I do not regularly engage in LinkedIn but I do use Facebook to keep up with friends and acquaintances. If elected, I would suspend these accounts to the extent possible. I would not utilize a personal account. No account is completely safe from potential view by the public. I would not post on a Facebook account as a potential litigant may see the material and misconstrue the intent or post. I do not engage in any other social media.

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)? If so, give the dates of your employment or activity in such capacity and specify by whom you were directed or employed.

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? If so, please specify the item or items you received, the date of receipt, and the lobbyist or lobbyist's principal involved.

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. If you have spent over \$100, have you reported your expenditures to the House and Senate Ethics Committees?

I have not spent any funds in my candidacy at this time. I anticipate I will buy postage and a name tag. I do not believe this will cost over \$100.00.

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 or have you been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening? 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? If so, give details.

Note: The flash drive with your application materials contains (1) Section 2-19-70(c); (2) JMSC Rule 24, and (3) informal opinions and letters concerning pledging prohibitions, with which third parties acting on your behalf, as well as you, must comply.

No.

47. Have you requested any third parties to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf before the final and formal screening report has been released? If so, give details. Are you aware of any third parties contacting members of the General Assembly on your behalf? If so, give details.
No.
48. Are you familiar with the 48-hour rule, which prohibits a candidate from seeking pledges until after the draft report becomes final, which occurs on the day and time specified on the Commission's published screening schedule?
Yes.
49. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy? If so, please specify the amount, solicitor, donor, and date of the solicitation.
No.
50. Since submitting your letter of intent to become a candidate, have you or has anyone acting on your behalf contacted any member of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission about your candidacy or intention to become a candidate? If so, give details.
No.
51. 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) American Bar Association
(c) SC Women's Lawyers Association
52. 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) Williston Ivy Garden Club
(b) Williston United Methodist Church
(c) Williston Country Club (not a current member)
(d) Barnwell United Methodist Church
(e) Aiken Civic Ballet Company Board
(f) Williston-Elko School District Facilities Study Committee, Secretary 2015/2016
53. 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. This information may include how your life experiences have affected or influenced the kind or type of judge you have been or plan to be.

Regardless of your background, many litigants lack foresight into his/her situation and succumb to the emotional nature of Family Court litigation. I hope to present a calm and friendly demeanor to each litigant who comes into court. As we have an increasing number of self-represented litigants, I want to maintain respect in the court while allowing each party to feel as if she or he has had the opportunity to fairly present a case.

For over fifteen years, I have maintained a general practice law firm in rural South Carolina. Although this is not a unique practice in our state, it certainly is an interesting perspective on life in South Carolina and provided me with insights on how the Family Court and other courts affect lives in myriad ways. I have advised families with their child or grandchild facing charges through juvenile justice. I have represented children before the local school board, and participated in DSS hearings as an advocate and as a volunteer guardian ad litem. As a private practitioner, I regularly act as a guardian ad litem in cases in Barnwell County. Many of my clients live in poverty conditions and have shown me the struggles of raising families with limited resources. Most litigants fear the judicial system and are suspicious of government administration. My Family Court experience will aid me in serving the litigants who come before me, and I will strive to be both respectful and fair in all of my actions.

While maintaining my law practice, I am raising three lovely girls with my husband of twenty-one years. My children have made me a better lawyer. I have managed a law practice while meeting the demands of parenting with the help of many.. An at-large judgeship would require travel away from home, but my husband, parents and extended family would continue to provide support for me and my children.

As a judge, I would use the knowledge I have as a mother, wife, and litigating attorney for 20 years to work with the South Carolina Bar, other members of the court system, and other stakeholders to make the judicial process more efficient and effective, especially for cases involving children.

54. List the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five (5) persons, including your banker, from whom you are providing references. Also, provide the Commission with **original letters** of recommendation from each person listed herein, including their signature (preferably in blue ink). **The Commission will not accept a photocopy or electronic submission of a letter of recommendation and failure to include all five (5) original letters of recommendation in your packet when you submit it will render your packet incomplete.** Please **do not** have references mail your reference letters to the Commission directly. *You must return the five (5) original letters of recommendation to the Commission with your application packet.*

- (a) Mr. Clint Collins, First Citizens Bank, 12965 Main St, Williston, SC 29853
(803) 266-7494
- (b) Mr. Chris Moore, RPWB, 1730 Jackson St, Barnwell, SC 29812
(803) 259-9900
- (c) Mr. Michael Tanner, Michael C. Tanner, LLC, P.O. Box 1061, Bamberg, SC 29003
(803) 245-9153
- (d) Sheriff Ed Carroll, Barnwell County Sheriff, P.O. Box 384, Barnwell, SC 29812

(803) 541-1052

- (e) Ms. Phyllis Sorensen , 413 Whiskey Road, Aiken, SC 29801
(803) 642-9636

55. 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.

Attach a copy of any contract or agreement.

None.

56. 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.

None.

57. For sitting judges, have you used judicial letterhead or the services of your staff, for which you did not pay, while campaigning for this office?

Not Applicable.

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: Mathew M Rivers

Sworn to before me this 26 day of July, 2016.

Janet S. Conder
(Notary Signature)

Janet S. Conder
(Notary Printed Name)

Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: 1/31/2023