



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

**Supreme Court/Court of Appeals**  
**(Incumbent)**

Full Name: **Paula Hinson Thomas**

Business Address: **401 Cleland Street, Georgetown, SC 29440**

Business Telephone: **(843) 545-3551**

1. Do you plan to serve your full term if re-elected?  
**Yes**
2. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?  
**No**
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?  
**My policy is no ex parte communications. The only exception would be for scheduling and requests for ex parte relief.**
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 reveal the relationship and if a conflict exists or there is the appearance of impropriety, I recuse myself.**
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?  
**I would recuse under the situation of an appearance of bias.**
7. What standards have you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality?  
**I do not accept individual gifts however I will accept lodging and social hospitality for legal education or Bar Association events.**

8. How would you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct or appearance of infirmity of a lawyer or of a fellow judge?  
**I feel it is my duty to report misconduct of a lawyer or fellow judge.**
9. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any social, community, or religious organizations? Please describe  
**No**
10. How do you prepare for cases that come before you?  
**I read the briefs and case law and become familiar with the issues of the case. I review the memos from the law clerks and staff attorneys and the record on appeal.**
11. What is your philosophy on "judicial activism," and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy?  
**I apply the law that exists. It is the role of the legislature to make law.**
12. 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 will participate in continuing legal education opportunities as a teacher and a student. I will use every opportunity given me to speak highly of the legal professions and our justice system.**
13. 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?  
**No this has not been a problem for me.**
14. Are you currently serving on any boards or committees? If so, in what capacity are you serving?  
**None at this time.**
15. Please describe your methods of analysis in matters of South Carolina's Constitution and its interpretation by explaining your approach in the following areas. Which area should be given the greatest weight?
- The use and value of historical evidence in practical application of the Constitution:  
**I would first consider the plain language, then I would give the most weight to precedent.**
  - The use and value of an agency's interpretation of the Constitution:  
**This would have the least impact upon my decision. Agencies should not interpret the constitution.**
  - The use and value of documents produced contemporaneously to the Constitution, such as the minutes of the convention:

**I would attempt to determine the intent of it's authors. This could give me some indication of that intent.**

**I would give the greatest weight to item (a)**

16. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality?

**No**

17. Are you a member of any organization or association that, by policy or practice, prohibits or limits its membership on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin? If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis.

**No**

18. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses for the past reporting period?

**Yes**

19. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge and when do these rules apply?

**To be willing to impartially listen, and to be courteous to the parties.**

20. Is there a role for sternness or anger with attorneys?

**Sternness at times but not anger.**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ANSWERS TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS ARE TRUE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

\_\_\_\_\_

Sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

Notary Public for S.C.

My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_