



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

Family Court
(Incumbent)

Full Name: Coreen B. Khoury

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1. Why do you want to serve another term as a Family Court Judge?

I believe that I possess the knowledge, experience and skill set to be an effective Family Court Judge and serve the general and legal communities in South Carolina.

2. Do you plan to serve your full term if re-elected?

Yes

3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?

If I am re-elected at the expiration of my term, I will not return to private practice.

4. Have you met the statutory requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice?

Yes

5. What is your philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications? Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated?

I do not initiate, permit or consider *ex parte* communications unless permitted by the Judicial Code of Conduct or authorized by law. *Ex parte* communications and action may be tolerated if they involve the health or safety of a child or litigant and prompt opportunity to be heard on the matter is afforded all parties to the matter.

6. What is your philosophy on recusal, especially in situations in which lawyer-legislators, former associates, or law partners are to appear before you?

I disqualify myself in any situation in which I, any attorney or participant questions my impartiality for good cause. I do not disqualify myself in cases with lawyer-legislators unless I have a professional or personal connection with the

participant, the issues to be tried or otherwise required to do so by the Judicial Code of Conduct or by law. I do not hear cases that involve my former lawyer partners as lawyers or litigants.

7. 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 I disclosed something that had the appearance of bias and a party requested my recusal, I would grant the motion and disqualify myself even if I did not believe the disclosure would prejudice my impartiality. If my impartiality is reasonably questioned, I believe the best policy is to disqualify myself from hearing the matter.

8. How do you handle the appearance of impropriety because of the financial or social involvement of your spouse or a close relative?

I would disclose the nature of the financial or social involvement of my spouse or close relative and if I, the attorneys or the litigants believed my impartiality could reasonably be questioned, I would disqualify myself from hearing the matter.

9. What standards have you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality?

I do not accept gifts or social hospitality unless allowed pursuant to Canon 4D (5) (a)-(i) of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

10. How do you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct or appearance of infirmity of a lawyer or of a fellow judge?

I am required to take the appropriate action if I become aware of the misconduct of a lawyer or judge. Appropriate action would include direct communication with the lawyer or judge, direct action if available and reporting the violation to the appropriate authority, agency or body.

11. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any social, community, or religious organizations? Please describe.

In the past, I have assisted with fundraisers for parent-teacher organizations (PTO), Little League Baseball, United Way and Boy Scouts. Since becoming a Judge, I have not participated in any fund-raising activities.

12. Do you have any business activities that you have remained involved with since your election to the bench?

No

13. Since Family Court judges do not have law clerks, how do you handle the drafting of orders?

I draft Bench Orders, Pro Se Support Orders, and Pro Se Decrees of Divorce and sometimes Orders resulting from complex litigation. In cases involving attorneys, I usually issue a memorandum of instructions which outlines the findings of facts and conclusions of law. I ask one of the attorneys to draft a proposed Order incorporating these findings and conclusions. I ask the attorney preparing the Order to submit the Order to the opposing attorney or party for modifications, corrections or additions before submitting it to me for my review. Once the Order is submitted for my review, I sign the Order if it complies with my written instructions and file the Order with the Family Court.

14. What methods do you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?

I use a calendaring system that alerts my administrative assistant to when deadlines are approaching. My administrative assistant notifies lawyers of any outstanding Orders that are due. If an Order remains outstanding after contact by my administrative assistant, I contact all parties by mail or email and advise that the matter will be dismissed if the Order is not received in my office by the date designated in the letter or email.

15. What specific actions or steps do you take to ensure that the guidelines of the guardian ad litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case?

I appoint guardians who are experienced, well trained and familiar with the requirements of the Guardian Ad Litem statutes.

16. What is your philosophy on “judicial activism,” and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy?

Judges are charged with interpreting the laws and applying the laws to the facts of the case. Judges are not charged with making laws or promoting public policies. However, judges are in a unique position to observe how the application of outdated laws or policies can create adverse consequences for litigants. I believe that judges can be valuable resources of information and experiences to groups charged with promoting and drafting new laws or policies or discontinuing archaic laws or policies.

17. 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 have no planned activities but would do whatever I was called upon to do to improve the legal system. As a judge, I am diligent and industrious in the handling of my duties. I calmly, courteously and willingly listen to all sides of a

controversy. These actions assist in the promotion of a positive image for the legal system on a daily basis.

18. 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?

I have served as a family court lawyer or judge for thirty three years in a relatively small community and the pressures of my job have not strained my personal relationships with family or friends. Over the years, I have tried very hard to separate my personal life from my professional life. I have tried to leave work at work and home at home. Family, friends, clients and attorneys have done a great job of understanding and honoring these boundaries. I would continue to behave in the same fashion and with the same expectations if re-elected to serve as a family court judge.

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

No

20. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved?

Yes, unless one of the lawyers or litigants questioned my impartiality after disclosure of the information.

21. 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

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

Yes

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

A judge should set the tone of the courtroom by being calm and courteous. A judge should treat all lawyers, litigants, other courtroom participants and courthouse personnel with respect. A judge should be fair and impartial in his/her rulings. A judge should be attentive to all matter before him/her and in control of his/her courtroom. All rules apply both in the courtroom and outside the courtroom.

24. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public, especially with a criminal defendant? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?

There may be occasions where it is appropriate to be angry with a person making an appearance in court, a pro se litigant or attorney. It would not be appropriate, however, for this anger to influence a judicial decision.

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 South Carolina

My commission expires: _____