



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

Family Court
(New Candidate)

Full Name: Carrie Hall Tanner

Business Address: 708 Lafayette Avenue, Camden, South Carolina 29020

Business Telephone: (803) 432-6034

1. Why do you want to serve as a Family Court Judge? I want to serve as a Family Court Judge to further assist my community and state. Throughout my years as a domestic attorney I feel that I have helped countless individuals and children work through some of the most difficult times of their lives. Family Court matters involve the most personal and emotional issues found in any Court and I believe as I Judge, I can better assist parties move forward and heal.
2. Do you plan to serve your full term if elected? Yes.
3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day? No.
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? *Ex parte* communications should not be allowed in any circumstance. Any communications regarding a pending action should be with all parties and/or counsel present or otherwise participating in the communication.
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 believe that recusal is necessary in any circumstance where there is any question of neutrality of the judge, including the

mere appearance of bias. Should a former law partner appear in front of me, I would only proceed after full disclosure to all parties, giving them the opportunity to discuss the issue in private with their counsel and then would only agree to proceed if all parties waived the conflict and only if the proceeding was an uncontested matter such as approval of an agreement or no-fault divorce. If any party raised a concern, I would immediately recuse myself.

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? I would absolutely grant the motion and recuse myself. Regardless of my belief that I would not be prejudiced, a litigant is entitled to the reality and the appearance of an impartial judge.
8. How would you handle the appearance of impropriety because of the financial or social involvement of your spouse or a close relative? I would reveal the involvement with all parties and would recuse myself from any part of the proceedings if I believed there was any effect on my neutrality. I would only proceed after giving the parties an opportunity to discuss the issue in private with counsel and specifically, on the record, indicating their consent for me to hear the matter.
9. What standards would you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality? I would err on the side of caution and not accept gifts of any kind from any individual who was not a relative or close friend who would never appear in front of me. Social hospitality would also be limited to these individuals or in a setting sanctioned by such organizations where other judges or public officials were present or as otherwise specifically allowed by the Canons.
10. 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 would first conduct my own investigation, including speaking directly with the lawyer or fellow judge, to ensure that the information I had was accurate. If actual misconduct or infirmity was confirmed, I would report such to the appropriate agency.

11. 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? No. If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis.
12. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any political, social, community, or religious organizations? No. Please describe.
13. Do you have any business activities that you would envision remaining involved with if elected to the bench? No.
14. Since family court judges do not have law clerks, how would you handle the drafting of orders? For matters taken under advisement, I would issue a memorandum to the attorneys, outlining my findings and ruling, and direct one of the attorneys to draft a proposed Order. For complex matters, I would have the drafting attorney submit the Order to me in a Word format so that I could make any modifications necessary. In some instances, I may draft the Order myself.
15. If elected, what method would you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines? I would calendar deadlines on my Microsoft Exchange calendar with a backup hardcopy calendar.
16. If elected, what specific actions or steps would you take to ensure that the guidelines of the Guardian Ad Litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case? I would ensure that there is a separate comprehensive Order appointing the guardian ad litem that outlines the specific requirements of the statute in every case where a guardian is appointed. This will ensure that everyone is on notice of the expectations of the guardian. Should these requirements not be met during the pendency of the case, I would address these issues with the guardian or, at a final hearing, give the appropriate weight to the report of the guardian.
17. What is your philosophy on "judicial activism," and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy? I do not believe that judicial activism is appropriate in the courtroom. A judge should

make decisions based on the facts presented as applied to the applicable law. A judge should not have a role in setting or promoting public policy.

18. Canon 4 allows a judge to engage in activities to improve the law, legal system, and administration of justice. What activities would you plan to undertake to further this improvement of the legal system? I would be available for community meetings and events to speak on the legal process and Family Court system to promote awareness and educate. I would also take advantage of any opportunities within the legal community and administration to update and improve procedures within the system to promote efficiency and fairness.
19. Do you feel that the pressure of serving as a judge would strain personal relationships (i.e. spouse, children, friends, or relatives)? How would you plan to address this? I believe that the additional pressure of a judicial position over that of a Family Court attorney, primarily with the need to travel, could be managed with the cooperation of my close family unit. My children are of the age where they are self-sufficient. Their father lives locally and is accustomed to the demands of this career. Our children flow seamlessly between our homes and we work together to ensure their needs are met. My mother and step-father live close by, are retired and available to assist in any manner needed.
20. Would you give any special considerations to a *pro se* litigant in family court? While a *pro se* litigant is expected to know and follow the same rules and procedures as an attorney, they should be given a certain amount of leeway, especially in Family Court. Family Court is a Court of equity and some concessions may be necessary to promote justice and an appropriate resolution to a case. So long as both parties are given a fair and proper opportunity to be heard without prejudicing either side, I believe there would be appropriate times for special considerations for *pro se* litigants.
21. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality?
No.

22. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved? No.
23. Have you met the mandatory minimum hours requirement for continuing legal education courses for the past reporting period? Yes.
24. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge and when do these rules apply? As a judge, you are held to a higher standard in your behavior and demeanor. A judge should set the standard for professionalism and competency both on and off the bench. A judge is expected to be fair, compassionate and kind. This standard is not only an expectation while on the bench but in all aspects of your life. A judge should lead by example.
25. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public who would appear before you, especially with a criminal defendant? No. Regardless of the actions or behavior of a member of the public, even a criminal defendant or juvenile, anger is not an appropriate reaction for a judge who must make decisions with an impartial mind and neutral demeanor. Our judicial system is founded on the principal of fairness and neutrality. Regardless of personal feelings, a judge must never express emotion that would give the appearance of undermining these principals. Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a *pro se* litigant? As with the general public, it is never appropriate to express anger with attorneys or *pro se* litigants. Like judges, attorneys are representatives of the legal system. Both attorneys and *pro se* litigants should be treated with respect.

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: _____