



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

Family Court
(New Candidate)

Full Name: Rame Lambert Campbell

Business Address: 111 Sharpe Street, Anderson, SC 29621

Business Telephone: (864) 965-9148

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

I have been an attorney for over twenty years. My experience as a lawyer representing clients in Family Court has shown me that decisions made in Family Court cases can have a profound and lasting impact upon the lives of not only the parties involved but also their extended family members and children as well. As a Family Court judge, I would have the ability to help people through difficult and tumultuous times in their lives, whether it be in a contested divorce hearing, a child custody action, a juvenile justice hearings or an adoption case. I understand the difficulties and problems that both litigants and attorneys face.

Family law is emotionally charged. It deals with every human emotion from pain, heartache, hatred, contempt, to love and happiness because it deals with a wide range of people's most intimate concerns, Parties who were at one time in a loving relationship could be in a contested dispute over property, money and children. As a Family Court judge, I would have the responsibility to make decisions which will have a long lasting and beneficial effect upon the parties and their children. I believe my courtroom experience, calm demeanor and temperament will assist me in making decisions that are just, right and fair for the parties involved.

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, if elected.
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 believe a judge should not be involved in ex parte communications. A judge's role is to decide and settle disputes based upon an independent and impartial review of a case's facts and applicable law. Ex parte communications are detrimental to our legal system because they can be viewed as compromising the integrity of the court. Attorneys and litigants should have faith in our legal system that a judge will make an independent and impartial decision, only after both sides have had a full and fair opportunity to present their cases. However, a judge may engage in limited ex parte communications with full disclosure, when neither party will gain an advantage over the other party; such as handling administrative matters, scheduling, matters authorized by law, and emergencies that do not deal with the merits of a case.

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

My philosophy on recusal is a judge must look at the parties of each case, disclose any potential for bias and use his or her discretion in deciding if recusal is appropriate. A judge may look at several factors when making this decision, such as: the current relationship a judge may have with counsel or the parties; whether the judge has any monetary interest remaining in the cases being handled by his or her former firm; whether the case was pending with his or her firm prior to the judge's election to the bench, or how long has it been since the judge left the firm. If it appears that a judge's impartiality might be called into question, a judge has a duty to disclose, on the record, information which the judge believes the parties or their attorneys might consider relevant. A judge must disqualify him or herself from a proceeding where his or her impartiality might reasonably be questioned. However, I believe a judge after full disclosure can still preside over a case, when both parties have agreed outside the presence of the judge to waive any potential conflict, on the record.

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 first attempt to learn the reason or rationale behind a party's request for my recusal. If the reason is that my judgement or impartiality might be called into question, then I would recuse myself after I had made a full disclosure of the information on the record, to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

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 disqualify myself and not hear a matter which involves the financial or social involvement of my spouse or close relative, simply due to the appearance of impropriety.

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

I would not accept gifts, as it can be perceived as trying to gain favor with or having an influence over a judge's decision. Social hospitality with parties having matters pending before my court should be avoided, unless it involves a large group settling such as Bar association function.

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 report to the appropriate authorities a lawyer or judge who has engaged in conduct which violates the Rules of Professional Conduct or Judicial Canons or who has the appearance of infirmity in carrying out their responsibilities.

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? If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis. No.

12. Have you engaged in any fund-raising activities with any political, social, community, or religious organizations? Please describe. No.

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?

I would have one of the attorneys in the hearing prepare a proposed order pursuant to my instruction and ruling from the bench or in writing shared with all parties. The attorney preparing the order would be required to provide the proposed order to all parties involved for their review and opportunity to make amendments or corrections prior to the order being submitted to me. I would then review the proposed order, amendments or corrections and make any changes, modifications or corrections I deem necessary to ensure the order adheres to my ruling from the bench or in writing, before I sign it. On highly contested or complicated matters, I would draft the order myself.

15. If elected, what method would you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?

In my private practice, I am continually having to meet deadlines. In my experience, I have found it necessary and essential to communicate with my office staff regarding scheduling deadlines and managing our case load. I would continue this practice. I would also use a daily and weekly roster of cases in order to manage the court times more efficiently during the court term.

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 issue an order appointing a guardian ad litem to a case which adheres to the guardian ad litem statute in both private cases and cases brought by the Department of Social Services. I would expect the appointed guardian to be diligent in their duties and represent to the court what is in the best interest of a child. As per the statute, I would request periodic case updates and reports for my review.

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

I believe a judge should first and foremost uphold the laws of our state as enacted by the legislators. A judge should not use his or her position to make a ruling based upon their own personal opinion or to advance or advocate for a cause which is contrary to our state laws. Public policy and/or changes in the law is a job best suited for action by our elected legislators.

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?

Only a small percentage of our citizens have ever been in a courtroom or been on a jury. The majority of our citizens’ views and understanding of our legal system is formed by watching television shows, watching the daily news or through the internet. I believe a judge is in a unique position to educate and inform the public about our system of justice. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as making public appearances at events that promote our justice system, speaking to civic groups and talking to students in our schools. As a prosecutor, I spoke many times with local high school students in their classrooms and would continue to do this if elected as a judge.

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 do not feel that serving as a judge would be an issue that would strain my personal relationships. My wife understands the life of an attorney and what would be required of me if elected. I have been an attorney throughout the sixteen years of our marriage and her father was also an attorney. My wife and daughter are well aware of the time commitment required and that the life and activities of a judge will revolve around a stringent court schedule.

20. Would you give any special considerations to a pro se litigant in family court?

I do not believe pro se litigants should receive special treatment in Family Court. A person has the constitutional right to represent themselves, but along with that right, is the responsibility a pro se litigant must undertake to familiarize themselves with the court rules and procedures. I believe pro se litigants should be treated fairly and not taken advantage of due to their lack of knowledge in the law, court rules and court procedures. However, our laws, rules and burden of proof must govern our proceedings.

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?

I would hear a case where myself or a family member held a de minimis financial interest in a party involved. It would be my responsibility to first fully disclose on the record my interest to the parties. I would then allow the parties sufficient time to discuss, outside of my presence, whether they would rather proceed with me hearing the case or rescheduling the case for another time with another judge. I would have the parties state on the record if they are waiving any potential conflict and are willing to proceed. I would recuse myself if a question arises regarding my impartiality.

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?

A judge is a representative of our state's legal system 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. A judge should always be mindful that he or she is held to a

higher standard of conduct. A judge should not engage in any conduct which would be detrimental or degrading to the bench or our legal system. A judge's demeanor should be polite and respectful to the people the judge comes into contact with whether they are attorneys, litigants, courthouse personnel or members of the public. A judge must be above reproach.

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? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?

A judge should not express or show any anger or rudeness when dealing with a member of the public, attorneys, criminal defendants or pro se litigants. Family Court judges are tasked with the duty to preside over matters which are emotionally charged, cases which will test the judge's patience and cases which may repulse the judge. Throughout all of this, a judge must control his or her emotions, maintain control and decorum of the courtroom and be professional and courteous throughout the proceeding.

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: _____