



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

**Family Court**  
**(Incumbent)**

Full Name: Tony M. Jones

Business Address: York County Family Court  
1070 Heckle Blvd, Ste. 202  
Post Office Box 11746 (29731)  
Rock Hill, South Carolina 29732

Business Telephone: (803) 909-7187

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

I enjoy being able to help families, particularly children. It is a public service, a way of giving something back to the community.

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?

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?

I am strictly against *ex parte* communication. The only exception is when the safety of a child is in imminent danger.

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

Recusal is absolutely necessary when there is an apparent conflict. I waited over a year before I heard any cases involving a former associate. Even then, I inquire of opposing counsel if he/she felt there was a conflict. As a judge, I must avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

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?

More than likely, I would grant such a Motion.

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

I am not married and have no close relative living in South Carolina. Most of my close relatives are deceased.

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

I accept no gifts from attorneys. I never allow an attorney to pay for a meal. I belong to no groups or clubs. Very rarely do I attend social functions outside of Bar related matter. I would never attend an event involving a political fundraiser nor attend any rally.

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 would have a duty to report.

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

No.

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 either assign the drafting of the order to one of the attorneys or I do it myself. I generally do my own orders on long complicated cases.

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

My Administrative Assistant is incredibly organized. She and I have a "tickler" system that has multiple backups.

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 review my files thoroughly before hearing a case. I normally go through a checklist at the Pre-Trial hearing to make sure all of the Guardian ad Litem reports have been timely filed. I do not read the reports prior to the call of the case in the event there may be an objection by the attorneys.

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

I do not believe in judicial activism. It is the legislature's duty to enact the laws and the Appellate Courts to determine public policy.

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 will have discussions with members of the local bar (groups) or other judges to learn how others do things in order to improve our methods of doing certain things. I learn a lot from other judges hearing how they operate in their counties.

If requested by a school administrator or college professor, I will address the students involving matters regarding the legal system.

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?

No, I remain out of the public eye.

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?

No.

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?

Socrates said it best when he said "A Judge is to hear courteously, answer wisely, consider soberly, and decide impartially." This applies to me as a judge at all times.

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?

No, particularly not in the courtroom. If I have ever been angry with an attorney, it was dealt with in chambers or outside of the presence of litigants.

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)  
Notary Public for South Carolina  
My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_