



**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE**

Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying:

1. Name: The Honorable James Otto Spence

Name that you are known by if different from above
Jimmy Spence

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge?
Yes. Lexington County Master-in-Equity since 2007.

Home Address: [REDACTED]

Business Address: Lexington County Judicial Center, 205 East Main Street
Suite 204, Lexington, S.C. 29072

E-Mail Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: (home): [REDACTED]
(office): 803-785-8291
(cell): [REDACTED]

2. Date of Birth: [REDACTED] 1959
Place of Birth: Staten Island, NY
Social Security Number: [REDACTED]

3. Are you a citizen of South Carolina? Yes.
Have you been a resident of this state for at least the immediate past five years?
Yes.

4. SCDL# [REDACTED]
Voter Registration Number [REDACTED]

5. Have you served in the military? No. If so, give the dates, branch of service, highest rank attained, serial number (if applicable), present status, and the character of your discharge or release. Please provide a copy of your DD214 concerning your discharge.

6. Family Status: In the space below, (a) state whether you are single, married, widowed, divorced, or separated; (b) if married, state the date of your marriage and your spouse's full name; (c) if you have ever been divorced or are in the process of obtaining a divorce, state the date, name of the moving party, court, and grounds; and (d) state the names of your children and their ages. If your children are old enough to work, include the occupation of each child.

Family Status: Married June 15, 1985 to Natalie Lynn Mincey.

Never divorced, two children: [REDACTED]

7. List each college and law school you attended, including the dates of your attendance, the degrees you received, and if you left an institution without receiving a degree, the reason for your departure. (a) Presbyterian College. 1977-1981 BA English/History. (b) USC Law School. 1981-1984 JD.
8. List the significant activities in which you took part during your attendance at law school. Give the years you were involved in these activities and list any leadership positions you held. Clerked House Ethics Committee (briefly) and clerked House Judiciary Committee (Chairman Robert J. "Bob" Sheheen) for approximately a year. Thereafter, clerked Dooley Law Firm Lexington, S.C. (2nd and 3rd years of law school. 1st year students not allowed to work.).
9. List the states in which you have been admitted to practice law and the year of each admission. Also list any states in which you took the bar exam but were never admitted to the practice of law. Please indicate the number of times you took the exam in each state. South Carolina. Took bar exam one time. Admitted November 15, 1984.
10. Describe chronologically, since graduation from law school, your legal experience. Please include a list of all positions held in which you worked in a legal capacity. Describe the general character of your practice and divide it into periods with dates if its character has changed over the years. Please also describe the extent to which you were involved with the administrative and financial management of each of these entities, including management of trust accounts.

I clerked for Dooley Law Firm for last year or so of law school. (1983-1984) Dooley Law Firm was a small father-son law general practice law firm concentrating in real estate and probate matters. The first several years I did title searches, closings and simple wills. Thereafter, I began to represent Lexington State Bank (later BB & T) in foreclosure and collections cases. Soon I began doing general real estate litigation, primarily before various state Masters-in-Equity judges in various counties. I became a certified mediator and arbitrator in mid- 1990's, helped develop Mediation for Lexington County Pilot Program. I mediated/arbitrated many real estate types disputes .I also represented adoptive couples through Bethany Christian Services. During the late 1990's I began to represent generally existing clients in personal injury cases. I also served as a party or court suggested Special Referee in various real estate type cases.

Justices/judges applying for re-election to their current position may omit Questions 11-17. If you are a judge seeking a judgeship different than your current position, Questions 11-17 should be answered based on your experience prior to serving on the bench.

11. Please answer the following: N/A.

- (a) If you are a candidate for Family Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience within each of the following Family Court practice areas: divorce and equitable division of property, child custody, adoption, abuse and neglect, and juvenile justice. Include information about cases you have handled in each of these practice areas, or if you have not practiced in an area, describe how your background and procedural knowledge has prepared you to preside over such matters as a Family Court Judge. Please also indicate the frequency of your appearances before a Family Court Judge within the past five years.
 - (b) If you are a candidate for Circuit Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience in criminal matters, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Further, please provide a brief written description of your experience in civil matters, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the types of matters handled, issues involved, and procedural history. Please include information such as the primary areas in civil court in which you practice, whether you represent plaintiffs or defendants, or both. You may go back further than five years if you feel it would assist the Commission with its assessment of your experience. If you lack experience in an area, describe how your background and procedural knowledge has prepared you to preside over such matters as a Circuit Court Judge, or how you would compensate for your lack of experience in this area. Please also indicate the frequency of your appearances before a Circuit Court Judge within the past five years.
 - (c) If you are a candidate for Master-In-Equity, please provide a brief written description of your experience in the Master's court, including any cases handled over the past five years and include a brief description of the issues involved. Please include the frequency of your appearances before a Master-In-Equity or a Circuit Court Judge within the past five years.
 - (d) If you are a candidate for Administrative Law Court, please provide a brief written description of your experience before an Administrative Law Judge, including any issues discussed and the frequency of your appearances before the Administrative Law or Circuit Court within the past five years.
12. What was the frequency of your court appearances during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench?
 (a) federal: (b) N/A pursuant to Crawford email.
13. What percentage of your practice involved civil, criminal, domestic, and other matters during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench?
 N/A
 (a) civil: (b) criminal:

(c) domestic: (d) other:

14. What percentage of your practice in trial court during the past five years or in the five years prior to your election to the bench involved matters that went to a jury, including those that settled prior to trial? N/A

(a) jury: (b) non-jury

Did you most often serve as sole counsel, chief counsel, or associate counsel in these matters? N/A

15. List five of the most significant litigated matters you have personally handled in either trial or appellate court or before a state or federal agency. Give citations if the cases were reported and describe why these matters were significant. N/A

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)
(e)

16. List up to five civil appeals you have personally handled. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision, and the citation if the case was reported. N/A

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)
(e)

17. List up to five criminal appeals you have personally handled. Give the case name, the court, the date of decision and the citation if the case was reported. N/A

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)
(e)

18. Have you ever held judicial office? Yes. If so, list the periods of your service, the courts involved, and whether you were elected or appointed. Describe the jurisdiction of each of the courts and note any limitations on the jurisdiction of each court.

I was appointed pursuant to statute to serve as Lexington County Master-in-Equity for the term beginning January 1, 2007 and have served continuously since that date. The Master-in-Equity Judge is the Circuit Court Equity Judge with Non-Jury Civil authority defined by the Order of Reference. As with most full time Masters, I also hear matters as a Special Circuit Court Judge. My Order is a civil action-jury and non-jury based authority Order executed each year by the Chief Justice. A Master-in-Equity does not have statutory family court (domestic) or criminal court authority.

19. If the answer to question 18 is yes, describe or list five of your most significant orders or opinions and give the citations if they were reported. Also list citations to any appellate review of these orders or opinions. (Note: All citations to Shearouse Advance Sheets).
- (a) Goldy v. The Storage Center-Platt Springs, LLC, Op. No. 27782 (S.C. Sup. Ct. filed March 14, 2018.)
 - (b) Snow et al. v Smith et. al., Op. No. 5386 (S.C. Ct. App. filed March 2, 2016.)
 - (c) Regions Bank v Owens et.al, Op. No. 5113(S.C. Ct. App. filed April 10, 2013.)
 - (d) Chase Home Finance, LLC v Risher., Op. No. 5138(S.C. Ct. App filed May 29, 2013.)
 - (e) Misty Lake Association, Inc. v Bridleridge HOA, Inc., UP Op. No 2013-UP-011(S.C. Ct. App. filed January 9. 2013).
20. List all courts in which you have been admitted to practice and list the dates of your admission. Give the same information for administrative bodies that require a special admission to practice.
- (a) State of South Carolina November 15, 1984.
 - (b) United States District Court March 2, 1989.
 - (c) United States Court of Appeals (Fourth Circuit) September 27, 2002.
21. Have you taught law-related courses or lectured at bar association conferences, educational institutions, or continuing legal or judicial education programs? If so, briefly describe each course or lecture. The following are representative of programs:
- (a) SC Legal Services 50th Anniversary Panel Speaker Feb. 15, 2018. Pro Se Litigants in trial Court.
 - (b) Palmetto Paralegal Association Feb. 2018. MIE Court Presentation.
 - © Invited to speak at Hon. Matthew Perry, Jr. Chapter/Black Law Student Association Journey to Judgeship (Sept. 28, 2017)
 - (d) Access to Justice-SC Summit of Access to Justice for All Break-out Discussion Moderator October 24, 2016.
 - (e) MIE Bench-Bar Speaker for absent Prof. Steven Spitz. October 2016.
 - (f) Lexington County Bar Association Sept 15, 2016 Real Estate and Probate Seminar MIE Court Practice and Procedure.
 - (g) Guest lecturer USC Law School Prof. Steven Spitz Real Estate Transactions Class Nov. 16, 2016 Judicial Perspective on Foreclosures and Claims against Land.
 - (h) Lexington Rotary Jan. 14, 2016 Equity Court Presentation
 - (i) Presented Equity Court section at Bridge the Gap August 20, 2015 program.
 - (j) Equity Court/Foreclosure presentation at Consumer Law Training June 6, 2014
 - (k) MIE Bench Bar. Foreclosure Ethics October 2013.
 - (l) Various school, scout or church presentations about South Carolina Legal system and South Carolina Equity Court
22. Provide, as a separate attachment, your continuing legal or judicial education report from the past five years. Attached.

23. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each. None
24. Please furnish as a separate attachment, two examples of legal articles, briefs, orders, or other legal writings for which you can claim sole or primary authorship. If you cannot claim sole authorship, please explain the extent to which you are the primary author, to include a description of the other authors and their contributions. The writing samples are for the Commission's use only and will not be published. (If you are a judge and are not seeking a different type of judgeship, this question is inapplicable.) N/A.
25. What is your rating or membership status, if any, by any legal rating organization, such as, Best Lawyers, Chambers, Legal 500, Martindale-Hubbell, Who's Who Legal, Super Lawyers, Million Dollar Advocates Forum, etc.? If you are currently a member of the judiciary, list your last available rating, if any. Upon information and belief based upon email, I have a 2018 Judicial AV Martindale-Hubbell rating. Attached.
26. List all bar associations and professional organizations of which you are a member and give the titles and dates of any offices you have held in such groups.
Lexington County Bar Association member and 1997-8 President.
27. Have you ever held public office other than judicial office? If so, list the periods of your service, the office or offices involved, and whether you were elected or appointed. Also, state whether or not you have timely filed your report with the State Ethics Commission during the period you held public office. If not, were you ever subject to a penalty? If so, give details, including dates. No other public offices..
28. For sitting or former judges, list all employment you had while serving as a judge (whether full-time or part-time, contractual or at will, consulting or otherwise) other than elected judicial office. Specify your dates of employment, employer, major job responsibilities, and supervisor. No other employment.
29. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates. No.
30. Have you ever been engaged in any occupation, business, or profession other than the practice of law, teaching of law, or holding judicial or other public office? If so, give details, including a description of your occupation, business, or profession, the dates of your employment, and the name of your business or employer. Was in a family corporation BD & S, Inc. which owned 30 acres of undeveloped land near Edmund, S.C. Property sold earlier this year in 2018. Corporation dissolved pursuant to statute. Mark Hendrix (Burkett CPA).
31. Are you now an officer or director or involved in the management of any business enterprise? Explain the nature of the business, your duties, and the term of your service. Not now.

32. Are you now or have you ever been employed as a “lobbyist,” as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(13), or have you acted in the capacity of a “lobbyist’s principal,” as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(14)? If so, give the dates of your employment or activity in such capacity and specify by whom you were directed or employed. No.
33. Provide, **as a separate attachment**, a complete, current financial net worth statement that itemizes in detail: Attached.
- (a) the identity and value of all financial assets held, directly or indirectly, including, but not limited to, bank accounts, real estate, securities, trusts, investments, and other financial holdings; and
 - (b) the identity and amount of each liability owed, directly or indirectly, which is in excess of \$1,000, including, but not limited to, debts, mortgages, loans, and other financial obligations.

(A net worth statement form is provided with this questionnaire and you must use this format for submission of your financial statement.)

NOTE: The Commission may require written confirmation that financial obligations have been satisfied or that the parties have agreed upon a payment schedule.

34. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities? No. Have you ever defaulted on a student loan? No. Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? No. If so, give details. N/A
35. Since filing with the Commission your letter of intent to run for judicial office, have you accepted lodging, transportation, entertainment, food, meals, beverages, money, or any other thing of value as defined by S.C. Code § 2-17-10(1) from a lobbyist or lobbyist’s principal? If so, please specify the item or items you received, the date of receipt, and the lobbyist or lobbyist’s principal involved. No.
36. Itemize (by amount, type, and date) all expenditures, other than those for travel and room and board, made by you, or on your behalf in furtherance of your candidacy for the position you seek. If you have spent over \$100, have you reported your expenditures to the House and Senate Ethics Committees? None.
37. List the recipient and amount of all contributions made by you, a member of your immediate family, or by a business with whom you are associated, to members of the General Assembly within the past four years. None.
38. Have you or has anyone acting on your behalf solicited or collected funds to aid in the promotion of your candidacy? If so, please specify the amount, solicitor, donor, and date of the solicitation. No.
39. Describe any financial arrangements or business relationships you have, or have had in the past, that could constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position you seek

or currently hold. Explain how you would resolve any potential conflict of interest. ,None.
Question not applicable.

40. Describe any interest you or a member of your immediate family has in real property:
- (a) in which there is a potential conflict of interest with your involvement in a South Carolina state or local public agency; None.
 - (b) in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or that adjoins property in which there have been public improvements of \$200; None that I know of. Our house abuts HWY #302. There is road construction and, I believe, a sewer line being constructed.
 - (c) which was sold, leased, or rented to a state or local public agency in South Carolina. None.

List the interest you hold and the value and location of the property. Identify as applicable the: None.

- (a) nature of any potential conflict of interest;
- (b) nature and value of any public improvements; and
- (c) South Carolina state or local public agency which purchased or is leasing or renting such property.

Attach a copy of any contract or agreement. None.

41. Identify any personal property interest you or a member of your immediate family sold, leased, or rented to a South Carolina state or local public agency. Identify the property, its amount or value, and the name of the agency. Attach a copy of any contract or agreement. None.
42. For sitting judges, if you currently hold an interest in stock or other securities or have held such an interest, list each stock you currently own or owned during the prior calendar year. If you prefer, you may attach broker or account records containing the requested information instead of listing it here. None.
43. For sitting judges, have you ever accepted anything of value from an attorney or litigant in a matter currently or previously before you or your court? If so, please give the details, including the name of the attorney or litigant and the thing of value you received. No. None.
44. For sitting judges, have you used the services of your staff, for which you did not pay, while campaigning for this office? No.
45. Have you ever been arrested, charged, or held by federal, state, or other law enforcement authorities for violation or for suspicion of violation of any federal law or regulation, state law or regulation, or county or municipal law, regulation, or ordinance, or any other law, including another country's law? If so, give details but do not include traffic violations which are subject to a penalty of \$125 or less. You must include any and all arrests, including, but not limited to, offenses for driving under the influence or similar traffic

offenses. Include all arrests that resulted in expungement, which will be redacted. If you have questions regarding whether to include an offense, please contact the Commission.

[All answers have been received and considered by the Commission, and as noted above, any expunged matters are redacted from the record.]

46. Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state, or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? If yes, explain. No.
47. Have you ever been sued by a client? Have you ever been a named party (personally or professionally) in or had a pecuniary interest in any civil or criminal proceedings? If so, give details, including, but not limited to, dates, and resolutions. No.
48. If you are in private practice, are you covered by malpractice insurance and, if so, how long have you carried malpractice insurance? If applicable, have you ever been covered by a tail policy? If so, please explain when you were covered by a tail policy. Also, if applicable, indicate your coverage and deductible for your current malpractice policy. N/A.
49. Have you ever, in South Carolina or any other jurisdiction, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, been sanctioned or disciplined for lawyer, judicial, or other professional misconduct or has any jurisdiction found that you committed any misconduct? If so, give the details and describe any final disposition. Include any and all confidential and public sanction, discipline, or finding of misconduct of any kind.
[Yes and no responses are redacted for all candidates unless there is a public discipline.]
50. Have you ever been investigated by the Department of Social Services? If so, give the details and the resolution. No. Has your name ever been enrolled on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect? No. If so, give the details.

Note: The flash drive with your application materials contains (1) Section 2-19-70(c); (2) JMSC Rule 24, and (3) informal opinions and letters concerning pledging prohibitions, with which third parties acting on your behalf, as well as you, must comply.

51. Have you directly or indirectly requested the pledge of any member of the General Assembly as to your election for the position for which you are being screened or have you been offered a conditional pledge of support by any legislator pending the outcome of your screening? Have you received the assurance of any public official or public employee that they will seek the pledge of any member of the General Assembly as to your election for the position for which you are being screened? If so, give details. No to all questions.
52. Have you requested any third parties to contact members of the General Assembly on your behalf before the final and formal screening report has been released? No. Describe the campaigning you have done for this election and include a list of those individuals you have asked to campaign on your behalf and, to the best of your knowledge, those who have

campaigned for you on their own initiative. No campaigning. No contacts or request for support.

53. Are you familiar with the 48-hour rule, which prohibits a candidate from seeking pledges until after the draft report becomes final, which occurs on the day and time specified on the Commission's published screening schedule? Yes.
54. Since submitting your letter of intent to become a candidate, have you or has anyone acting on your behalf contacted any member of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission about your candidacy or intention to become a candidate? No. If so, give details.
55. List the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five (5) persons from whom you are providing references.

I note that all of these folks (other than Terry Burnett) work in some capacity at the Lexington County Courthouse. I don't have any authority over any of them and they see me all during the day, all year long, at my best and at my worst. Terry and I work together planning annual MIE Equity Court CLE's each year.

(a) Shirley Snelgrove (County of Lexington) 2020 LaBoon Court, Leesville, S.C. 29070
803 622-1319(cell)

(b) Master Deputy Danny Lewis, Lexington County Sheriff's Department P.O. Box 639,
Lexington, S.C. 29071 803-785-8459

© Lexington County Bailiffs, 11th Judicial Circuit c/o Master Deputy Danny Lewis, P.O.
Box 639, Lexington, SC 29071 803-785-8459

(d) Lisa Comer, Lex. Co. Clerk of Court, 205 E. Main St., Suite 128, Lexington, S.C.
29072 803-785-8212 & Mona Huggins, Deputy Clerk, Court of Common Pleas, 205 E.
Main St. Suite 128, Lexington, SC 29072 803 785-8398.

(e) John T. "Terry" Burnett (SC CLE) 950 Taylor Street, Ste. 120 Columbia, SC 29201
803-576-3780

Also, provide the Commission with **original letters** of recommendation from each person listed herein, including their signature (preferably in blue ink). **The Commission will not accept a photocopy or electronic submission of a letter of recommendation and failure to include all five (5) original letters of recommendation in your packet when you submit it will render your packet incomplete.** Please **do not** have references mail your reference letters to the Commission directly. *You must return the five (5) original letters of recommendation to the Commission with your application packet.*

All Reference letters attached.

56. Are you active on or a member of a social media or Internet site or have you, to your knowledge, been featured or depicted on a social media or Internet site, such as, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.? If so, how would your use of social media or other

similar types of Internet sites be affected if you were serving in a judicial capacity? No.
Not on social media.

57. List all civic, charitable, educational, social, and fraternal organizations of which you are or have been a member during the past five years and include any offices held in such a group, any professional honors, awards, or other forms of recognition received and not listed elsewhere.

None other than I attend Red Bank United Methodist Church where I am part of an adult team teaching group. I also usher, greet and read scriptures on occasion. My wife, Natalie and I team taught Church and God class to church scout group this March-April.

58. Provide any other information that may reflect positively or negatively on your candidacy, or which you believe should be disclosed in connection with consideration of you for nomination for the position you seek. This information may include how your life experiences have affected or influenced the kind or type of judge you have been or plan to be.

- (a) Equity Court cases deal with people who are losing their homes in foreclosures, litigating property and business disputes. I am continually humbled by how resilient people are and how professional /civil our equity attorneys are in these stressful situations. We have a Bench-Bar meeting four times a year where our office meets with attorneys and or their staff to ensure communication remains open. We have outstanding attorneys. I believe that serving as a judge is a stewardship position –not here forever, instead am here knowing that I have a duty to work hard and be prepared to give an accounting at the proper time. To always remember that while a robe gives authority, it does not earn respect. Respect must be earned every day, every case, with every single person.
- (b) Not entirely sure why, but Chief Justice Jean Toal appointed me to serve on SC Access to Justice Commission and thereafter, Chief Justice Costa Pleicones appointed me to serve on Commission on the Profession. I had no idea prior to these appointments of the amount of work, the number of issues, and the care and professionalism that the justices, judges and members of the Bar put forth to better our legal system for the public, for the practicing attorneys, and the judges of the entire court system. To be honest, most times, I think I should be walking around taking water and food to the folks around the table. It's inspiring and humbling to work with these folks.
- (c) I'm blessed to work with three really wonderful co-workers, Gail Faircloth, Leslie Shealy and Vanda White. They work hard and well together and challenge me to do the same. The County of Lexington, Clerk of Court's Office and the Admin. folks are the same. They do everything they can to assist us in the performance of our duties.
- (d) Finally, we mentor law students through various law programs such as JOE (Judicial Observation and Experience) each year. Many people are down or negative about the future because of the perception of our young people/lawyers as a whole. I think we are going to be surprised. We have many outstanding young student lawyers who have good work ethics, morals and will work to make our justice system even more equitable. I think sometimes I gain more from this exchange than the students do.

YOUR SIGNATURE WILL BE HELD TO CONSTITUTE A WAIVER OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ANY PROCEEDING BEFORE A GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE OR ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR CREDIT.

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

Signature: _____

Sworn to before me this ____ day of _____, 2018.

(Notary Signature)

(Notary Printed Name)
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: _____