



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

**Master-in-Equity**  
**(New Candidate)**

Full Name: William Thomas Geddings, Jr.

Business Address: 20 South Brooks Street, Manning, SC 29102

Business Telephone: 803-435-4770

1. Do you plan to serve your full term if appointed?  
Yes.
2. If appointed, do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?  
No.
3. Have you met the statutory requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice?  
Yes.
4. What is your philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications? Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated?

I believe *ex parte* communications detract from the neutrality a Judge must show. It is not enough to be impartial, it is necessary to behave impartially. The only time I would tolerate *ex parte* communication would be for scheduling purposes where nothing substantive is being discussed and I would be reluctant to engage in *ex parte* even then.

5. 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?

Yes, I would likely recuse myself. It is not enough to be impartial, a Judge must APPEAR impartial to an outside observer. However, given that I live in a small town, I will often have cases where I know the parties or attorneys but if any believe that I would show favoritism to another party/attorney, I would make every effort to explain the relationship and, if necessary, recuse

myself rather than taint the process with any allegation of not being impartial.

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

I would follow the judicial canons applicable to gifts or social hospitality. I would not accept such things except where specifically allowed.

7. 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 try to talk with the individual involved first, if possible. If the lawyer or judge would not take action and self-report, I would report the issue as required.

8. Are you affiliated with any political parties, boards or commissions that would need to be evaluated if you are appointed?

No.

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

No.

10. If appointed, how would you handle the drafting of orders?

In most cases before a Master-In-Equity, the prevailing attorney drafts the order. However, I have no problem drafting orders. My priority would be to see that a written order is signed and submitted as soon as possible, whether I draft it or an attorney in the action drafts it.

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

We would maintain a calendar and mutually review that calendar at least weekly. The calendar would be electronic and available to me and my staff at all times using technological means.

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

I personally do not believe that Judges should engage in judicial activism. I realize that some many feel that it is appropriate but my personal belief is that a Judge should take a position of neutrality whenever possible. If

someone wants to promote changes in public policy or attitude, there are better and more appropriate avenues than serving as a Judge.

13. 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 would continue to speak about the legal system when invited. I enjoy speaking and teaching and I believe that having a Judge more visible outside of the courtroom or classroom, engaging in appropriate programs, can help to improve the perceptions of the public toward our legal system and can help to educate the public.

14. Do you feel that the pressure of serving as a judge will strain personal relationships (i.e. spouse, children, friends, or relatives)? How would you plan to address this?

I do not believe it would cause a strain at all. Family is very important to me and to prevent strain to personal relationships, I would ensure that my time away from work is spent with them and nurturing our relationships. My daughter and son-in-law are expecting my first grandchild in late September so moving to Berkeley County is more like to improve my personal relationships.

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

No.

16. 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 only hear the case after full disclosure on the record and if all parties are willing to waive any potential conflict. Normally, if any party showed any concern about my ability to be impartial, I would recuse myself since the appearance of impartiality is as important as actually being impartial.

17. 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.

I am a member of a social fraternity (Sigma Chi Fraternity) that is limited in membership to males only. Beyond requiring that new members be males (as defined by state law or school policy), there are no other limitations. The right of a men's fraternity or a woman's sorority to remain single sex has been recognized by the United States Supreme Court and Congress.

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

Yes, but I am exempt from CLE requirements currently.

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

I believe a Judge should show compassion whenever possible but also maintain the dignity of the Courtroom. How a Judge behaves or speaks while on the bench can be different from how the Judge behaves or speaks while in chambers, in terms of being more formal or less formal, but at all times it is essential to keep in mind that while serving as a Judge, he or she represents the State of South Carolina and our system of justice. This applies while in or out of the courtroom and while at work or home. I believe that a Judge should strive to be calm, wise, understanding, patient and compassionate while also being decisive and fair.

20. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public appearing before you? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?

Anger is natural but I believe that a Judge should always seek to avoid it at all times. If a Judge loses his/her temper, it demeans the office and greatly harms the Judge's effectiveness. I would try to ensure that if I felt myself growing angry, I would call a recess or do whatever is necessary to end the confrontation or situation before anger took control so I could regain control of myself. If I did lose my temper, I would ensure that I apologized to all involved as soon as possible. It is impossible to claim to never get angry so I believe the challenge, and appropriate path, is to learn to recognize the signs and take steps to maintain composure. Since I am human, it is possible I may fail at some time and then it is imperative to acknowledge the mistake and apologize.

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 \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_

Notary Public for S.C.

My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

