



**JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION COMMISSION  
PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE  
2024**

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

1. Name: The Honorable Angela W. Abstance

Name that you are known by if different from above  
(Example: A Nickname):

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge? If part-time, please note.  
(Includes Municipal, Magistrate, Etc.)

Yes. I am currently serving as a Family Court Judge for the Second Judicial Circuit,  
Seat 2.

Home Address: [Redacted]

County of Residence: Bamberg

Business Address: Post Office Box 615, Barnwell, South Carolina 29812

E-Mail Address: [Redacted]

Telephone Number: (home): [Redacted]  
(office): 803-541-1033  
(cell): [Redacted]

2. Date of Birth: [Redacted] 1975  
Place of Birth: Augusta, Georgia  
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# or SCHED#: 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:  
Family Status: Married on July 19, 1997 to Robert M. Abstance, III.  
Spouse's occupation: Vice-President of Transmission for Southeast Power Corporation  
Never divorced, three 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) Furman University, 1994-1998, Bachelor of Arts in English;  
(b) University of South Carolina School of Law, 1998-2001, Juris Doctor
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.  
Environmental Law Journal, Fall 1999-Spring 2001
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.  
  
Admitted to practice in South Carolina in 2001 after taking the bar exam once.
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 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.
- a) The Moore Firm, LLC, 2001-2008.  
Upon graduation from law school, I worked as an associate attorney at The Moore Firm, LLC in Barnwell, South Carolina. During this time, I practiced in the areas of family law (including cases involving divorce, custody, visitation, equitable distribution, adoptions, domesticating foreign adoptions, and defending parents in SCDSS abuse and neglect cases, representing the volunteer GAL program in DSS cases), civil litigation, personal injury, probate, real estate, and post-conviction relief cases, as well as Social Security disability cases. I also drafted wills. I practiced in state and federal court and participated in civil appeals, including writing appellate briefs. At that time, I was not involved in the financial management of the firm. My work involved extensive client contact, legal writing, court appearances, representation in depositions, and interaction with other attorneys and judges.

- b) South Carolina Department of Social Services staff attorney, Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, 2008-2011.

In this position, I was the sole attorney responsible for handling abuse and neglect cases for the Department of Social Services in Colleton, Hampton, and Allendale Counties. In that capacity, I was usually in court at least three weeks per month. I regularly tried contested cases involving issues of abuse and neglect, including physical and sexual abuse cases in which entry of Defendants on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect was at issue. I was responsible for managing the docket, scheduling cases to be heard in a timely manner, presenting and trying cases in court, supervising the paralegals who assisted in the legal department, ensuring correct data was entered into the case management system, and interacting with attorneys and caseworkers.

- c) Abstance Law Firm, LLC, 2014-2018

I operated a solo law practice in my hometown of Barnwell, South Carolina, and I was solely responsible for the administrative and financial management of my practice, including the trust account. I supervised a part-time administrative assistant. I was a certified Family Court Mediator. I was also a 608 contract attorney with the Office of Indigent Defense and appeared regularly in court representing parents in abuse and neglect cases in the Second and Fourteenth Circuits. I handled private cases in Family Court and regularly served as a guardian ad litem. I handled guardianship/conservatorship actions in Probate Court, and served as guardian ad litem for minors or unknown heirs in Probate Court when needed. I regularly interacted with clients, attorneys, judges, guardians and litem, and Family Court and Probate Court personnel. I also drafted Wills and Deeds for clients. I handled a small percentage of personal injury cases.

- d) Family Court Judge 2018 to present.

I have had the privilege of serving as Family Court Judge in the Second Judicial Circuit, Seat 2, since 2018.

**Justices/judges applying for re-election to their current position may omit Questions 11–17. If you are a full-time 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:

- (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, and 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) state:
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?
- (a) civil:
  - (b) criminal:
  - (c) domestic:
  - (d) other:
14. During the past five years
- (a) What percentage of your practice was in trial court, including cases that settled prior to trial?

- (b) What number of cases went to trial and resulted in a verdict?
- (c) What number of cases went to trial and resolved after the plaintiff's or State's case? (Resolved may include settlement, plea, by Judge's order during a motion hearing, etc.)
- (d) What number of your cases settled after a jury was selected but prior to opening statements?

During the past five years, did you most often serve as sole counsel, chief counsel, or co-counsel?

For sitting judges seeking a judgeship different than your current position, During the five years prior to your election to the bench, what percentage of your practice was in trial court, including matters that settled prior to trial?

- 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.
  - (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.
  - (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.
  - (a)
  - (b)
  - (c)
  - (d)
  - (e)
- 18. Have you ever held judicial office? 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.

Yes. I have served as Family Court Judge for the Second Judicial Circuit, Seat 2 since July of 2018. The Family Court has jurisdiction as set forth in South Carolina Code section 63-3-510 through 63-3-530, and the court handles issues of separate support and maintenance,

divorce, child custody and child support, delinquency, child abuse and neglect, termination of parental rights, and adoption.

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.
- (a) Norma A. Estrada Baez v. Oscar Serralde Solano, Case Number available upon request, 2024-UP-283, 2024 WL 3549737. In this case, Plaintiff requested the court issue an order granting her custody of the child and making findings concerning Special Immigrant Juvenile status pursuant to 8 C.F.R. section 204.11(a), (c), (d). I dismissed this case because all issues of divorce, custody, and child support were previously handled by a court in Mexico. Plaintiff did not register the court order from Mexico in South Carolina for enforcement, and Father still lived in Mexico. Pursuant to the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (UCCJEA), Mexico maintained exclusive jurisdiction over custody determinations involving this child. The Court of Appeals upheld my ruling in an unpublished opinion.
  - (b) State of South Carolina v. REDACTED, Case Number available upon request. In this juvenile case, I held a contested waiver hearing to determine whether the juvenile should be waived up to the court of General Sessions for disposition of murder charges. This case required careful consideration of the factors in *Kent v. United States*, 383 U.S. 541 (1966) in determining whether it was in the best interest of the child and the community to transfer the case to adult criminal court.
  - (c) Chad Reynolds v. Kathleen Stone, Case Number available upon request, 2024-UP-172. In this change of custody action, I found Plaintiff Father had proven a substantial change in circumstances and that awarding custody to Father was in the child's best interest. The Court of Appeals affirmed my ruling in an unpublished opinion.
  - (d) Linda Schewe-Gries v. Brett E. Gries, Case Number available upon request. The Plaintiff in this case sought a divorce, alimony, and equitable division under several theories; 1) that the parties were married in Mexico; 2) the parties had a common law marriage in South Carolina; or 3) that she was entitled to relief as a putative spouse under an Illinois statute. I found the ceremony in Mexico was not a legal marriage, the parties did not meet the requirements of a common law marriage in South Carolina, and the Illinois putative spouse statute did not provide Plaintiff any relief under these facts.
  - (e) Caroline Rebecca Moore v. Darren Scott Smith, Case Number available upon request, 441 S.C. 261, 892 S.E.2d 552 (Ct.App. 2023). This matter was a highly fact-specific case that revolved around whether the proper remedy for husband's failure to disclose a lien on the marital home which was awarded to wife was through a contempt action, a Rule 60(b) motion to set aside the final order of equitable division, or a motion to enforce the warranty provision in the final settlement agreement. Husband's failure to disclose the loan caused Wife to pay the lien upon the sale of the home, and Wife sought reimbursement from Husband. The action was tried as a contempt hearing. I found Husband was not in willful contempt of the Final Order by failing to indemnify Wife, and the Court of Appeals agreed. However, the Court of Appeals found the Family Court could enforce the Final Order's payment and indemnification terms in the rule to show cause action by

ordering Husband to pay the lien amount as well as Wife's attorney fees, even without making a finding of contempt, because Husband had failed to meet his obligation to hold harmless and indemnify Wife for the balance of the lien.

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) South Carolina, 2001
  - b) US District Court for the District of SC, 2003
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.
- No.
22. Provide, as a separate attachment, your continuing legal or judicial education report from the past five years.
- See attached.
23. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each.
- a) "Are Employer Credit Checks on the Way Out?" (South Carolina Lawyer, November, 2013)
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.
- I have not applied for membership or rating in any such organization.
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.
- (a) South Carolina Bar Association 2001 to present
  - (b) Member of Barnwell County Bar
  - (c) Member of Bamberg County Bar

(d) Member of Aiken County Bar

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.

I have never held public office other than as Family Court Judge.

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.

N/A

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.

I previously served as the Executive Director for the Barnwell County Chamber of Commerce from January 2016 until February of 2017 while also managing my own law practice. In that capacity, I was responsible for organizing networking events for members, recruiting new members, planning and handling fundraisers, presenting monthly reports to the Board of Directors, and various other duties as needed. I visited our member businesses, organized the Annual Meeting, helped members publicize their events, and responded to other requests from members as needed.

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.

No.

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:
- (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.)

See attached.

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

34. (a) Have you filed state and federal income tax returns for the last 5 years? If no, please provide details.  
Yes.
- (b) Have you or any business with which you are associated been delinquent in any local, state, or federal taxes? If yes, please provide details.  
No.
- (c) Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities? If yes, please provide details.  
No.
- (d) Have you ever defaulted on a student loan? If so, please provide details.  
No.
- (e) Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? If so, please provide details, along with proof of satisfaction of any liens or defaults.  
No.
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. If you participate in any employer-mandated contributions to a PAC or any other political entity, please describe and note your personal involvement in contributions. If you are a sitting judge, please include such contributions since your last screening.

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.

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;
  - (b) in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or more that adjoins property in which there have been public improvements of \$200 or more; or
  - (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:

- (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. N/A

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.

I have small amounts of stock in Enbridge, Duke Energy, and Dominion Energy.

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.

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 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?

No.

Have you ever been a named party (personally or professionally) in or had a pecuniary interest in any civil or criminal proceedings? Yes.

If so, give details, including, but not limited to, dates, and resolutions.

While practicing law, I served as Special Administrator at the request of attorneys who were trying to resolve a dispute regarding who would serve as the Personal Representative in the

Estate of Flint Abrams in Barnwell County. I was not an interested party and acted merely as a placeholder until the issue was resolved.

I was named as a Defendant in a wrongful termination suit against the Barnwell County First Steps Board, of which I served as a board member. I was dismissed as a party prior to the resolution of the case. (Ethel T. Faust v. Barnwell County First Steps to School Readiness Partnership, A South Carolina Nonprofit Corporation, d/b/a Barnwell County First Steps, et al., Case Number 1:17-cv-00926-JMC-SVH, filed April 11, 2017.)

While serving as a Family Court Judge, someone forged my name on a fake court order. This came to light and SLED prosecuted the case in Aiken County. I was named as a victim in that case, but I did not participate other than providing requested information to SLED to assist in their prosecution. It is my understanding that matter has been resolved. (State of South Carolina v. Patricia Haley Eubanks, Case No. 2022A0210201341, disposition date 1/23/2024).

48. If you are in private practice, are you covered by malpractice insurance and, if so, how long have you carried malpractice insurance? N/A If applicable, have you ever been covered by a tail policy? Yes. 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.

I purchased a tail policy upon my election as Family Court Judge.

49. Have you ever, in South Carolina or any other jurisdiction, as a lawyer, judge, or other professional, been cautioned with or without a finding of misconduct, 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 sanctions, disciplines, letters of caution, or findings of misconduct of any kind. Private or confidential dispositions will be redacted.

[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? No. If so, give the details and the resolution. Has your name ever been enrolled on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect? If so, give the details.

No.

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? No. 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.

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.

None.

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? If so, give details.

No.

55. List the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five (5) persons from whom you are providing references. 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.*

(a) Rev. Andy Hunter  
[Redacted]

(b) Honorable Barnwell County Sheriff S. W. (Steve) Griffith  
Barnwell County Sheriff's Office  
[Redacted]

(c) Mr. Shawn Guess  
[Redacted]

(d) Mrs. Lisa Bonnette  
[Redacted]

(e) Mr. Camden B. Kittrell  
[Redacted]

56. Are you active on or a member of a social media or Internet site such as, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.?

I have an account on Twitter (X), Instagram, and Threads.

If so, please list the account names for each account and the relevant platform.

X: [Redacted]

Instagram: [Redacted]

Threads: [Redacted]

How would your use of social media or other similar types of Internet sites be affected if you were serving in a judicial capacity?

Upon my election as Family Court Judge, I deleted my Facebook Account. I maintain an account on X, Instagram, and Threads mainly to follow musicians and news organizations as well as public figures. However, I do not regularly post or like posts. I do not identify myself as a judge on social media, and do not even use my full name.

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, and any professional honors, awards, or other forms of recognition received and not listed elsewhere.
- (a) member of First Baptist Church of Denmark, South Carolina, currently serving as deacon
- (b) member of the South Carolina Conference of Family Court Judges

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.

I grew up in Barnwell County, South Carolina, and I was the first person in my immediate family to graduate from college. My mother worked at Savannah River Site, and my father ran his own mechanic shop in Barnwell. I graduated from Barnwell High School, then graduated from Furman University in Greenville and went on to law school at the University of South Carolina. After graduating from law school, I returned to my hometown of Barnwell to practice law. Practicing law in a small town has its unique opportunities and

challenges. I worked with people who had substantial resources and assets as well as people who were much less well off. I handled a wide variety of different kinds of cases in a general practice law firm, and it was an honor and privilege to serve as an attorney helping families with all different types of legal matters they encountered over the years. I appreciated earning that trust from my clients that allowed me to assist them in multiple matters. As the practice of law has become more specialized, I think this kind of practice has become more rare.

As Family Court judge, I have seen first hand the problems of drug addiction and overdoses on families in our rural circuit. In the rural areas of our state, we struggle to find the mental health and substance abuse resources to help children and families overcome their challenges. In DSS cases, I have worked with the Department of Children's Advocacy, the Department of Mental Health, and the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs on tough cases to find the resources our children in foster care desperately need. The lack of qualified residential treatment facilities for children in foster care is a significant challenge. I also try to emphasize education for our children in the DJJ and DSS systems. I realize that caseworkers are rightfully concerned with the immediate need to place children in a safe environment, but unfortunately sometimes education takes a backseat. When children in foster care are moved frequently to many different placements, they often fall behind in school. While they may be enrolled in school, they may not be accumulating credits toward graduation. I routinely request transcripts to see how many credits children are gaining toward graduation. I also try my best to ensure that if children must change foster care placements, that they can maintain treatment with their current mental health provider until a new provider is found in the new county to minimize the time without mental health care. I hope my insistence on these issues reminds caseworkers and guardians ad litem to ask the same questions, with a goal of improving outcomes for the children in foster care.

In private actions, I think you will hear that I encourage lawyers to present their cases with civility and courtesy. I firmly believe that litigants must continue to deal with each other long after the lawyers and the court have closed their files, and we owe it to them to get them through this adversarial process with as little animosity as possible.

I am so thankful for the privilege of serving as a Family Court Judge. In my law practice, I always tried to help people solve problems. As a Family Court Judge, I have the opportunity every day to engage with people who are going through some of the most challenging times in their lives. My goal is always to help people resolve their issues in a fair and equitable manner. I sincerely try to ensure people leave my courtroom feeling respected and heard, even if they don't agree with every aspect of my ruling. Each day, my goal is to have empathy and compassion for the people entering the courtroom, and I strive for wisdom in my decisions. In the Family Court, we have a unique opportunity to affect directly the lives of fathers, mothers, and children. I try to help these cases move along as swiftly as possible so people can move forward with their lives.

I believe my position as a Family Court Judge allows me to help people solve problems every day, and I hope to continue doing that work for the people of South Carolina.

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

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

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