



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

Court, Position, and Seat # for which you are applying:
Family Court Judge, Second Judicial Circuit, Seat 1

1. Name: Mrs. Amanda Frances Whittle

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

Are you currently serving in some capacity as a judge? If part-time, please note.
(Includes Municipal, Magistrate, Etc.) No

Home Address: [Redacted]

County of Residence: Aiken

Business Address: 1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 471A
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

E-Mail Address: [Redacted]

Telephone Number: (home): [Redacted]
(office): 803-315-2251
(cell): [Redacted]

2. Date of Birth: [Redacted], 1971
Place of Birth: Aiken, South Carolina
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 SCHD#: [Redacted]
Voter Registration Number: [Redacted]

5. Have you served in the military? 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.

No.

6. Family Status:
(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 and occupation.
- (c) If widowed, list the name(s) of spouse(s).
- (d) 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.
- (e) State the names of your children and their ages. If your children are NOT full-time students, also include the occupation and employer of each child.

Family Status:

Married on March 5, 1994 to James Edward Whittle, Jr., lawyer.

Three children.

[Redacted]

Divorced on August 23, 1993, Aiken Co., S.C Family Court, Amanda F. Wallick was the moving party, One Year's Continuous Separation.

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) University of South Carolina School of Medicine
August, 2022 - August, 2023
Certificate of Graduate Studies (C.G.S.) in Psychiatric Rehabilitation
4.0 GPA
 - (b) University of South Carolina School of Law
August, 1992 - December, 1994
Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree
 - (c) University of South Carolina at Aiken
August, 1989 - June, 1992
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree
Magna Cum Laude

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.
 - (a) I worked part-time during law school searching real estate titles in 1993 and 1994.
 - (b) I assisted a lawyer with conducting research and drafting appellate briefs in 1993.

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.
- (a) South Carolina, 1995, took the bar exam one time
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) November, 1995 to July, 2005
Johnson, Johnson, Whittle and Snelgrove, Attorneys, P.A., Aiken, South Carolina
I represented litigants primarily in Family Court including protection from domestic abuse, divorce, separate support and maintenance, custody, visitation, child support, adoption, correction of birth certificates, name changes, alimony, equitable distribution, attorney's fees, and abuse and neglect. I also handled Probate Court matters and real estate closings. I had signature authority for checks but did not manage trust accounts.
- (b) July, 2005 to September, 2011:
Attorney II with Department of Social Services (DSS), Barnwell, South Carolina
I represented DSS in child abuse and neglect and Adult Protective Services (APS) matters. I did not have signature authority for checks and did not manage trust accounts.
- (c) September, 2011 to July, 2015
Attorney III with Department of Social Services, Aiken, South Carolina
I represented DSS in child welfare and adult protective services cases. I served as the managing attorney for the Second Judicial Circuit. I did not have signature authority for checks and did not manage trust accounts.
- (d) July, 2015 through June, 2019
Assistant General Counsel (Attorney IV) with Department of Social Services, Columbia, South Carolina
I represented DSS in Family Court proceedings and administrative matters, and I worked with other attorneys regarding civil litigation in state and federal courts. I did not have signature authority for checks and did not manage trust accounts.
- (e) October, 2018 to June, 2019
South Carolina Children's Guardian Services, Aiken, South Carolina
I was co-owner and operator of a private training company. I co-created a program to offer initial and continuing training for lay guardians ad litem for children in private (non-DSS) family court matters. I discontinued my role in the

business and the training when I was appointed to my current position in June of 2019. I did have signature authority for the checking account and did not manage a trust account.

- (f) July, 2019 to Present
State Child Advocate and State Director of the South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy, Columbia, South Carolina
I continue to appear in court and be involved in family court matters in my role as the State Child Advocate and State Director of an independent state agency with 222 employees and approximately 1500 volunteers. The agency administers the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program, the Foster Care Review Division, S.C. Heart Gallery, S.C. Continuum of Care, and System Improvement Division. I participate in staffings regarding children and youth concerning matters of abuse and neglect, juvenile justice involvement, mental illness, substance use, autism, intellectual disabilities, related disabilities, and human trafficking. I review and approve purchase orders and procurement card purchases. I do not have signature authority for checks and do not manage trust accounts.

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.

DIVORCE AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY – I have represented parties in divorces on fault and no-fault grounds. I have represented parties for which there was no property to be divided and for matters which included equitable division of significant property. This included requesting and/or attending temporary hearings, engaging in discovery, preparing witnesses for testimony, and creating exhibits for trial. I have assisted clients with preparing financial declarations and affidavits for temporary hearings and have tried cases in family court concerning divorce, child-related matters including custody, and equitable distribution. I have handled divorces that included (and did not include) child custody, visitation, child support, alimony, and attorney's fees.

One of the most significant cases I handled was a contested domestic matter regarding the parties' final divorce decree concerning equitable distribution. This was a significant matter because of the contested and complicated nature of the issues which included equitable distribution, transfer of assets, contempt, and attorney's fees. Another significant case I handled was an action for separate support and maintenance with no fault grounds, no children, few assets, no debt, and a lengthy marriage. I represented the Wife, and the primary point of contention involved canned fruit. Both sets of parties were equally upset with each other and with their situations, and I tried to bring a sense of calm to my clients.

CHILD CUSTODY – I have represented parties concerning child custody in private matters and in DSS actions, and I have received and responded to complaints related to this issue in my current role. I have experience regarding the different factors to be considered in a private custody case (parental fitness and best interests) as compared with a public custody case (abuse and neglect and best interests). I have also served as guardian ad litem in child custody matters. One of the most significant child custody cases I handled spanned more than four years during which the custodial parent fled the state and then fled the country with the parties' child. I successfully argued for a transfer of custody to my client to trigger the application of the Parental Kidnapping Protection Act and involvement of the State Department and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. With a great deal of coordination, we located the child, who was returned to the United States and to my client. In another matter, I represented a legal, but not biological, father in seeking custody when the mother did not return the child after a visit then immediately filed a custody and child support action in another state. Although the child had lived in South Carolina her whole life, neither parent had an order of custody establishing South Carolina as the home state prior to the out-of-state action being filed. I effectively represented my client, and he was awarded custody.

ADOPTION - While in private practice, I represented adoptive parents and advised biological parents about consent and relinquishments for adoption. I served as a guardian ad litem for children in private adoption proceedings and represented the Department of Social Services in public adoption actions. One of the most significant adoptions I handled occurred while I was an attorney for the Department of Social Services. The case went to the Court of Appeals in 2013 and resulted in Unpublished Opinion No. 2013-UP-368. This was significant based on the application of the Indian Child Welfare Act, including the burden of proof of beyond a reasonable doubt required for termination of parental rights as opposed to the burden of proof of clear and convincing evidence for non-ICWA termination of parental rights and adoption proceedings. While working as an Assistant General Counsel, I represented DSS in approximately 100 adoptions. Since being in my current role, I have responded to complaints from parties with adoption-related issues. I also served on the editorial board and provided written recommendations to Attorney James Fletcher Thompson for his book South Carolina Adoption Law and Practice which was published in 2023.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT - I am certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) through the National Association of Counsel of Children and recognized by the South Carolina Bar. I have represented defendant parents, guardians ad litem, and the Department of Social Services in abuse and neglect actions. I handled Adult Protective Services (APS) and Child Protective Services (CPS) matters including family preservation and foster care cases at probable cause, merits, judicial review, termination of parental rights, and appellate hearings including oral argument before the South Carolina Supreme Court. I served as the Interim Internal Monitor for the Michelle H. federal class action lawsuit concerning child welfare reform, and I have attended state and national trainings including the National Judicial Leadership Summit on Child Welfare in 2019. One of the most significant child abuse and neglect matters I handled concerned preparing a young child to testify about sexual abuse. I was able to successfully argue a South Carolina Code of Laws Section 19-1-180 motion to have the child's out-of-court statements admitted into evidence and to avoid having the child testify about sexual abuse during the Family Court merits hearing. I continue to be regularly contacted to appear in court or otherwise assist in Family Court matters concerning abuse and neglect.

JUVENILE JUSTICE - I partnered with the Departments of Mental Health, Juvenile Justice, and Health and Human Services to advocate for funding from the General Assembly to create a state-operated psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) for seriously mentally ill justice-involved youth to address the statutory requirements of S.C. Code of Laws Section 63-19-1450(A). I have been involved with discussions among the Departments of Disabilities and Special Needs, Juvenile Justice, Health and Human Services, Mental Health, and Social Services to address intellectually disabled, justice-involved youth as outlined in statute. I have handled cases concerning youth who were involved with juvenile justice. I was appointed to the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (GJJAC) by Governor Henry McMaster in 2021, served as chairperson of the System Improvement Subcommittee for approximately two years, and attended the Coalition for Juvenile Justice conference in May of 2022. I co-created and implemented the The Juvenile Court Program which included court observation in Richland, Aiken, and York counties. I have visited with youth and staff at all of the facilities operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice including the evaluation centers, detention center, and Broad River Road Campus (BRRC). I am regularly contacted to appear in court or otherwise assist in Family Court juvenile justice matters.

The frequency of my appearances before a Family Court judge was at its height between 2005 and 2015 when I handled approximately 25 hearings weekly. My approximate frequency before a Family Court Judge has been on a monthly basis within the past five years in addition to reviewing pleadings and court orders regarding hearings I have not attended.

(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.

Not applicable

(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.

Not applicable

(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.

Not applicable

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: Minimal

I have attended federal court twice as an observer for Michelle H. hearings in the past five years and attended and/or participated in mediation in my role as Interim Internal Monitor and litigation liaison for the Department of Social Services approximately 4 times per year beginning in November of 2015 and through May of 2019

(b) state: Weekly or monthly

In the past five years, the frequency of my court appearances has varied between weekly and monthly for the Juvenile Court Program, Guardian ad Litem Program, when requested by a Family Court Judge, and when responding to a complaint. Between 1995 until 2015, the frequency of my court appearances was weekly, and I handled approximately twenty-five hearings each week from approximately 2005 until 2015. From 2015 until 2019, the frequency of my court appearances was several times each month as I handled adoption finalizations and complex litigation.

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: 5%
 - (b) criminal: 0%
 - (c) domestic: 60%
 - (d) other: 30%

14. During the past five years
- (a) What percentage of your practice was in trial court, including cases that settled prior to trial?

Jury: 0%
Non-jury: 100%

- (b) What number of cases went to trial and resulted in a verdict?

Not applicable.

- (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.)

Not applicable

- (d) What number of your cases settled after a jury was selected but prior to opening statements?

Not applicable

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

Sole 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?

Not applicable

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) Helton v. Helton, Aiken County Family Court.
1994-DR-02-1684 / JR#81,490

I represented the husband in a portion of a contested domestic matter. My representation dealt with contempt actions regarding the parties' court-ordered equitable distribution. This was a significant matter because of the contested and complicated nature of the issues which included equitable distribution, transfer of assets, contempt, laches, unclean hands, and attorneys' fees.

(b) Holt v. Wagner, Aiken County Family Court.
1993-DR-02-63

I represented the father in a contested child custody matter which was significant, because the mother was the custodial parent and fled the state, then fled the country, with the parties' child. I successfully argued the application of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Enforcement Act (UCCJEA) when the child was taken to another state, and I successfully argued for a transfer of custody to trigger the application of the Parental Kidnapping Protection Act (PKPA) and involvement of the State Department and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. With a great deal of coordination, the child was located, and we worked with the other country to have the child returned home to his father.

(c) Hatcher v. Moore, Aiken County Family Court and Court of Appeals.
2004-UP-332 Filed May 17, 2004

I represented the mother in this termination of parental rights action brought by the minor child's paternal grandparents. We were successful in family court, and the paternal grandparents appealed. The appellate court cited Santosky v. Kramer, 455 U.S. 745 (1982) in affirming the family court order which denied the termination of my client's rights. This was a significant case for me, because I handled it as a relatively young lawyer, and a seasoned lawyer represented the plaintiffs. This matter was significant, because, although the appellants' best interest argument was compelling, they were not able to meet their burden of proof regarding the grounds for termination of parental rights.

(d) S.C. Dept. of Social Services v. Lauren M., et.al., Aiken County Family Court and Court of Appeals.

2013-UP-367 Filed September 30, 2013

I represented the Department of Social Services in this contested termination of parental rights and adoption matter that involved child abuse and neglect and the Indian Child Welfare Act. The case went to the Court of Appeals in 2013 and resulted in an Unpublished Opinion No. 2013-UP-368 and was significant based on the application of the Indian Child Welfare Act, including the burden of proof of beyond a reasonable doubt required for termination of parental rights as opposed to the burden of proof of clear and convincing evidence for non-ICWA termination of parental rights and adoption proceedings.

- (e) S.C. Dept. of Social Services v. D.T., et.al, Aiken County Family Court
confidential case, unreported
I represented the Department of Social Services in this legal proceeding which concerned sexual abuse allegations and the potential testimony of a young child. I was able to successfully call witnesses and argue a South Carolina Code of Laws Section 19-1-180 motion to have the child's out-of-court statements admitted into evidence and to avoid having the child testify about sexual abuse during the Family Court merits hearing.

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) Hatcher v. Moore
South Carolina Court of Appeals
Appeal from Aiken County Family Court
Filed May 17, 2004
2004-UP-332
- (b) South Carolina Department of Social Services v. Kelley S., et.al.
South Carolina Court of Appeals
Appeal from Barnwell County Family Court
Filed August 19, 2009
No. 2009-UP-404
- (c) South Carolina Department of Social Services v. Tyesha H., et.al.
South Carolina Court of Appeals
Appeal from Allendale County Family Court
Filed August 29, 2011
2011-UP-408
- (d) Ex Parte: Wells In Re: S.C. Dept. of Social Services v. Mother and Father
South Carolina Supreme Court
Appeal from Aiken County Family Court
Filed March 7, 2012
2012-MO-002
- (e) S.C. Dept. of Social Services v. Shawna O., et.al.
South Carolina Supreme Court *on writ of certiorari*
Appeal from Aiken County Family Court
Filed July 11, 2012
2012-MO-027

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.

I have not personally handled any criminal appeals.

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.

I have never held judicial office.

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.

Not applicable

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 Courts of South Carolina, November 13, 1995

(b) United States District Court, January 25, 2016

(c) United States Supreme Court, April 14, 2023

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.

(a) I made a presentation about the Foster Care Review Division, Guardian ad Litem Program, Continuum of Care and Investigations Unit for Orientation School for New Family Court Judges on May 16, 2024.

(b) I made a presentation a presentation about the Department of Children's Advocacy and children's legal issues at the South Carolina Conference of Family Court Judges Spring meeting on April 19, 2024.

(c) I co-presented on the topic of a legislative update concerning statutes affecting children at the S.C. Bar Convention on January 20, 2024.

(d) I lectured for Professor Margaret Bodman's Children and the Law class at the University of South Carolina School of Law on the topic of Termination of Parental Rights on September 25, 2023.

(e) I made a presentation on the topics of a legislative update and panel discussion at the S.C. Bar Convention on January 22, 2023.

(f) I served as the organizer and moderator on the topic of "Human Trafficking: Legal and Substance Abuse Implications in Family Court" at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Services at the 39th Annual Judges and Attorneys Substance Abuse and Ethics Conference on December 2, 2022.

- (g) I made a presentation on the topic of Safe Babies Courts at the Hot Tips from the Coolest Domestic Law Practitioners seminar on September 23, 2022.
- (h) I provided a lecture at Aiken Technical College on the topic of Child Protection Hearings at the S.C. Bar's Law School for Non-Lawyers on September 20, 2022.
- (i) I made a presentation about children's legal advocacy at the S.C. Bar Convention Children's Law Section on January 22, 2022.
- (j) I served as the organizer and moderator on the topic of "The Intersection of Adolescent Mental Health and Juvenile Justice" at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Services 38th Annual Judges and Attorneys Substance Abuse and Ethics Conference on December 3, 2021.
- (k) I made a presentation about the statutory role of the Department of Children's Advocacy for the Family Court Judges' Conference on September 16, 2020.
- (l) I made presentations on the topic of child testimony in Family Court at Children's Law Center CLEs on July 14, July 16, August 24 and August 26, 2020.
- (m) I provided presentations about Family Court pre-hearing conferences at trainings on August 12, 2020 and August 19, 2020.
- (n) I made a presentation for parents' attorneys at the Commission on Indigent Defense CLE on June 12, 2020.
- (o) I made a presentation on the topic of preparing family preservation cases for court, staffing emergency matters, and other matters at the Intensive Bootcamp Training for Child Welfare Attorneys CLE on September 20, 2018.
- (p) I made a presentation on the topics of timely hearings and Title IV-E language in court orders at the Intensive Bootcamp Training for Child Welfare Attorneys CLE on September 19, 2018.
- (q) I made a presentation on the topic of Safe Haven for Abandoned Infants Act (Daniel's Law) at the Intensive Bootcamp Training for Child Welfare Attorneys CLE which was held on September 19, 2018.
- (r) I presented on the subject of Title IVe compliance in concert with achieving permanence and improving outcomes for children at the DSS Paralegal Seminar CLE on August 28, 2018.
- (s) I presented a training regarding chain of custody in drug cases, Jaidon's Law, Requests to Admit, and depositions *de bene esse* at the Special Topics in Child Protection Cases CLE on April 27, 2018.

(t) I made a presentation regarding how lawyers and case managers should staff and prioritize cases at Intensive Bootcamp Training for Child Welfare Attorneys CLE on February 15, 2018

(u) I made a presentation regarding Title IV-E and the Legal Case Management System at Intensive Bootcamp Training for Child Welfare Attorneys CLE on February 14, 2018.

(v) I made a presentation regarding Daniel's Law at Intensive Bootcamp Training for Child Welfare Attorneys CLE on February 14, 2018.

(w) I co-presented about proof and practice issues regarding DSS termination of parental rights actions to a class of law students at the University of South Carolina School of Law on January 29, 2018.

(x) I co-presented at a training for Children's Law Center court liaisons who observe and report information regarding abuse and neglect court actions throughout the state on January 5, 2018.

(y) I presented at the annual statewide South Carolina Solicitors' conference regarding DSS's role in addressing criminal conduct which included information about modification of bonds to allow parents to participate in treatment services with DSS while subject to criminal bond, court coordination protocol, law enforcement protocol, sharing of information and confidentiality, and victim witness assistance issues on September 26, 2017.

(z) I conducted presentations on September 15, 2017 in Greenville and on September 13, 2017 in Florence for the Fatherhood Initiative about what the DSS abuse and neglect process is, how court is involved, how fathers get notice of actions, and other matters related to non-custodial parents.

(aa) I provided training regarding docket management to avoid continuances, achieve permanence, and improve outcomes for children at the Paralegal Seminar on June 30, 2017.

(bb) I provided internal legal training to Out of Home Abuse and Neglect (OHAN) investigators regarding law applicable to OHAN investigations on April 24, 2017.

(cc) I presented training about Daniel's Law (The Save Haven for Abandoned Infants) and its statutory provisions to expedite permanence for abandoned infants at DSS Attorney Boot Camp CLE on February 14, 2017.

(dd) I conducted four separate trainings throughout the state for Regional and Managing Attorneys to share information learned at the National Association of Conference for Children (NACC) conference regarding permanence for children in the Fall of 2016.

- (ee) I provided training at the DSS Paralegal Seminar CLE on August 26, 2016.
- (ff) I provided training on the subjects of Title IVe and confidentiality at the DSS Boot Camp for Lawyers CLE on February 10, 2016.
- (gg) I provided training concerning the identification of cases involving Indian children and the application of the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and child welfare practice on November 20, 2015.
- (hh) I provided training regarding the roles and responsibilities of a DSS attorney at the Identifying Representation Issues: Strategizing Solutions CLE on October 2, 2015.
- (ii) I provided a presentation about the Legal Case Management System at the Best Legal Practices for Paralegals seminar on August 21, 2015.
- (jj) I provided best practice training tips concerning Daniel's Law (Safe Haven for Abandoned Infants Act) and Jaidon's Law (regarding drug abuse). These training tips were professionally videoed on April 7 and 8, 2015 for statewide training use by SCDSS.
- (kk) I provided statewide training on a monthly basis to attorneys and paralegals for use of the statewide Legal Case Management System (LCMS) as a practice and data tool to improve legal permanency for children and families from March of 2015 through May of 2019.
- (ll) I made a presentation regarding the role and responsibilities of the agency attorney and working with other agencies at Intensive Boot Camp Training for Child Welfare Attorneys CLE on February 12, 2015.
- (mm) I made a presentation on the topic of confidentiality and handling requests for agency records at Intensive Boot Camp Training for Child Welfare Attorneys CLE on February 12, 2015.
- (nn) I provided presentations at the Paralegal Seminar CLE on August 22, 2014 and May 17, 2013.
- (oo) I made a presentation regarding child sexual abuse cases at the Prosecuting Child Sexual Abuse Cases in Family Court CLE on May 31, 2013.
- (pp) I provided training regarding trial preparation in child abuse and neglect cases and adult protective services cases at a Continuing Legal Education seminar in February of 2013.
- (qq) I provided a presentation regarding DSS processes to members of multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) across the state of South Carolina at the Multi-Disciplinary Training with the Children's Law Center in January of 2013.

(rr) I made a presentation to attorneys at the Program DSS Attorneys' Training CLE in May of 2012.

(ss) I provided training regarding child and adult protective services the Boot Camp Training for New DSS Attorneys CLE in January and February of 2012.

(tt) I provided training at the Court-Appointed Parents' Attorneys and DSS Attorneys in DSS actions CLE in April of 2011.

(uu) I provided a presentation regarding implementation of the Court Coordination Protocol at the South Carolina Mini Summit on Justice for Children in December of 2010.

(vv) I provided a paralegal training at the University of South Carolina Center for Child and Family Studies program in May of 2008.

(ww) I provided a presentation regarding implementation of the Court Coordination Protocol at the South Carolina Professional Society on the Abuse of Children Conference which was held on April 17 and 18, 2008.

(xx) I co-developed and implemented the Aiken County Court Coordination Protocol which included providing training for Family Court Judges, Magistrates, Solicitors, Public Defenders, private attorneys, and Circuit Court Judges between 2007 and 2011.

(yy) I provided ongoing training for Aiken DSS staff regarding legal and court processes including appropriate dress and demeanor in court, timeliness and accuracy of document preparation, and what to expect when testifying in court from 2007 through 2015.

(zz) I provided numerous after-hours, two-hour presentations to volunteer guardians ad litem regarding DSS procedure and applicable law from intake through termination of parental rights. Four training sessions were held in 2014. Trainings occurred at least once per year during an 11-year period between 2006 and 2015.

22. Provide, as a separate attachment, your continuing legal or judicial education report from the past five years.

CLE statements from 2018 through 2023 are attached.

23. List all published books and articles you have written and give citations and the dates of publication for each.

(a) South Carolina Adoption Law and Practice James Fletcher Thompson (SC Bar CLE 2023), Editorial Board.

(b) 2023 Annual Report (State Child Fatality Advisory Committee, 2024), Contributing Author.

- (c) 2023 Annual Report (S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy, 2024), Contributing Author.
 - (d) 2022 Annual Report (S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy, 2023), Contributing Author.
 - (e) 2022 Annual Report (State Child Fatality Advisory Committee, 2023), Contributing Author.
 - (f) "Safe Babies Courts Launched in South Carolina Benefits Children, Families, and the Judicial Process" (S.C. Lawyer July 2022), Author.
 - (g) "Advocating for Permanency," (S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy The Advocate newsletter June 2022), Author.
 - (h) "Advocacy for a State-Operated Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility," (S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy The Advocate newsletter February 2022), Author.
 - (i) 2020-2021 Annual Report (S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy, 2021), Contributing Author.
 - (j) 2019-2020 Annual Report (S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy, 2020), Contributing Author.
 - (k) Bench-Bar Best Legal Practices in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases (University of South Carolina Children's Law Center 2018), Contributing Member.
 - (l) The Advocate newsletters (S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy 2020-2024), Contributing Author.
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.)
- (a) South Carolina Court of Appeals, 2011
 - (b) South Carolina Supreme Court, 2011
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.
- (a) I do not pay for membership in any legal rating organizations.
 - (b) Martindale-Hubbell, Notable rating

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) Aiken County Bar Association
-Secretary, late 1990s or early 2000s
- (b) American Bar Association
- (c) National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC)
-Child Welfare Law Specialist, 2018- present
- (d) South Carolina Bar Association
-Child Welfare Law Specialist certification, 2018 to present
-Chair of Children's Law Committee, July 2023 to present
- (e) United States Ombudsman Association
-Children and Families Chapter
-Healthcare Chapter
- (f) South Carolina Women Lawyers Association
- (g) South Carolina Family Law American Inn of Court

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, not applicable.

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.

Not applicable.

29. Have you ever been an unsuccessful candidate for elective, judicial, or other public office? If so, give details, including dates.

No, not applicable.

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.

No.

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.)

A complete, current financial net worth statement was provided to the Commission.

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, not applicable.

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?

(a) 6/23/2024	Canva – postcards, resumes and shipping	\$78.00
(b) 7/09/2024	United States Postal service - postage	\$43.16
(c) 7/09/2024	Amazon - stationery	\$111.95
(d) 7/14/2024	Staples- paper and envelopes	\$92.16
(e) 7/17/2024	Stapes – paper and envelopes	\$89.93
(f) 7/21/2024	Canva – postcards and shipping	\$43.50
(g) 7/21/2024	Canva – resumes and shipping	\$90.00
(h) 7/21/2024	Amazon – name badge	\$19.70
(i) 7/23/2024	United States Postal service - postage	\$29.20
(j) 7/29/2024	United States Postal service - po stage	\$88.93
(k) 8/16/2024	Amazon - name badge	\$19.70
	Total	\$706.23

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.

(a) I was the co-owner of South Carolina Guardian ad Litem Services from approximately October of 2018 until June of 2019. During that time, I held trainings for which attendees paid to participate. This was a relatively small number of people, and I kept a list of the individuals who paid to attend.

(b) My husband has an interest in the business (law firm) where he is a partner. That law firm is Johnson, Johnson, Whittle, Lancer and Staggs, Attorneys, P.A. My relationship to the business is that it is the law firm where my Husband works, is a partner, and has a financial interest. He has law partners and staff at the law firm, and there is a financial relationship among him and the law partners and staff that work at the law firm.

(c) Regarding both situations, I would disclose the prior or existing relationship and recuse myself from having those individuals appear before me. I would work with the Clerk's office and would advise the attorneys and staff at my Husband's law firm that I would not preside over hearings involving them. If there was a matter required by law to proceed within a limited period of time (such as a 72-hour probable cause hearing), I would ask another Judge to preside. If another Judge was not available and if that matter was required by law to proceed, I would disclose on the record to the parties the relationship. I would explain to the parties that there is a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest, and, although I would commit to providing a fair and impartial hearing for them, out of an abundance of caution, and based on a real or perceived conflict, I would not preside over the merits of the case. I would explain that the law requires the hearing before us to occur such that I must proceed, but I would include in the order from the hearing that the parties have the right to ask for a *de novo* hearing in front of a different Judge without prejudice to the any of the parties.

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.

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.

Not applicable.

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.

Not applicable.

44. For sitting judges, have you used the services of your staff, for which you did not pay, while campaigning for this office?

Not applicable.

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?

No.

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

Not applicable.

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.

I am no longer in private practice, and I have never been covered by a tail policy.

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? 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?

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.

I have not requested any third parties to contact members of the General Assembly on my behalf. I have provided oral and written communication to legislators to introduce myself and to share my qualifications. I have not had oral or written communication with members of the Judicial Merit Selection Commission to introduce myself or to provide information about my qualifications. I have not asked individuals to campaign on my behalf and am not aware of anyone who has campaigned for me on their own initiative.

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) Dr. Fred W. Andrea, III
[Redacted]

- (b) Reverend John Carroll
[Redacted]
- (c) The Honorable Dale Moore Gable
[Redacted]
- (d) J. Strom Thurmond, Jr.
[Redacted]
- (e) The Honorable Bill Weeks
[Redacted]

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

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

- (a) X: [Redacted]
- (b) Facebook: [Redacted]
- (c) LinkedIn: [Redacted]
- (d) Instagram: [Redacted]
- (e) X: [Redacted]
- (f) Facebook and Linked In: [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?

I currently use X, LinkedIn and Facebook accounts personally and in relation to my current employment. My current role requires the promotion of employees, volunteers, events and initiatives, and this differs from the role of a Judge.

I do not participate in any communication that reflects negatively upon me, the legal profession, or others. I monitor my privacy settings. I do not use my Instagram account for work and have very few followers and posts.

I am aware that the need to avoid the appearance of impropriety, to avoid conflicts of interest, to avoid political activity, to avoid soliciting and raising money, and to maintain impartiality extends to social media, and social media posts, shares, relationships, and comments can be misinterpreted. Since submitting my intent to seek election to the bench, I have significantly reduced personal social media use and would consider deactivating social media accounts if elected. I would never post or comment about a lawyer or case with which I was involved. If elected, I would “unfriend” lawyers who appear in front of me to avoid conflicts and to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

I created Facebook, X (Twitter), and LinkedIn accounts for the Department of Children’s Advocacy. I have assigned responsibility for these accounts to an employee at the agency and would relinquish all administrative rights to the agency accounts if elected.

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.

Civic, charitable, educational, social organizations for the past five years:

- (a) Aiken First Baptist Church – currently serving as children's prayer partner, Bylaws Committee, and Bereavement Committee; formerly served as Deacon, Vice-Chair of Deacons, Transition Team Chairman, nursery and toddler room volunteer, Baptism Committee, Nominating Committee, church league basketball coordinator, Mission Friends leader, and Children's Sunday School teacher (Member, 2007 to present)
- (b) 988 State Advisory Board
- (c) Children's Justice Act Task Force
- (d) Children's Law Center Bench-Bar Committee
- (e) Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (State Advisory Group member; Chair of the System Improvement committee from 2021-2023)
- (f) Human Trafficking Task Force
- (g) Joint Counsel for Children and Adolescents (Member, 2019 – present; Chair 2020)
- (h) Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children, *ex officio* member (2023–present)
- (i) KinCarolina Advisory Council
- (j) Master Plan Advisory Committee
- (k) Medical Care Advisory Committee
- (l) Safe Babies Court Advisory Committee
- (m) South Carolina Behavioral Health Coalition
- (n) State Child Fatality Advisory Committee (Member, 2019-present; Chair 2022-2024)
- (o) State Crisis Intervention Advisory Board
- (p) Suicide Prevention Coalition

Professional honors, awards or other forms of recognition not listed elsewhere:

- (q) Keynote speaker, Aiken United Way, Women United Gala (2024)
- (r) Speaker, Fostering the Family (April 2023 and April 2024)
- (s) Speaker, Bible Way Church (2022)
- (t) Commencement speaker, University of South Carolina-Aiken (December 2019)
- (u) Guest speaker, Aiken Woman's Club (2019)
- (v) Employee of the Month, S.C. Dept. of Social Services (2018)
- (w) Keith Frazier Team Award, S.C. Dept. of Social Services (2017)
- (x) "A Hero for Children Individual Award," S.C. Dept. of Social Services (2013)
- (y) "Together Forever for Kids" Team Awards, S.C. Dept. of Social Services (2013)
- (z) Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Service and Dedication to the Children of South Carolina, Dept. of Social Services Managed Treatment Services (2001)

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.

People come to Family Court at some of the most difficult times in their lives. My life experiences have taught me to not only be compassionate, kind, and patient but also to be clear and decisive in difficult moments. I respect and honor the legal system, and, from starting law school at the age of age twenty to completing a graduate program at the age of fifty-two, I have worked hard to contribute to the legal system and to remain professionally competent.

I am grateful for a diverse legal career in the area of family law, and I believe my education and experiences, both personal and professional, have allowed me to develop a unique perspective and appropriate temperament to serve as a Family Court Judge. It is an extraordinary honor to be considered for this role.

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: _____