



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

Family Court
(New Candidate)

Full Name: Shannon M. Chandler

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

To act and to work in the service of others is one of the highest callings. Being a Family Court judge is service to others. I believe that every plaintiff, defendant and attorney, when required to appear in court, should have the opportunity to appear before a Court who recognizes the differences (gender, gender identity, race, age, socioeconomic status) of those who appear before him/her and how those differences may affect a person who appears before him/her, but is prepared to extend justice to each individual regardless of those differences. I would be that kind of judge. I believe that when properly administered and utilized, the legal system works for everyone. For me, being a Family Court judge is the next step in helping to ensure that our legal system works for all the citizens of our State.

2. Do you plan to serve your full term if elected?

Yes

3. Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?

If elected, I have no plans to return to private practice.

4. Have you met the statutory requirements for this position regarding age, residence, and years of practice?

Yes

5. What is your philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications? Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated?

The Code of Judicial Conduct, Canon 3(B)(7) governs my philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications. Succinctly, I would not engage in *ex parte* communications with any individual involved in a matter pending before the Court, other than on the limited occasions (as stated in Canon(B)(7)(a)-(e)) where such communication is allowed.

6. If you disclosed something that had the appearance of bias, but you believed ~~it would not actually prejudice your impartiality,~~ what deference would you give a party that requested your recusal? Would you grant such a motion?

The Code of Judicial Conduct provides clear direction for what a judge should do in the situation described above. I would give much deference to a request that I recuse myself and I would grant the moving party's motion. It is far more important for parties to have the sense that court proceedings are fair than for me to insist on inserting myself in situations that do not require my input.

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

First, if the parties were not aware of my spouse's (and therefore, my connection) connection to the litigation, I would disclose his involvement. Second, depending upon the extent of the social and/or financial involvement, I would recuse myself at the outset, even without a request to do so, to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Third, if either party made a serious request for recusal I would recuse myself.

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

I would adhere to the standard already set by Canon 4(D)(5) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. There are circumstances under which a judge and/or his/her family can accept gifts; nevertheless, I would tend

to err on the side of caution in every situation. Succinctly, I would only accept gifts of nominal value from close friends and family.

9. How would you handle a situation in which you became aware of misconduct or appearance of infirmity of a lawyer or of a fellow judge?

Pursuant to the Code of Judicial Conduct I would inform the appropriate authority of the misconduct or appearance of infirmity.

10. Are you a member of any organization or association that, by policy or practice, prohibits or limits its membership on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin? If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis.

I am a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., an organization whose membership is solely comprised of college educated women and/or those individuals who identify as women. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. does not discriminate on any other basis.

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

Yes. As an active member the Aiken Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., I have participated in numerous fundraising events to raise money for scholarships for college bound students. I have also participated in fund-raising activities with Aiken United Way. I understand that I would not be able to participate in such fundraising if elected to serve on the Court.

12. Do you have any business activities that you would envision remaining involved with if elected to the bench?

No

13. Since Family Court judges do not have law clerks, how would you handle the drafting of orders?

Typically, I would follow the example of the judges in front of whom I have appeared and require the attorney for the prevailing party to draft the order. On occasions where the issues at hand are less complicated, if a form order is available, I will use it to draft the order myself. When

necessary, I will ask counsel to submit briefs to the Court prior to issuing a ruling. On those occasions, I will send the prevailing party detailed instructions regarding the drafting of the order. Over the course of my career, I have drafted numerous orders, so if time permits, I would not be opposed to drafting some orders myself. In every instance, I would provide deadlines for the submission of the order and have my assistant follow up if deadlines are not met. I will not sign an order that has not been reviewed and approved by both sides of the litigation, without first communicating with both parties simultaneously.

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

I would work closely with my staff to create a system (using paper and electronic calendars) to track the cases on my docket and the orders generated from said cases. I would give attorneys deadlines to turn in orders, that consider the deadlines to which Court Administration expects me to adhere. Weekly meetings with staff to address tasks and deadlines would be an effective tool as well.

15. If elected, what specific actions or steps would you take to ensure that the guidelines of the guardian ad litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case?

The guardian ad litem statute allows the Court to appoint a guardian ad litem when it is unlikely that a Court will not be "fully informed about the facts of the case" without the appoint of a guardian ad litem and there is a "substantial dispute" that requires the appointment of a guardian ad litem. I would require counsel to submit a proposed order when I appoint a guardian ad litem, or I would have a standard guardian ad litem order that I can offer to counsel as a guide.

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

There is no place for "judicial activism" on the Bench, as establishing the laws of our State is squarely in the purview of the Legislature.

Judges are elected to interpret and to enforce the law; therefore, judges should not set or promote public policy.

17. Canon 4 allows a judge to engage in activities to improve the law, legal system, and administration of justice. What activities would you plan to undertake to further this improvement of the legal system?

As an attorney, I have actively promoted the practice of law and the positive aspects of the legal system by allowing students who are interested in any part of the legal system to "shadow" me, by presenting at numerous Career Day programs and by volunteering with Mock Trial competitions. I would continue the aforementioned if elected to the Court. I would be willing to present at CLE programs and to serve in any other capacity as requested by the Supreme Court.

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

No, I do not believe that serving as a judge would strain my personal relationships. I have been an attorney for almost twenty-five (25) years, and I have been a solo practitioner for almost twenty (20) years, so I am no stranger to balancing the stress of practicing and maintaining healthy familial and personal relationships. My husband is an attorney as well, so he is well aware of the pressures of practicing law and we both understand the obligations that come with being appointed to serve as a judge. As for my other family and friends, they respect what I do as an attorney and I am confident that they would respect my work obligations and the boundaries to which I would have to adhere as a judge.

19. Would you give any special considerations to a pro se litigant in family court?

No, I would not give special consideration to a pro se litigant. Judges are required to remain impartial as to all litigants. Pro se litigants are to be held to the same standards as attorneys, as it pertains to the law; however, they should also be given the same respect as attorneys are given by the Court.

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

No

21. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved?

No

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

Yes

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

Per the Code of Judicial Conduct, a judge should be "patient, dignified and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers..." Ultimately, a judge should treat each and every person who comes into his/her courtroom the way that he/she wants to be treated. A judge should embody the competence and confidence of the best jurist, while maintaining the spirit of a servant. A servant is humble and does not consider him/herself better than those he/she serves. The aforementioned applies at all times.

24. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public who would appear before you, especially with a criminal defendant? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?

No. Anger is not an appropriate emotion for a judge to display to litigants or to the attorneys who appear before him/her .

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

Sworn to before me this ____ day of _____, 2024.

(Signature)

(Print name)

Notary Public for South Carolina

My commission expires: _____