



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

Family Court
(Incumbent)

Full Name: Alice Anne Richter

Business Address: 100 Broad Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Business Telephone: (843)958-4417

1. **Why do you want to serve another term as a Family Court judge?**
I have been honored to serve the people of South Carolina as a member of the judiciary and have learned a great deal through my service. I would like to continue to utilize my knowledge and experience as an attorney, a judge, and a lifelong South Carolinian in service of all who come into the South Carolina Family Court. I can think of no more meaningful and effective way to work in service of others than as a Family Court Judge.
2. **Do you plan to serve your full term if re-elected?**
Yes.
3. **Do you have any plans to return to private practice one day?**
No.
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?**
I believe it is vital to comply with all state laws, Rules of Procedure, all rules applicable to conduct of lawyers and/or judges, and the Judicial Canons. While some *ex parte* communications are clearly contemplated, these are addressed in our rules of procedure, professional responsibility, and judicial canons. The court system has rules and procedures established to address appropriate *ex parte* communications in, for example, emergent situations, on administrative and scheduling issues, and motions for supersedeas, among others. Canon 3(B)(7) is particularly helpful. My staff, if well trained, has worked for over thirty years as a paralegal prior to coming to work with me, and she and I are both diligent in ensuring that any such communications are properly handled. Ensuring that the

integrity and impartiality of the judiciary are protected by avoiding *ex parte* communications, except as allowed under the relevant authorities, is of utmost importance.

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?

I believe due deference would need to be given to such a request and that the particular facts and circumstances of each situation would have to be addressed in such an instance. In general, I believe that if my impartiality may be meaningfully questioned or there is an appearance of bias, it would be necessary to recuse myself in order to maintain the integrity of the system and my own integrity. I maintain a list of individuals from whose cases I am recused from hearing. Judges do have a duty to hear the cases scheduled before them; however, it is appropriate to openly address any concerns raised in relation to this issue with due regard for the integrity of the judicial process. Impartiality is a cornerstone to the integrity of our legal system, is key to the issuance of fair and unbiased rulings, and I endeavor to ensure that I recuse myself, if necessary, to protect this key element of our system.

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

As I have stated previously, I believe that impartiality of the judiciary is of utmost importance. I am recused from all cases in which my spouse represents a party. I would approach any other situations of which I was aware may lead to an appearance of impropriety for these reasons on a case-by-case basis and either recuse myself immediately or, if more information was needed, I would disclose any potential conflict and follow the procedures set forth in the Canons.

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

I adhere to Judicial Canon 4, which clearly details which gifts and invitations may appropriately be accepted. I only accept ordinary social hospitality with friends and relatives, and I err on the side of avoiding any situation which could reasonably raise concerns.

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?

In accordance with the Judicial Canons, particularly Canon 3(D), if I had a reasonable belief that there was a substantial likelihood that a judge or lawyer had violated the applicable rules of conduct, I would take all appropriate action. This could consist of communication with the individual and/or referral to the appropriate authority handling discipline in such situations. If I knew that such a

violation had taken place, I would take appropriate action, including possibly sanctions and/or referral to the proper disciplinary authority. If I became aware of the infirmity of a lawyer or fellow judge, I would discuss my concerns with the individual and proceed accordingly if any further action was required.

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

No.

11. Do you have any business activities that you have remained involved with since your election to the bench?

No.

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

I begin by timely issuing my rulings. I then either prepare orders myself or instruct one or both of the lawyers to prepare an order pursuant to my instructions to be submitted within a set timeframe. Also, Clerks of Court in some counties have their staff prepare certain orders for consideration by the presiding Family Court Judge. In addition, the Ninth Circuit and several other circuits have been involved in a pilot program through the Judicial Branch which has provided those circuits with law clerks. As Chief Administrative Judge in the Ninth Circuit when the program was in its nascent stages, I worked with the law clerk assigned to our circuit to introduce her to the Family Court. One of the areas in which we have utilized her support is in drafting orders for review by the Judge(s), specifically in cases with Pro Se litigants. This assistance from a law clerk has been of great value to us in our circuit.

13. What methods do you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines?

My staff and I maintain a shared calendar, meet regularly to communicate about and monitor deadlines, and take timely action to ensure deadlines are met.

14. What specific actions or steps do you take to ensure that the guidelines of the guardian ad litem statutes are followed during the pendency of a case?

I maintain familiarity with the applicable statutes for guardians ad litem in both private and agency cases, apply the statutory mandates to the facts and circumstances of a particular case, and instruct action or provide guidance as is appropriate in any case that comes before me.

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

The role of a Judge is to interpret and enforce the law based upon existing statutes and caselaw. I do not believe that judicial activism is appropriate, and I endeavor

to avoid the appearance of judicial activism in my rulings. Where my ruling may have relation to or be dependent in some way on public policy, I look to the public policy stated in appellate law in South Carolina and, if appropriate in the United States appellate courts and the intent of the legislative branch.

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

I continue to be involved by participating in and speaking at continuing legal and judicial education programs. I serve as a member of the Chief Justice's Advisory Committee, as the current Vice President of the South Carolina Conference of Family Court Judges, and as a Master in the South Carolina Family Court American Inn of Court. I have continued my involvement with the Charleston County Bar, the South Carolina Bar, and South Carolina Bar Foundation. I am a regular participant in the Judicial Observation Extern Program which allows law students to sit with Judges and observe our courts, and also frequently have students in high school, college, and at the graduate level shadow/observe me in my work. I speak to various groups and classes and teach at the Orientation School for new Family Court Judges. I will continue to look for opportunities to improve the law, legal system, and administration of justice.

17. Do you feel that the pressure of serving as a judge strains personal relationships (i.e. spouse, children, friends, or relatives)? How do you address this?

I do not believe my service as a judge has strained my personal relationships with my family and friends. If anything, it has brought us closer. Many of my friends and family, including my husband, are lawyers, and they have all been very aware of the demands of my position and have been very supportive of me during my service as a Judge. Likewise, I am acutely aware of the potential stress my job could place on our relationships, and I work to prevent such strains. My service as a Judge has meant that I draw more upon the support of my family and close friends, which has deepened my appreciation for each of them. I believe my service has also given me a better ability to support my friends and family and has helped me to prioritize maintaining a healthy balance of work and family time.

18. Are you involved in any active investments from which you derive additional income that might impair your appearance of impartiality?
No.

19. Would you hear a case where you or a member of your family held a *de minimis* financial interest in a party involved?
No.

20. 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.

No.

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

Yes.

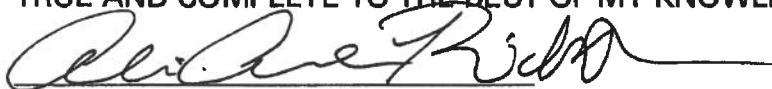
22. What do you feel is the appropriate demeanor for a judge and when do these rules apply?

The rules and best practices as to demeanor apply at all times. Judges should be respectful of counsel, litigants, and all who come before the court and should be respectful of court staff and the public at large. Judges also need to be able to maintain decorum in the courtroom, which may require firmness and decisiveness at times, while still maintaining a respectful demeanor. A Judge should be calm and respectful to all, demonstrate a sincere interest in matters before the court, and ensure diligence in her service. I find kindness and patience are very important in interacting with all those with whom I come into contact each day, both inside the courthouse and beyond.

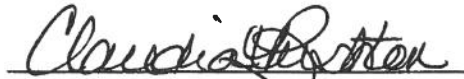
23. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public, especially with a criminal defendant? Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant?

Anger is neither appropriate nor effective when dealing with parties to a case, counsel, members of the public, or court personnel. Judges must maintain civility and avoid allowing emotions to influence their reason. It is, at times, important to communicate the seriousness of a given case or situation or even to be firm at times, but anger is far different and is not appropriate.

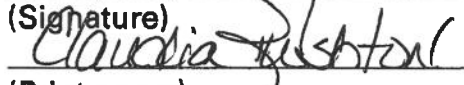
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ANSWERS TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS ARE TRUE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.



Sworn to before me this 15th day of August, 2024.



(Signature)



(Print name)

Notary Public for South Carolina

My commission expires: 4/24/2032