



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

Family Court
(Incumbent)

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1. Why do you want to serve another term as a Family Court judge? I want to serve another term as a Family Court Judge because I still have a strong passion and drive for my job. I absolutely love it and still find it very fulfilling, irrespective of the difficult decisions that I must make. I enjoy reporting to work each day. I appreciate the uniqueness of each case and the litigants that appear before me. I am naturally inclined to attentively and objectively listen to all parties in a dispute. I am inherently fair, open-minded, courteous, diligent, patient, humble and compassionate. I still possess the intellectual capacity to interpret legal principles, apply them to the facts of each case and clearly and logically communicate the reasoning that leads to my conclusions. I still possess the ability to work well with others as well as relate well to others, regardless of their background.
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? My philosophy regarding *ex parte* communications is that all parties should have the right and opportunity to be heard on any matter pending or impending before the Court prior to any decision being

made by the Court. Canon 3(B) (7) directs “that a judge shall not initiate, permit, or consider *ex parte* communications, or consider other communications made to the judge outside the presence of the parties concerning a pending or impending proceeding.

Are there circumstances under which you could envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated? The circumstances that I envision *ex parte* communications being tolerated are: (1) administrative purposes: the judge speaking with the clerk in order to schedule a case; (2) emergencies that do not deal with substantive matters or issues on the merits. If *ex parte* communication is entertained at this time, the judge must reasonably believe that no party will gain a tactical or procedural advantage as a result of the *ex parte* communication; (3) the judge seeking advice from a disinterested expert on the law applicable to a pending or impending matter. If advice is sought, the judge must give notice to all parties of the name of the person consulted and the substance of the advice. The parties must also be given a reasonable opportunity to respond; and (4) by consent of the parties in an effort to settle or mediate contested issues pending before the judge. I have experienced temporary restraining orders being issued in orders of protection and domestic violence matters where it appeared based on the affidavit of the affiant or in the verified complaint, that immediate and irreparable harm, injury, loss or damage would result to the affiant before notice could be served and a hearing held thereon. I have also issued bench warrants for failure to pay child support as ordered by the court without the actual rule to show cause action and summons being served on the Defendant because it appeared to the court that the Defendant could not be served with notice. I have also issued temporary custody on an emergency basis without prejudice to the opposing party when it appeared that the minor child was in eminent danger or would suffer irreparable harm. I, however, require an emergency hearing to be scheduled to give the opposing party an equal opportunity to address the court.

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? If I disclosed something that had the appearance of bias, but believed it would not actually prejudice my impartiality, I would give the parties an opportunity to discuss my recusal outside of my presence and if

they further desired recusal, then he/she would be allowed to file and/or make an oral motion for my recusal.

Would you grant such a motion? Yes

7. How do you handle the appearance of impropriety because of the financial or social involvement of your spouse or a close relative? I would disqualify or recuse myself from a pending or impending proceeding that involved the appearance of impropriety because of the financial or social involvement of my spouse or a close relative. I would also discourage my spouse or close relative from continuing relationships with individuals likely to come before me to avoid creating an appearance of exploitation of my office and to minimize the potential for my disqualification in the future.

8. What standards have you set for yourself regarding the acceptance of gifts or social hospitality? I make it a practice to not accept gifts from individuals likely to come before me to avoid casting doubt on my capacity to act impartially as a judge. With respect to social hospitality, I attend functions classified as ordinary social hospitality so long as I'm not the only invited person. I also attend functions such as birthday parties, weddings and anniversaries as long as there is no expectation that I may show partiality toward the hostess or honoree. In accordance with Canon 4 (D) (5), I would accept gifts incident to: (1) a public testimonial, books, tapes or other resource materials provided by a publisher on a complimentary basis for my official use; (2) the business, profession or other separate activity in which I am involved, provided it can't be perceived as intending to influence me in the performance of my duties; (3) ordinary social hospitality; (4) my birthday or anniversary from family and/or friends, provided the gift is commensurate to the occasion and the relationship; (5) relationships from individuals of whom I would be disqualified from hearing any matters.

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? Canon 3 (D) (2) directs that if I became aware of misconduct of a lawyer, I should call the violation to the lawyer's attention. I should further do what I could to rectify the problem and if the violation raises a substantial question as to the lawyer's honesty,

trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects, as difficult as it may be, I must report the violation to the appropriate authority.

Canon 3 (D) (1) directs that If I became aware of misconduct of a fellow judge, I should call the violation to the fellow judge's attention. I should further do what I could to rectify the problem and if the violation raises a substantial question as to the other judge's fitness for office, as difficult as it may be, I must report the violation to the appropriate authority.

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

Please describe. My sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Mu Phi Omega Chapter has a Biennial Debutante Cotillion where young ladies are invited to participate as a Debutante to raise funds that the Chapter in turn uses to provide scholarships, perform needed services, as well as make financial contributions to worthy community causes. My daughter was a Debutante in 2018 and I have assisted in fundraising efforts since that year through the present. During the various fundraising projects, the Sorority, Chapter, Team Number and perhaps the Debutante's Name is listed. No reference to my position as judge was ever used to solicit any funds. I also assisted in planning of the fundraisers and managed the funds raised until the process ended and funds were turned into the Chapter. Each Debutante Team was comprised of at least 9 members of the chapter.

I am a Steward and member of the Commission on Stewardship and Finance at my church, St. Paul AME. The church has many fundraisers throughout the year. I work along with the planning of some fundraisers and as member of the Commission report on the management of funds. My job title of judge is never used in any form or fashion.

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? The drafting of orders is assigned to the

prevailing party's attorney consistent with my findings of facts, conclusions of law and the applicable case law as recited by me in the ruling of the case(s). Once the order is drafted, a copy is provided to the other side for approval and presented to me for signature. In instances where a Self-Represented Litigant prevails over an attorney, I draft the order. I do prepare orders/interim orders for child support, custody, visitation, drug testing etc. if there is an emergent need due to time constraints. I also prepare Orders of Protection depending on the Circuit. In Contempt actions or Bench Warrants filed or brought by the Clerk of Court, the Clerk drafts the order for my signature.

13. What methods do you use to ensure that you and your staff meet deadlines? We use note sheets for each case heard by me. The note sheets are referenced on a weekly basis for receipt of orders for my signature by my administrative assistant. My administrative assistant also makes calls to attorneys to inquire of the status. Once an order is received and signed, it is noted on the sheet.
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? Prior to beginning any hearing involving a Guardian Ad Litem, I review the file for the interim and final reports to ensure that guidelines and statutes were followed during the pendency of the case.
15. What is your philosophy on "judicial activism," and what effect should judges have in setting or promoting public policy? A judge takes an oath to judge fairly and impartially, according to the evidence presented to him/her. I am to interpret the law as written and not create law based on my emotions, personal bias, political persuasion or to influence public policy. It is my duty to issue rulings according to the law as written and the author's intent. However, there are times that a judge needs to be creative when dealing with juveniles, much like parents are with children.
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 speak to youth groups at the Courthouse, at Church and at schools

for Career Day, Constitution Day, Truancy, Human Trafficking and other issues that affect Juveniles. I also address the importance of youth furthering their education as well as convey words of encouragement. On June 27, 2018, I was a panelist at the Attorney General's Youth Summit on Human Trafficking. I have also presented to adults at the Father's Place Initiative concerning what is expected of them as custodial and non-custodial parents. I plan to continue engaging in these forums because of the enjoyment that I receive and to promote confidence in our laws and the judicial system.

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 feel that the pressure of serving as a judge strains my personal relationships. When I am not at work, I am with my family, working for my church in some capacity or working for my sorority in some capacity. I haven't had to change the activities in which I engage or change the person that I am because I always carried myself in the utmost of respect. Imbedded in me is the fact that my character is of the highest importance. I have guarded my activities and associations with my character in mind.
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? No If so, please identify the entity and explain if this organization practices invidious discrimination on any basis.
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? I feel that the appropriate demeanor for a judge

is to always be in control of oneself. A judge should be patient, courteous, fair, impartial, dignified, fearless, attentive, competent and efficient. These described rules of demeanor applies at all times.

23. Do you feel that it is ever appropriate to be angry with a member of the public, especially with a criminal defendant? No

Is anger ever appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant? Anger is never appropriate in dealing with attorneys or a pro se litigant. Canon 3(B) (4) directs that a judge shall be patient, dignified and courteous to all individuals appearing before him or 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: _____