

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable Robert S. Armstrong

The Honorable Robert S. Armstrong is a candidate for the S.C Court of Appeals, Seat 1, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution Article V, Section 15.

Judge Armstrong is a graduate of the University of South Carolina. He received his J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1982. Following his admission to the S.C. Bar, Judge Armstrong worked at various times as a law clerk to a Circuit Judge; as a Public Defender; as an Assistant Solicitor; and as Deputy Solicitor. He also practiced law as a solo practitioner, with the bulk of his practice consisting of family law, criminal law and personal injury matters. Judge Armstrong was elected to the family court in 1998 and has served continuously since that time.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information. The members surveyed believe Judge Armstrong possesses the requisite characteristics to be an appellate court judge. He has experience in both the civil and criminal side of the lower courts. He was also considered to possess above average knowledge of the law as well as the requisite skill and temperament to serve as an appellate judge.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable Mary E. Buchan

The Honorable Mary E. Buchan is a candidate for the S. C. Court of Appeals, Seat 1, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution Article V, Section 15.

Judge Buchan is a 1973 graduate of Presbyterian College. After graduation from college, she taught school until 1977. She then enrolled in the University of South Carolina School of Law where she received her J.D. in 1980. Prior to her election to the family court bench, Judge Buchan was a partner in the firm of Whittington and Buchan in Marion, South Carolina. As an attorney, Judge Buchan dealt primarily with domestic matters, but also handled civil, criminal, real estate, commercial and probate matters. In May 1992, Judge Buchan was elected as Family Court Judge, Seat 1, Twelfth Judicial Circuit. She has been serving in that position continuously since that time.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament, the Committee reports the following information. The members surveyed believe Judge Buchan possesses the requisite characteristics to serve on the appellate court. She is perceived to be exceptionally compassionate, patient and reasonable. She was also considered to possess above average knowledge of the law and the requisite skill and temperament to serve on the Court of Appeals. The members surveyed hold Judge Buchan in high regard as an intelligent, articulate judge who is both fair and extremely considerate in the courtroom and out.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable Paul E. Short, Jr.

The Honorable Paul E. Short, Jr. is a candidate for the S.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 1, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution, Article V, Section 15.

Judge Short graduated from the Citadel in 1968 with a B.A. Degree in Political Science. Thereafter, he received his J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1971. He has completed all course work for the Master in Judicial Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. Judge Short began his practice in Chester, South Carolina and practiced continuously in the same firm until his election to the S.C. Circuit Court, At Large Seat 8, in 1991. He was elected as resident judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit in 1999 and has served continuously since.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information: The members surveyed believe Judge Short possesses the requisite characteristics to be an appellate court judge. He has experience in both the civil and criminal side of circuit court and experience in family court. He was also considered to possess the requisite legal knowledge, skill and temperament to preside in the courtroom.

Judge Short received high praise for his performance as a circuit court judge. Members of the Bar see Judge Short as a judge who knows what it is like to be a lawyer. They believe he has good judicial temperament, is fair to lawyers and litigants and has a good depth of legal knowledge. There were no questions about his character or integrity.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable Ray N. Stevens

The Honorable Ray N. Stevens is a candidate for the S.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 1, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution, Article V, Section 15.

Judge Stevens received his B.S. Degree in Accounting from the University of South Carolina 1971. He received his Masters in Business Administration from the University of South Carolina (1973) and he received his J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law (1978). He was admitted to the S.C. Bar in 1978. Judge Stevens also received his Master of Laws in Taxation from William and Mary School of Law (1980).

Judge Stevens practiced with Stophel, Caldwell and Heggie (1978-1979) in general corporate practice with an emphasis on taxation, the United States Internal Revenue Service as Federal Estate and Gift Tax Return Examiner (1979-1980), and the South Carolina Attorney General's Office (1980-1995) where he served as Chief Deputy Attorney General and Director of the Tax Division. In 1995, Judge Stevens was elected as an administrative law judge and has served continuously since.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament, and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information: The members surveyed believe that Judge Stevens possesses the requisite characteristics to be an appellate court judge.

Although Judge Stevens has no jury trial experience, limited criminal experience, and no experience in the family court, he is nevertheless considered to possess the requisite legal knowledge and temperament to preside in the courtroom and perform as an appellate court judge. Members of the Bar who are familiar with Judge Stevens indicate that he is a very quick study. Judge Stevens is quite scholarly and has extensive experience writing legal opinions which is a requisite for service on the Court of Appeals.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable Daniel F. Pieper

The Honorable Daniel F. Pieper is a candidate for the S.C Court of Appeals, Seat 2, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution Article V, Section 15.

Judge Pieper is a graduate of the College of Charleston. He received his J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1984. Thereafter, he obtained an LL.M. in Tax Law from The New York University School of Law. Following his admission to the Bar, Judge Pieper was law clerk for the Honorable Robert Carr, United States Magistrate and then the Honorable Sol Blatt, Jr., United States District Court judge. Mr. Pieper worked for a brief period of time in a private law practice. He has served as a county magistrate and as a master-in-equity. Mr. Pieper was elected to the circuit court in 1996 and has served continuously since that time.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information. The members surveyed believe Judge Pieper possesses the requisite characteristics to be an appellate court judge. Although some interviewed commented that he did not serve for a significant amount of time in private practice, most felt he was well suited for the appellate court. He has experience in both the civil and criminal side of the lower courts. He was also considered to possess the requisite legal knowledge, skill and temperament to serve as an appellate judge.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable Alison R. Lee

The Honorable Alison R Lee is a candidate for the S.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 1, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution Article V, Section 15.

Judge Lee graduated from Vassar College in 1979 and received her J.D. from the Tulane University School of Law in 1982. In addition she has studied at Georgetown University, the University of Grenoble, France, and the University of South Carolina School of Law. She is admitted to the State Bar of Texas (1982), Louisiana (1983) and the S.C. Bar (1984). She clerked for the Honorable Israel M. Augustine, Jr., Louisiana Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals (1982-1983) and the Honorable C. Tolbert Goolsby, Jr., South Carolina Court of Appeals (1983-1984). She was an associate at the McNair Law Firm practicing contract, consumer and labor and employment law (1984-1989). In 1989, she became staff counsel to the S.C. Legislative Council serving there until elected as administrative law judge in 1994. She was elected to the circuit court bench in 1999 where she has served continuously since.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information. The members surveyed believe Judge Lee possesses the requisite characteristics, legal knowledge, skill and temperament to be on the appellate court. She has a broad background in civil and criminal law and has significant experience in administrative law. A significant concern was raised about the timeliness of her rulings. Judge Lee acknowledged that this was an issue and indicated that she has been working diligently to overcome this. She also indicated that a portion of this was due to her deliberative nature and desire to adequately research and draft her own opinions. Those surveyed feel that she is well suited for the Court of Appeals given her background, her nature and the resources that would be available at the Court of Appeals.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable L. Casey Manning

The Honorable L. Casey Manning is a candidate for the S.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 1, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution Article V, Section 15.

Judge Manning received his undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina. He was admitted to the S.C. Bar in 1977 after receiving his J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law. He was in private practice (1979-1983), served as an Assistant Attorney General (1983-1989), as Chief of Prosecutions (1988-1989) and was a partner in Walker, Morgan and Manning (1989-1994). He was elected to the circuit court bench in 1994 and has served continuously since.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information. The members surveyed believe Judge Manning possesses the requisite characteristics to be on the appellate court. He has experience in both the civil and criminal side of the circuit court. He was also considered to possess the requisite legal knowledge, skill and temperament to serve as a jurist. Among those surveyed he is considered an asset to the trial court.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable Carolyn C. Matthews

The Honorable Carolyn C. Matthews is a candidate for the S.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 1, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution Article V, Section 15.

Judge Matthews is a graduate of Furman University and has studied at the University of London & Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-on-Avon. She received her J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1978 and was admitted to the S.C. Bar that same year. She served as a staff attorney for the S.C. Supreme Court (1978-1981) and law clerk to the Honorable George T. Gregory, Jr. (1981-1982). She served as an Assistant Attorney General (1982-1986), and Counsel to the House Judiciary Committee (1986-1988). Her private practice experience includes practicing with Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough (1988-1996), Woodward, Cothran & Herndon (1991-1998) and in a solo practice for a brief period before being elected administrative law judge in June 1999 where she has served since.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information. The members surveyed believe Judge Matthews possesses the requisite characteristics to be on the appellate court. She has a broad background in both civil and criminal law and appellate practice experience and has significant experience in administrative law. A significant concern was raised about the timeliness of her rulings. When questioned about the speed with which she issued opinions, she explained that due to budget cuts the ALJ Division is significantly understaffed, she has no secretary and only a part-time law clerk. She is considered to possess the requisite legal knowledge, skill and temperament to serve on the Court of Appeals.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable H. Bruce Williams

The Honorable H. Bruce Williams is a candidate for the S.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 2, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution Article V, Section 15.

Judge Williams is a graduate of Wofford College. He attended Cumberland School of Law at Sanford University before transferring to the University of South Carolina School of Law, where he received his J.D. in 1982. He was admitted to the S.C. Bar in 1982. He practiced with Scott, Mathews and Williams (1982-1991), and he practiced with Trotter and Williams (1991-1995). In both cases the practice was the general practice of law with emphasis on family law and personal injury. He also served as a part-time municipal judge for the Town of Irmo (1991-1995). He was elected to the family court bench in 1995 where he has served continuously since.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information. The members surveyed believe Judge Williams possesses the requisite characteristics to be on the appellate court. Judge Williams is seen as having exemplary character and integrity. Although some interviewed commented that the majority of his experience was in domestic law, all felt he was well suited to the appellate court. He is described as innovative, proactive, courteous to lawyers and litigants, possessing above average legal knowledge, fair, and an asset to the family court bench.

Judicial Qualifications Committee

Report on

Honorable Paula H. Thomas

The Honorable Paula H. Thomas is a candidate for the S.C Court of Appeals, Seat 2, the statutory requirements for which are set out in South Carolina Constitution Article V, Section 15.

Ms. Thomas is a graduate of the University of South Carolina. She received a M.Ed from the University of South Carolina in 1981. Thereafter, she received her J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1986 and was admitted to the S.C. Bar that same year. Following her admission to the Bar, Judge Thomas was an associate with the Law Offices of Kenneth W.Thornton (1987), a partner with Rubillo and Thomas (1987-1988), was a sole practitioner (1988-1993), was a partner with Thomas & Gundling (1993-94), Lawimore, Thomas, Gundling & Kelaher (1994), Thomas, Gundling, & Kelaher (1994-1995) before returning to a solo practice setting. She specialized primarily in handling family law matters during her years of practice. Judge Thomas was elected to the circuit court in 1996 and has served continuously since that time.

After interviewing a minimum of 30 members of the Bar who have knowledge of the candidate's integrity, competence and temperament and interviewing the candidate, the Committee reports the following information. The members surveyed believe Judge Thomas possesses the requisite characteristics to be an appellate court judge. She has experience in both the civil and criminal side of the lower courts. She is described as courteous to lawyers and litigants, possessing above average legal knowledge and good courtroom management skills. She was also considered to possess requisite legal knowledge, skill and temperament to preside as an appellate judge.