

**Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission  
Application for Nomination to Judicial Office**

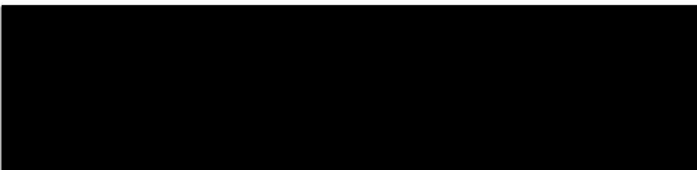
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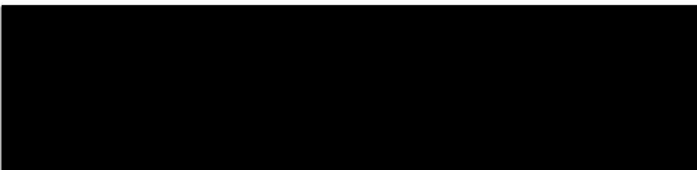
Name: Jennifer C. Covellis

Office Address: 2273 N. Highland Ave., Ste A  
(including county) Jackson, Tennessee 38305 (Madison County)

Office Phone: (731) 200-0225 Facsimile: (731) 200-0420

Email Address: jennifer@karneslegal.com

Home Address:   
(including county)

Home Phone: 

**INTRODUCTION**

Tennessee Code Annotated section 17-4-301 et seq. charges the Trial Court Vacancy Commission with assisting the Governor and the People of Tennessee in finding and appointing the best qualified candidates for judicial offices in this State. Please consider the Commission's responsibility in answering the questions in this application questionnaire. For example, when a question asks you to "describe" certain things, please provide a description that contains relevant information about the subject of the question and, especially, that contains detailed information that demonstrates that you are qualified for the judicial office you seek. In order to properly evaluate your application, the Commission needs information about the range of your experience, the depth and breadth of your legal knowledge, and your personal traits such as integrity, fairness, and work habits.

This document is available in Microsoft Word format from the Administrative Office of the Courts (telephone 800-448-7970 or 615-741-2687; website [www.tncourts.gov](http://www.tncourts.gov)). The Commission requests that applicants obtain the Microsoft Word form and respond directly on the form. Respond in the box provided below each question. (The box will expand as you type in the document.) Review the separate instruction sheet prior to completing this document. Your complete application, including both the original and digital copies, must be received by the Administrative Office of the Courts on or before the deadline prescribed in the Notice of Vacancy. See section 1(g) of the application instructions for additional information related to hand-delivery of application packages.

THIS APPLICATION IS OPEN TO PUBLIC INSPECTION AFTER YOU SUBMIT IT.

**PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND WORK EXPERIENCE**

1. State your present employment.

I am currently employed full-time as an attorney with Karnes Legal Services and part-time as a Magistrate with Madison County Juvenile Court.

2. State the year you were licensed to practice law in Tennessee and give your Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility number.

I was licensed to practice law in 2011, and my Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility number is 030107.

3. List all states in which you have been licensed to practice law and include your bar number or identifying number for each state of admission. Indicate the date of licensure and whether the license is currently active. If not active, explain.

I am only licensed to practice in Tennessee.

4. Have you ever been denied admission to, suspended or placed on inactive status by the Bar of any State? If so, explain. (This applies even if the denial was temporary).

No.

5. List your professional or business employment/experience since the completion of your legal education. Also include here a description of any occupation, business, or profession other than the practice of law in which you have ever been engaged (excluding military service, which is covered by a separate question).

I have been an attorney with Karnes Legal Services in Jackson, Tennessee since I became licensed in 2011. I have worked with this firm for the past 15 years primarily practicing family law. I have been a Magistrate with Madison County Juvenile Court since August 2022. My Magistrate position is part-time, and I hear child custody, child support, and truancy cases.

6. Describe the nature of your present law practice, listing the major areas of law in which you practice and the percentage each constitutes of your total practice.

The nature of my present law practice is centered around family law. I handle divorce (10%), child custody (10%), parentage (5%), termination of parental rights and adoption (32%), conservatorship (5%), and probate cases (5%). I also serve frequently as Guardian ad Litem in dependency and neglect cases (33%) in which the Department of Children's Services is involved.

7. Describe generally your experience (over your entire time as a licensed attorney) in trial courts, appellate courts, administrative bodies, legislative or regulatory bodies, other forums, and/or transactional matters.

Over my 15-year practice, I am in trial courts almost weekly, primarily in Madison County Juvenile Court and Chancery Courts in West Tennessee. I have had a few cases before the Court of Appeals but probably less than 10 cases in the last 15 years. I have not practiced before any administrative bodies, legislative, or regulatory bodies.

8. Describe any matters of special note involving your practice in trial courts, appellate courts, and administrative bodies.

I believe my regular practice in trial courts in the subject matter that I would be hearing in Chancery Court uniquely prepares me for this position.

9. Describe any other legal experience, not stated above, that you would like to bring to the attention of the Commission.

My role as a Magistrate has also provided me invaluable experience on the bench and prepared me for managing dockets and hearing cases.

10. List and describe all prior occasions on which you have submitted an application for any state or federal judicial position.

None.

## EDUCATION

11. List each college, law school, and other graduate school which you have attended,

including dates of attendance, degree awarded, major, any form of recognition or other aspects of your education you believe are relevant, and your reason for leaving each school if no degree was awarded.

Rhodes College, 2004-2008, graduated cum laude with Bachelor's degree in Political Science

Mississippi College School of Law, 2008-2011, graduated magna cum laude with Doctor of Jurisprudence

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

12. State your date of birth.

1985

13. How long have you lived continuously in the State of Tennessee?

I have lived continuously in the State of Tennessee since birth except for the 3 years I was in law school in Mississippi.

14. How long have you lived continuously in the county where you are now living?

I have lived continuously in Madison County since birth except for the 4 years I lived in Memphis for my undergraduate studies and the 3 years I was in law school in Mississippi.

15. State the county in which you are registered to vote.

Madison County

16. Describe your military service, if applicable, including branch of service, dates of active duty, rank at separation, and decorations, honors, or achievements. Please also state whether you received an honorable discharge and, if not, describe why not.

Not applicable.

17. Have you ever pled guilty or been convicted or are now on diversion for violation of any law, regulation or ordinance other than minor traffic offenses? If so, state the approximate date, charge and disposition of the case.

No.

18. To your knowledge, are you now under federal, state or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute or disciplinary rule? If so, give details.

No.

19. Please identify the number of formal complaints you have responded to that were filed against you with any supervisory authority, including but not limited to a court, a board of professional responsibility, or a board of judicial conduct, alleging any breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by you. Please provide any relevant details on any such complaint if the complaint was not dismissed by the court or board receiving the complaint. You may wish to request a report from the appropriate supervisory authority (or authorities) for a complete history.

None.

20. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure been instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities or creditors within the last five (5) years? If so, give details.

No.

21. Have you ever filed bankruptcy (including personally or as part of any partnership, LLC, corporation, or other business organization)?

No.

22. Have you ever been a party in any legal proceedings (including divorces, domestic proceedings, and other types of proceedings)? If so, give details including the date, court and docket number and disposition. Provide a brief description of the case. This question does not seek, and you may exclude from your response, any matter where you were involved only as a nominal party, such as if you were the trustee under a deed of trust in a foreclosure proceeding.

In my capacity as trustee of a testamentary trust, I was named a Respondent in a lawsuit by a beneficiary who believed she was entitled to assets of the estate. It was filed in Henderson County Chancery Court, bearing docket number 27657, on February 5, 2021. The beneficiaries of the estate were able to resolve the matter by agreement, and the matter was dismissed.

23. List all organizations other than professional associations to which you have belonged within the last five (5) years, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social and fraternal organizations. Give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such organizations.

I have been on the Board of WRAP since 2024. I have been a member of Fellowship Bible Church since 2023. Prior to 2023, I was a member of First Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

24. Have you ever belonged to any organization, association, club or society which limits its membership to those of any particular race, religion, or gender? Do not include in your answer those organizations specifically formed for a religious purpose, such as churches or synagogues.
- If so, list such organizations and describe the basis of the membership limitation.
  - If it is not your intention to resign from such organization(s) and withdraw from any participation in their activities should you be nominated and selected for the position for which you are applying, state your reasons.

I was a member of the Chi Omega Sorority while I attended Rhodes College. The organization was not open to men but did not discriminate on membership due to race or religion. I have not been a member of this sorority since my graduation in 2008.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

25. List all bar associations and professional societies of which you have been a member within the last ten years, including dates. Give the titles and dates of any offices which you have held in such groups. List memberships and responsibilities on any committee of professional associations which you consider significant.

Madison County Lawyer's Association for Women, current member  
Inns of Court, 2019-2022  
Madison County Young Republican Party, 2024  
Madison County Republican Party, current member

26. List honors, prizes, awards or other forms of recognition which you have received since your graduation from law school which are directly related to professional accomplishments.

Pro Bono Service Award, 2019

Safe Baby Court Female Lawyer of the Year Award, 2019

Magistrate for Madison County Juvenile Court, 2022-current

27. List any public office you have held or for which you have been candidate or applicant. Include the date, the position, and whether the position was elective or appointive.

I am currently the Republican Party nominee for Chancellor for the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District which is on the ballot for election on August 6, 2026.

### ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS

28. What are your reasons for seeking this position? *(150 words or less)*

I have a heart and passion for families and children in our community. I have represented hundreds of families and children during my career, and I am excited for the opportunity to continue to serve families and children, just from a different perspective. One of the things I pride myself on is my empathy for others. Coming to the bench from years of practicing law, gives me the experience of knowing what the parties are going through. I will give everyone who comes before me a fair and equal chance to present their side without any preconceived notions.

29. Describe the judgeship you seek (i.e. geographic area, types of cases, number of judges, etc. and explain how your selection would impact the court. *(150 words or less)*

Chancellor for the 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District serves three counties in West Tennessee: Madison, Chester, and Henderson. Chancery Court serves a vital role in our community as this is the Court that has jurisdiction to decide a wide variety of family law issues to include divorces, child custody, adoptions, probates, and conservatorships, as well as issues involving property and contract law among others. The Chancellor is the only Judge in these three counties to hear these types of cases with the exception of the General Sessions Judge in Madison County, who has probate jurisdiction through private act. I believe my selection would positively impact the Court because my career has focused on the exact type of cases this Court hears regularly. I am familiar with and knowledgeable about this area of the law. I am also familiar with all of the Court Clerks and staff. They are used to working with me and know my work ethic. I think my serving in this capacity would provide as smooth a transition as possible due to my familiarity with the law and those I would be working with.

30. Will you uphold the law even if you disagree with the substance of the law (e.g., statute or rule) at issue? Give an example from your experience as a licensed attorney that supports

your response to this question. (250 words or less)

Yes, I will always uphold the law, even if I disagree with the substance of the law at issue. There have not been many occasions in my practice where I have not agreed with the substance of the law. The substance of the law in a majority of my practice focuses on the best interests of children. But, there have been occasions where my client's position may not have aligned with my personal beliefs. As a zealous advocate for my client, I had to put my personal beliefs aside and argue for the rights of my client. Similarly, the judicial code of conduct charges judges to aspire at all times to conduct themselves to ensure the greatest possible public confidence in their independence, impartiality, integrity, and competence. The code requires judges to strictly adhere to and uphold the law, setting aside personal opinions, to achieve a fair and impartial outcome: a standard that will guide me each day on the bench.

### REFERENCES

31. List five (5) persons, and their current positions and contact information, who would recommend you for the judicial position for which you are applying. Please list at least two persons who are not lawyers. Please note that the Commission or someone on its behalf may contact these persons regarding your application.

A. Lanis L. Karnes, Attorney, [REDACTED]

B. William H. Shackelford, Attorney, [REDACTED]

C. Bob C. Hooper, Attorney, [REDACTED]

D. Bart Swift, Juvenile Court Clerk, [REDACTED]

E. Mike Bryant, President First Horizon Bank and County Commissioner, [REDACTED]

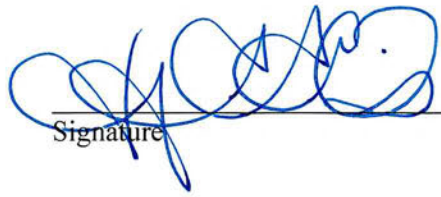
### AFFIRMATION CONCERNING APPLICATION

Read, and if you agree to the provisions, sign the following:

I have read the foregoing questions and have answered them in good faith and as completely as my records and recollections permit. I hereby agree to be considered for nomination to the Governor for the office of Judge of the Chancery Court – 26<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Tennessee, and if appointed by the Governor, agree to serve that office. In the event any changes occur between the time this application is filed and the public hearing, I hereby agree to file an amended questionnaire with the Administrative Office of the Courts for distribution to the Commission members.

I understand that the information provided in this questionnaire shall be open to public inspection upon filing with the Administrative Office of the Courts and that the Commission may publicize the names of persons who apply for nomination and the names of those persons the Commission nominates to the Governor for the judicial vacancy in question.

Dated: April 29, 2026.

  
Signature