

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

1/17/23

Name: William Christopher "Chris" Frulla

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**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 a Partner at Rainey, Kizer, Reviere & Bell, PLC. I have spent my entire legal career working at this firm. I have been a Partner at the firm since 2020. I have worked at the firm as an attorney since 2012. I also worked at the firm as a summer associate in 2011.

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

2012. BPR #031127.

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.

Tennessee, #031127, 2012, Active.

Mississippi, #106355, 2021, Active.

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).

- 2012-Present—Rainey, Kizer, Reviere & Bell, PLC—Attorney
- 2011-2012—University of Memphis, Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law—Graduate Assistant
- 2011—Rainey, Kizer, Reviere & Bell, PLC—Summer Associate
- 2011—Lexis Nexis—Student Representative
- 2011—Magistrate Judge Diane K. Vescovo—Extern
- 2008-2009—Ryley, Carlock, and Applewhite, P.C. (Denver, CO)—Legal Assistant
- 2006-2008—Brockington & Associates (Charleston, SC)—Archaeological Field Technician

- 2005-2006—The Terrace (Charleston, SC)—Line Cook
- 2003-2005—Captain Don's Seafood (Charleston, SC)—Fish Cleaner
- 1999-2002—Various jobs at restaurants, delis, and grocery stores in Memphis, TN

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.

I solely practice civil law. My practice is litigation based and is almost entirely defense focused. The major areas of law in which I practice are personal injury defense (60%), breach of contract/bad faith insurance claims (15%), insurance coverage (10%), professional negligence (5%), general tort defense (5%), and commercial litigation (5%).

In my personal injury defense practice, I mainly handle cases involving automobile/trucking accidents and premises liability cases. The majority of those cases involve insured individuals or entities. However, I also represent self-insured entities and sometimes uninsured individuals and entities. I also work directly for insurance companies on breach of contract/bad faith claims. Those types of cases involve first-party disputes between insureds and insurers. Additionally, I handle coverage investigations for insurance companies and conduct examinations under oath while investigating claims. My professional negligence practice mainly consists of defending real estate agents and brokers in disputes with buyers or sellers. Although, I have also been involved in defending legal malpractice cases. Finally, I represent individuals and entities in commercial litigation cases involving fee disputes, contract disputes, and workmanship disputes.

Overall, my practice has largely been consistent in these areas since I became licensed as an attorney in 2012. I routinely draft pleadings, complete written discovery, conduct depositions, participate in mediations, and attend court for hearings and trials. I also spend a great deal of time meeting with my clients to obtain information needed for the defense of their cases.

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.

I am licensed in Tennessee and Mississippi. Also, I am admitted to the U.S. District Courts for the Western District of Tennessee and the Northern District of Mississippi. The majority of my work is conducted in Tennessee, but I obtained my Mississippi license in 2021 and have also practiced in the state trial courts of Mississippi over the past four years. My practice is approximately 70% in state court and 30% in federal court. I often litigate trucking cases, premises liability cases, and insurance disputes in federal court. The amount of time I have spent in federal court has increased throughout my time in practice, but in the early years of practice, I spent the large majority of my time in state court.

On a weekly basis, I am typically in court at least one to two days per week. The majority of those court appearances are in Shelby County Circuit Court. Aside from Shelby County, I also

practice in the neighboring counties and other counties in West and Middle Tennessee, as well as North Mississippi.

I became licensed in 2012, and I tried my first bench trial in early 2013 in Shelby County General Sessions Court. In 2015, I tried my first jury trial in Shelby County Circuit Court. Since then, I have tried a number of jury trials in both state and federal court. Also, I have tried countless bench trials in state court. Further, I have extensive experience with motion practice in both state and federal court. I have spent a considerable amount of time in the Shelby County Civil Court, and I have been fortunate enough to develop great relationships with both the judges and other staff throughout my years of practice.

My appellate practice is somewhat limited compared to the amount of work I have done in the trial courts. I have argued several times before the Tennessee Court of Appeals, but I have never been involved in a matter in front of the Tennessee Supreme Court. In federal court, I have been involved in two matters that were appealed to the Sixth Circuit. Those matters were decided on briefs.

Over the course of my career, I have handled approximately 10-15 workers' compensation settlement hearings. Aside from those hearings, I do not have any other experience practicing in front of administrative bodies or legislative/regulatory bodies. I also have not handled any type of transactional cases.

Overall, due to the nature of my practice, I have extensive experience practicing in the trial courts of Tennessee. As noted above, my practice areas have largely been consistent throughout my career. This has allowed me to become very comfortable and confident in my role as a litigator, both in and out of court.

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

Over the course of my legal career, I have handled approximately 800-1000 cases. I have received many noteworthy outcomes for my clients over the years, including the following:

-*Moses v. YouTube, Inc.*, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 17029 (W.D. Tenn., Feb. 11, 2014)—Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Personal Jurisdiction Granted.

-*Patterson v. Wal-Mart Stores East, LP*, 2015 Tenn. App. LEXIS 935 (Tenn. Ct. App. 2015)—Summary Judgment affirmed on appeal.

-*Wynn v. Wal-Mart Stores E., L.P.*, 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 181407 (W.D. Tenn., Dec. 14, 2015)—Summary Judgment for Defendant.

-*Putnam v. Leach*, 572 S.W.3d 605 (Tenn. Ct. App. 2017)—Motion to Dismiss affirmed on appeal.

-*Oldham v. Wal-Mart Stores East, L.P.*, 2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 149067 (W.D. Tenn., July 2, 2019)—Summary Judgment for Defendant.

-*Glasper v. Wal-Mart Stores East, LP*, 2022 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 235303 (W.D. Tenn., Sept. 27, 2022)—Summary Judgment for Defendant.

-*Murphy-Pike v. Mauck*, Shelby County Circuit Court—CT-000006-14—Defense Verdict (jury trial).

-*Alexander v. Widmer*, Shelby County Circuit Court—CT-004998-14—Defense Verdict (jury trial).

-*Wright v. Sam's Club*, W. District Federal Court—15-cv-2354-SHL-cgc—Defense Verdict (jury trial).

-*Berkley v. Walmart Stores East, LP*, Shelby County Circuit Court—CT-0501-20—Defense Verdict (jury trial).

-*King v. Chase*, W. District Federal Court, 2:22-cv-02030-JPM-atc—Defense Verdict (jury trial).

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

Over the course of my career, I have represented close to one thousand clients. While the majority of my cases are resolved short of trial, every single case requires my zealous advocacy, strategic thinking, and compassionate representation. Each client has their own set of problems and issues, and it has been my job to counsel them on those issues and find efficient solutions to their problems. While courtroom experience is absolutely necessary to hone your skills as a litigator, I truly think that the time I spend getting to know each client and providing them comfort when they need it most is equally important to my development as an attorney. I take great pride in calming my clients and ensuring them that I will do everything within my power to achieve the best possible outcome in their case. I find this aspect of the practice highly rewarding.

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

Not applicable.

### **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.

University of Memphis, Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law—2009-2012—J.D. (2012)

- *Cum Laude*
- Member of The University of Memphis Law Review
- Freshman Moot Court Competition Finalist
- Dean's Award of Excellence, Best Brief, Legal Methods II
- Vice President of the Student Bar Association
- CALI Award for Civil Litigation Clinic
- Graduate Assistant and Scholarship Recipient

College of Charleston—2002-2006—B.S. in Anthropology (2006)

- *Cum Laude*

University of Oregon—2005—Archaeological Field School

- I attended a six-week field school through University of Oregon for transfer credit in between my junior and senior year at College of Charleston. I received a passing grade.

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

12. State your date of birth.

June 11, [REDACTED]

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

I was born in Memphis, Tennessee in 1984, and I lived continuously in Memphis, Tennessee from 1984-2002. I lived in Charleston, South Carolina from 2002-2008, and I lived in Denver, Colorado from 2008-2009. In 2009, I moved back to Memphis, Tennessee, and I have lived here in Tennessee continuously for the past sixteen years.

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

I was born in Shelby County, Tennessee in 1984, and I lived continuously in Shelby County, Tennessee from 1984-2002. I lived in Charleston, South Carolina from 2002-2008, and I lived in

Denver, Colorado from 2008-2009. In 2009, I moved back to Shelby County, Tennessee, and I have lived here in Shelby County continuously for the past sixteen years.

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

Shelby County, TN.

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.

In 2004, I was cited for minor in possession of alcohol in Charleston, South Carolina when I was twenty years old. I plead guilty and successfully completed a diversion program, and the charge was later expunged.

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.

No.

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.

- Church of the Holy Communion—Member
- Lodge Manufacturing Co.—Family Council—Secretary (2017-2019) and Chairman (2019-2023)
- East Buntyn Historic District Neighborhood Association—Member (2016-2022)

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.

- a. If so, list such organizations and describe the basis of the membership limitation.
- b. 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 Boy Scouts of America when I was a youth. I believe that membership was restricted to males during the time in which I was active in the organization. After I obtained the rank of Eagle Scout, my participation within the organization ended. While I do not have any intention of future participation in their activities at this time, I do not intend to resign my status as an Eagle Scout. I do not believe my membership in the Boy Scouts of America has any effect on my ability to be a fair and impartial member of the judiciary.

### **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.

- Tennessee Bar Association (2012-present)
- Mississippi Bar Association (2021-present)
- Memphis Bar Association (2012-present)
- Memphis Bar Foundation Fellow (2023-present)
- Tennessee Defense Lawyers Association (2014-present)
  - Secretary-Treasurer (2023-2024)
  - President-Elect (2024-present)
- Defense Research Institute (2015-present)
- Insuralex (2022-present)
- The Memphis ADR American Inn of Court (2022-present)

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.

- Fellow, Memphis Bar Foundation (2023)
- Defense Lawyer of the Year, Tennessee Defense Lawyers Association (2022-2023)
- "Rising Star" in Mid-South Super Lawyers (2016-2023)

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.

None.

### **ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

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

Since becoming a licensed attorney in 2012, I have consistently litigated cases in Shelby County Circuit Court. Now, I am ready to serve the community as a whole by becoming a judge here, where I was born, raised, and where I am now raising my family. I want the citizens of Shelby County to be confident that they have a judge who will administer justice in a reliable and efficient manner. I will build upon the strengths of our local justice system and improve on any weaknesses. If I am appointed to this position, I believe I can make a long-term positive impact on the life of not only the litigants but also their attorneys. I know that my many years of experience practicing in Shelby County will allow me to serve the community with confidence and provide a firm but fair application of our laws.

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)*

I am seeking to be appointed to the open judgeship for Shelby County Circuit Court, Division 3. Shelby County encompasses the Memphis metropolitan area and surrounding municipalities. It is the largest county in Tennessee, both in population and area. Historically, there have been nine divisions/judges. However, in 2024, Division 7 was eliminated. Once this appointment is made, there will be eight presiding judges in Shelby County Circuit Court. This Court handles civil matters including tort claims, family law, healthcare liability, personal injury cases, and other cases in which juries are requested. The Court also handles non-jury matters such as Tennessee Governmental Tort Liability Act claims. If the Governor appoints me to this position, I will work with the current judges to provide the citizens of Shelby County with an efficient and impartial system in which to resolve their civil disputes in a timely manner.

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 believe that becoming a judge is the ultimate privilege within the legal system. However, with that privilege comes great responsibility, including the application of the law as written despite any subjective feelings on the substance of the law. As a lawyer, I am already bound by the Rules of Professional Conduct. However, if I was appointed to this position, I would also be bound by the Code of Judicial Conduct. I do not take these requirements lightly, as the ethical and moral obligations we have in this profession are of the utmost importance.

In my practice, I have dealt with a number of scenarios where I have had to either take action or abstain from taking action on behalf of my client based on certain laws and rules of procedure even when I knew that I might personally disagree with the outcome. For example, I have had several cases where I knew that my client was liable for the actions complained of by the

plaintiff, but, in order to zealously represent my client, I had to file motions to dismiss based on procedural and legal insufficiencies. While I sympathized for the plaintiffs, I had to take these actions in order to fulfill my obligations to my clients, and the motions were soundly based in law and fact. Similarly, if I receive this appointment, I will apply the law in a fair and impartial manner regardless of how I may feel personally about the consequences of my rulings.

### 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. Russell E. Reviere; Partner at Rainey, Kizer, Reviere & Bell, PLC; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

B. Darryl D. Gresham; Partner at Allen, Summers & Gresham, PLLC; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

C. Loys A. "Trey" Jordan, III; Partner at McDonald Kuhn, PLLC; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

D. Sarah C. Watkins; Senior Claims Specialist at Progressive Insurance; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

E. Michael J. "Mike" Otterman; CEO/President of Lodge Cast Iron; [REDACTED]  
[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 **Thirtieth Judicial District Circuit Court 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: June 5, 2025.



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Signature

When completed, return this questionnaire to John Jefferson at the Administrative Office of the Courts, 511 Union Street, Suite 600, Nashville, TN 37219.



**TENNESSEE TRIAL COURT VACANCY COMMISSION  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**

511 UNION STREET, SUITE 600  
NASHVILLE CITY CENTER  
NASHVILLE, TN 37219

**TENNESSEE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY  
TENNESSEE BOARD OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT  
AND OTHER LICENSING BOARDS**

**WAIVER OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

I hereby waive the privilege of confidentiality with respect to any information that concerns me, including public discipline, private discipline, deferred discipline agreements, diversions, dismissed complaints and any complaints erased by law, and is known to, recorded with, on file with the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, the Tennessee Board of Judicial Conduct (previously known as the Court of the Judiciary) and any other licensing board, whether within or outside the State of Tennessee, from which I have been issued a license that is currently active, inactive or other status. I hereby authorize a representative of the Trial Court Vacancy Commission to request and receive any such information and distribute it to the membership of the Commission and to the Office of the Governor.

William Christopher Frulla

Type or Print Name

Signature 

Date

031127  
BPR #

Please identify other licensing boards that have issued you a license, including the state issuing the license and the license number.

The Mississippi Bar

Mississippi, #106355.