

Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission
Application for Nomination to Judicial Office

1/17/23

Name: MARY LIVINGSTON WARD

Office Address: [REDACTED] Knox County)
(including county) _____

Office Phone: 865-599-1567 Facsimile: _____

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Home Address: same as office
(including county) _____

Home Phone: same as office Cellular Phone: same as above

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). 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 self employes as an attorney. My business is Mary L. Ward, Attorney at Law.

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

2000- B.P.R. #019942

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.

Admitted in Georgia in 1991. B.P.R. #737320. Active in Georgia and 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).

Associate attorney from 1991-1995- Perry, and Walters in Albany, Georgia. Associate attorney with Brown and Scoccimaro, P.C. in Albany, Ga from 1995-1998. 1998-2000 assistant district attorney for Dougherty County, Ga. 2002-2006 assistant district attorney for Knox County, Tennessee. 2006-present solo practitioner in Knoxville, Tennessee.

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.

Criminal defense 45%; Family law/juvenile law 45%; Estate planning 10%. I am a sole practitioner with a large volume of 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 have been a litigator in both civil and criminal courts in Georgia and Tennessee for 34 years. I have appeared in appellate courts in Tennessee and Georgia including the Court of Criminal appeals. In Georgia, I also did some worker's compensation and social security law and appeared in school board cases because my office represented the school board.

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

I have had many acquittals during my practice as a defense attorney, had large civil verdicts and many convictions as a prosecutor. I have tried numerous murder cases as a defense attorney.

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

Former prosecutor in both Georgia and Tennessee and many years of criminal defense practice.

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.

Bachelor of arts- politics major; sociology minor 19984-1988; graduated cum laude Wake Forest University; 1998-1991 Wake Forest School of Law; j.d.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

12. State your date of birth.

[REDACTED]

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

Since 2000.

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

Since 2000

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

Knox

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.

none

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.

Dui 2011- pled guilty.

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.

Divorce in Knox County 2007; Divorce in Knox County 2015.

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.

None

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.

No

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.

Knoxville Bar Association

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.

None

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.

Candidate for city judge Knoxville, T.N. 2023. Elected position; did not win.

ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS

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

I am seeking the position of Judge of Criminal Court for Knox County because I am the most qualified and experienced for the position and I have the temperament and patience to handle the large dockets. I am distinguished from the other candidates in that I have acted as both a prosecutor in Georgia and Tennessee and have practiced as a criminal defense attorney. I have tried over 100 jury trials in the span of my career in both civil and criminal courts and am well versed in the law of evidence, discovery, statutes, and sentencing. As a prosecutor, I was accustomed to handling very large dockets which is necessary for the position. I get along well with both prosecutors and defense attorneys and I will uphold the rule of law as the oath requires.

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 applying for the vacancy left by Steven Sword for the Criminal Court in Knox County, Tennessee(Division I. There are 3 Criminal Court Judges for Knox County. My selection will bring some diversity to the Court because there has only been one other woman that has served in this role in Knox County. I am in a position to manage the long dockets because I have had experience with that during my years as a prosecutor. I am also distinguished because I have worked as both a prosecutor and defense attorney which puts me in a unique position to understand both roles. I understand the need for due process in the court system and the need for defendants to be afforded a fair trial as well as the rights of victims in the criminal court system.

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 uphold the law even if I disagree with it. One example that comes to my mind as a defense attorney is mandatory sentencing in many cases. I experienced this issue last week where I represented an individual who was a career offender but had not had any convictions since 2008. He was charged with an E felony and we had a jury trial and he was convicted. The judge had to sentence him to the only sentence possible which is 12 years@60%. Unfortunately, the judge had no discretion in this matter. The 12-year sentence seemed extremely harsh given his good behavior for the last 17 years. He was charged with possessing a very small amount of drugs and bringing it into the penal facility. He was homeless and an addict. Another example I have seen are circumstances where victims do not believe that the system is just in situations where judges have very little discretion in the sentencing based on the class of the crime or the range of a defendant. For example, where a defendant gets 6 months of unsupervised probation for offensive contact to a child.

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. Joseph Ayers, attorney. Contact information is	[REDACTED]
B. Robin Gunn, attorney.	[REDACTED]
C. Rhonda Lee, attorney;	[REDACTED]
D. Paul Hatch, private investigator;	[REDACTED]
E. Julie Armstrong, state investigator;	[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 [Court] Criminal Court of Knox County 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: May 12, 2025 _____.

Mary L. Ward

Signature

Mary L Ward

When completed, return this questionnaire to John Jefferson at the Administrative Office of the Courts, 511 Union Street, Suite 600, Nashville, TN 37203.



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

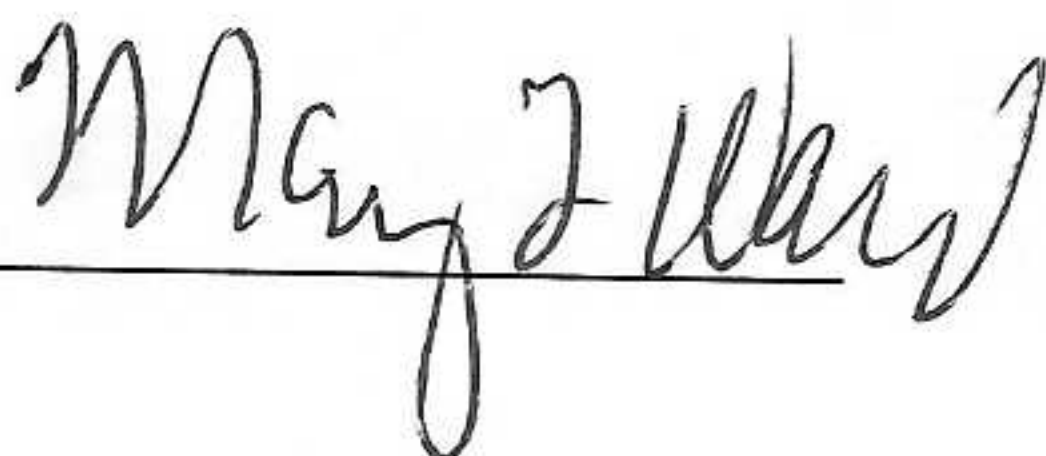
I hereby waive the privilege of confidentiality with respect to any information that concerns me, including public discipline, private discipline, deferred discipline agreements, diversions, dismissed complaints and any complaints erased by law, and is known to, recorded with, on file with the Board 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.

Mary L. Ward

Type or Print Name

Mary L. Ward

Signature



05/12/2025

Date

019942

BPR #

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