

Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission
Application for Nomination to Judicial Office

1/17/23

Name: William Nicholas Blaylock
Office Address: 1000 England Drive, 2nd Floor, Cookeville, TN 38501
(including county) (Putnam County)

Office Phone: 931-526-7668 Facsimile: none

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Home Address: [REDACTED] Sparta, TN 38583 (White County)
(including county) [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED] Cellular Phone: [REDACTED]

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 employed as an administrative law judge (hearing officer) with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. I adjudicate unemployment appeals cases daily and have done so since October 1, 2007. Since then, I have adjudicated approximately 20,000 cases for Tennesseans from every part of Tennessee and continue to do so on a daily basis.

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

2004
BPR Number: 00023513

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
00023513
Active
Date of Licensure: 2004

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).

After I graduated from law school, I worked in private practice with Attorneys Mike Kress and

Gary Dodson in Sparta, Tennessee. I handled criminal matters (misdemeanors and felonies), juvenile court cases, civil matters, and completed real estate title searches for clients. I handled a variety of cases to assist clients in a small town practice. On October 1, 2007, I began work for the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development as an administrative law judge (hearing officer). I adjudicate unemployment appeals cases daily and have done so since October 1, 2007. Since then, I have adjudicated approximately 20,000 cases for Tennesseans from every part of Tennessee and continue to do so on a daily basis. I served as the Chief Hearing Officer from 2021 through 2022.

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 am an administrative law judge (hearing officer). I adjudicate unemployment appeals cases daily and have done so since October 1, 2007. Since then, I have adjudicated approximately 20,000 cases for Tennesseans from every part of Tennessee and continue to do so on a daily basis.

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.

From 2004 to 2007, I handled criminal matters (misdemeanors and felonies) in the general sessions courts and criminal courts of White County, Van Buren County, and Putnam County, Tennessee. Many of these cases were court appointments wherein I represented the indigent. I also represented clients in the White County, Van Buren County, and Putnam County juvenile courts. These consisted, mostly, of dependency/neglect cases, termination of parental rights cases, and juvenile criminal cases. I also represented clients in civil courts involving motor vehicle accidents, divorces, boundary disputes, child support cases, and requests for temporary restraining orders. I also conducted real estate title searches and drafted wills for clients. I did not practice before appellate courts when I worked in private practice.

From 2007 to the present, I have worked as an administrative law judge (hearing officer). I adjudicate unemployment appeals cases daily and have done so since October 1, 2007. In the hearings, I take testimony under oath, listen to and evaluate the arguments of the parties attorneys, consider motions submitted by the parties and/or their attorneys, admit or deny motions for admission of evidence pursuant to the Tennessee Rules of Evidence, and issue written decisions in each case. Since 2007, I have adjudicated approximately 20,000 cases for Tennesseans from every part of Tennessee and continue to do so on a daily basis.

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

I have adjudicated unemployment compensation appeals hearings for the citizens of Tennessee for almost 15 years now. As a result, I have interacted with Tennesseans from every corner of Tennessee, from every socio-economic background, from every educational level, and from multiple ethnicities. I am keenly aware of the variety and greatness of Tennessee's citizens and take seriously the responsibility to provide them with a fair and impartial hearing every day. I interact with them during a particularly stressful time in their lives when they are unemployed or when the recently elected to terminate the employment of an employee. I consider this position as one of a neighbor helping another neighbor because we are all Tennesseans. It has been a special privilege and blessing to serve my neighbors in this way.

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

While in law school, during the summer of 2003, I clerked in the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Tennessee in Memphis, Tennessee. During that time, I conducted research on a variety of matters for assistant United States attorneys and observed a variety of federal criminal trials be adjudicated. I also helped the assistant United States attorney with legal research for their forthcoming briefs to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in a variety of cases.

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

In 2021, I submitted an application to the Governor's Council for Judicial Appointments to be an Associate Justice on the Tennessee Supreme Court. The body considered my application on December 8, 2021. The body did not submit my name to the Governor as a nominee.

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 Tennessee at Knoxville. Dates attended: August 1997 through December 2000.

Degree Awarded: Bachelor of Arts. Major: Political Science (honors) with minors in English, History, and Japanese. Graduated Magna Cum Laude and was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society.

University of Memphis. Dates attended: August 2001 through May 2004. Degree awarded: Doctor of Jurisprudence. Major: Law. Articles Editor for the Tennessee Journal of Practice and Procedure and recipient of the Dean's Distinguished Service Award.

Austin Peay State University. Dates attended: August 2013 through July 2017. Degree awarded: Master of Arts. Major: Military History. Graduated Summa Cum Laude.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

12. State your date of birth.

██████████ 1979

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

43 years

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

19 years

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

White 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.

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.

None

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.

Cookeville Community Band—Clarinet player
Putnam County Master Gardeners—Member
Bear Cove Baptist Church—Deacon

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.

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.

White County Bar Association, 2004 to 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.

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.

None

ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS

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

My grandfather had a third grade education and, unfortunately, he passed away before I was born. The idea that his grandson has graduated from college, graduate school, and law school and is now being considered for a criminal court judge position would be unbelievable to him. It is the epitome of the American Dream. I have been blessed in my life to be educated and serve the citizens of Tennessee. Legal professionals in our small town are viewed as learned friends who are there to help their neighbors with legal matters. I have a servant's heart and public service is the highest calling for anyone. I want to continue to serve the people of Tennessee.

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 the Criminal Court judgeship for the Thirteenth Judicial District. The cases involve felony criminal cases and misdemeanor appeals from general sessions courts. There are currently two criminal court judges in our judicial district and the General Assembly has elected to add a third. My selection would impact the court by adding a third judge to reduce the number of cases on the dockets of the other two criminal court judges. I would be fair and impartial and seek to adjudicate all matters 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. Tennessee law requires that unemployment compensation applicants must be able and available for suitable work in order to receive unemployment compensation benefits. There are occasions wherein employees are injured at the jobsite performing their assigned job duties precisely in the manner they have previously been instructed to perform them by their employer. They are injured through no fault of their own. However, their injuries render them physically unable to work and they are, therefore, ineligible for unemployment compensation benefits pursuant to state statute. I disagree with this outcome but I, nonetheless, apply the law as written without passion or prejudice.

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. State Senator Paul Bailey [REDACTED]
B. Melinda Williams, former Chief of Staff to Commissioner Burns Phillips, [REDACTED]
C. Pastor Scott Foshie, [REDACTED]
D. David McCulley, owner of Morgan's Furniture Center, [REDACTED]
E. Scott Wilson, assistant principal at White County High School, [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 Criminal Court (13th 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: May 25, 2023.



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 Nicholas Blaylock

Type or Print Name



Signature

May 25, 2023

Date

00023513

BPR #

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

