

Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission
Application for Nomination to Judicial Office

1/17/23

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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, 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 presently employed as a partner at the Law Office of Walker & Garner, Attorneys, 122 6th Avenue W., Springfield, Robertson County, Tennessee 37172

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 Tennessee in 1986. My BPR Number is 012287.

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.

Not Applicable

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).

In 1986 after graduating from law school and passing the bar exam, I began practicing law in Springfield, Tennessee, with William R. "Bill" Goodman and the firm was known as Goodman & Walker, Attorneys. We had a general practice that provided legal services in the areas of criminal law, family law, general civil cases, personal injury, workers' compensation, wills and estates, business formation and contracts, and real estate. The firm represented Tennessee Farmers Mutual Insurance Company and most of the industries located in Robertson County, including Electrolux Home Products, Inc., which is the largest employer in the county. We had a successful law practice and worked together for twenty-seven (27) years until Bill was elected to the Circuit Court bench in 2014.

In 2014, I formed a partnership with Jonathan Garner, who was an associate attorney with Goodman & Walker, and the firm is now known as Walker & Garner, Attorneys. The law firm has continued to grow and be successful and is a general practice, much like its predecessor. While some staff members have changed, I have had the same legal assistant for twenty-three (23) years. I still handle a variety of cases, including criminal, wills and estates, personal injury and family law.

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 areas of law in which I presently practice are as follows:

Criminal law (65%)

Wills and Estates (10%)

Personal Injury (10%)

Family Law (10%)

Miscellaneous Civil Cases (5%)

I am in court on the average of three (3) days per week.

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 practiced law before the Circuit Courts of Robertson, Montgomery, Cheatham, Sumner, Dickson, Rutherford, Hickman, and Davidson Counties. I have also had cases in the Chancery Courts of Robertson, Cheatham and Davidson Counties. Further, I have practiced law before the United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee. In addition, I have had cases in the Supreme Court of Tennessee, the Special Workers' Compensation Appeals Panel of the Supreme Court, Tennessee Court of Appeals, and the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals. Finally, I have practiced law before the Tennessee Court of Judiciary, Social Security Administration, Tennessee Board of Claims, the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and the State of Tennessee Bureau of Workers' Compensation.

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

I have litigated many interesting and challenging cases in my thirty-six (36) years of practicing law. At the trial court level, I have handled several murder cases and other serious crimes. I have also represented both plaintiffs and defendants in various civil cases, including wrongful death and a case in which I represented a three-year-old child who was assaulted by an intruder at a daycare that resulted in a civil settlement and the daycare being permanently closed.

At the appellate level, I was the attorney on three (3) cases that resulted in opinions from the appellate courts that were designated for publication. Those cases were as follows:

- *State vs Carla Coleman*, 791 S.W.2d 504 (Tenn.Cr.App.1989)
I was the attorney for Ms. Coleman. The case against her was dismissed and set forth the standard to be applied when the police stop a vehicle based on an anonymous tip.
- *State vs David Morelock*, 851 S.W.2d 838 (Tenn.Cr.App.1992)
I was the attorney for Mr. Morelock and the charges against him were dismissed. His case sets forth the law as to the right of a person not to be unreasonably detained after a legal traffic stop, but without probable cause to search or make an arrest.
- *Martha Benton, Administratrix of The Estate of Davis Ray Benton v. City of Springfield*, 973 S.W.2d 936 (Tenn.1998)
I was the attorney for Martha Benton. The Supreme Court granted review of her workers' compensation case related to her deceased husband's heart attack who was a police officer. This case interpreted the law as to the statutory presumption afforded to law enforcement officers in workers' compensation cases.

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

I have been certified as a Rule 31 General Civil Mediator since 2002.

I have served four (4) terms as a Hearing Committee Member for the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility.

In the past, I have filled in as a special judge for the General Sessions Court for Robertson County, Tennessee, and as judge for the City of Springfield, Tennessee and the City of Greenbrier, Tennessee.

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.

University of Tennessee at Knoxville, B.S., 1978 - 1983
Member, University of Tennessee Golf Team, 1978-1983
1983 Co-Captain

Cumberland School of Law of Samford University, J.D., 1983-1986 (Class Ranking Top 20%)
Best Advocate - Basic Skills Competition
Director, Cumberland School of Law Trial Advocacy Board, 1985-1986
Member, Cumberland School of Law National Trial Team 1985-1986

PERSONAL INFORMATION

12. State your date of birth.

1960

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

63 years

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

54 years

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

Robertson County, Tennessee

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 1976 when I was 16 years old, I was cited for Reckless Driving in Davidson County, Tennessee. I was not required to appear in court and I paid the citation.

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.

I had complaints filed by Melanie Edwards in 1990, Will Ogburn in 1995, and Thomas Gabriel in 1997 with the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility. All three (3) complaints were dismissed.

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 1994 a former client, Edward D. Fuqua, filed a lawsuit against me bearing docket number 74CC4-1994-CV-671 in the Circuit Court for Robertson County, Tennessee. The lawsuit arose out of a divorce action wherein the Court of Appeals vacated the judgment of the trial court and dismissed the case due to the wife's attorney failing to attach the oath to the complaint for divorce bearing his client's signature. Since Mr. Fuqua obtained from the Court of Appeals the relief he was seeking and in consideration of my agreement to waive the balance owed for attorney fees the case was dismissed.

I located a few cases that were filed in General Sessions Court in Robertson County, Tennessee naming me as the plaintiff for collection of attorney fees for legal services rendered to former clients. All these cases have been resolved and are several years old. These cases are as follows:

Jeff K. Walker vs Yvonne Earls Docket #74GS1-2001-CV-455
Jeff K. Walker vs John Tennpenny Docket #74GS1-1994-CV-604
Jeff K. Walker vs Carl A. Jones Docket #74GS1-2001-CV-890
Jeff K. Walker vs Barry Haas Docket #74GS1-2001-CV-895
Jeff K. Walker vs Joshua D. Hooper Docket #74GS1-2001-CV-446
Jeff K. Walker vs David C. Tucker Docket #74GS1-2001-CV-891
Jeff K. Walker vs Donald Graef Docket #74GS1-2007-CV-950

In 2013 I was a party to a divorce action styled *Jeffery Keith Walker vs Elise Wright Walker*, bearing docket number MCCHCV D1 12-505, in the Chancery Court for Robertson County, Tennessee. The divorce was granted on the grounds of irreconcilable differences and all issues were resolved by agreement.

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.

2016 to the present: Board of Directors, Robertson County Recovery Court Foundation
First United Methodist Church of Springfield, Tennessee
Springfield Chamber of Commerce
University of Tennessee T Club
Tennessee Golf Association

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.

Not Applicable.

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.

Robertson County Bar Association (1986 – present)
Tennessee Bar Association (1986 – present)
Tennessee Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (2013 – present)
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (2000 – 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.

Robertson County Reader’s Choice Awards - Voted Best Attorney

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)*

I am applying to be a Circuit Court judge for the opportunity to serve my community in a different way after many years of practicing law. If appointed, I will use my experience, knowledge, and abilities in dealing with the public for the benefit of the court.

I have been an attorney for over 36 years. I have handled cases in most areas of the law where the circuit court has jurisdiction, including criminal law and domestic relations, which, from my understanding, will mainly be heard in this court. I am prepared to assume this role.

Finally, as an attorney, I have always dealt with the public. The position of circuit judge will allow me to continue to be involved with the citizens of my community.

I am ready to assume the position of circuit judge. If given the opportunity, I will do so with dedication, honesty, and integrity.

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 Circuit Court, Part VI Judge position in the 19th Judicial District, which is comprised of Montgomery and Robertson Counties. There are presently five Circuit Court Judges and one Chancellor. The Circuit Court has general jurisdiction, including jurisdiction over criminal cases.

In the event I am appointed, I will strive to have a positive impact. I have a good relationship with all the current judges and will work with them well. I will use my experience to make sound judgments, promote an environment of honesty and fairness, and be dedicated to upholding the integrity of the legal system. I will be prepared and consider all the evidence before making decisions in any given case. I will treat those appearing before the court with respect.

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)*

As a judge I will uphold the law even if I disagree with its substance. As an attorney and officer of the court, it has always been my practice to do so as well.

I have encountered many situations in my career as an attorney where I explain the law that applies, and the client expresses their dissatisfaction with it. The client wants to make decisions based on what he or she thinks the law should be and what they think is fair, instead of following the law that exists. In that situation, my role as their attorney is to get my client to acknowledge the law as written and to deal with their situation within the confines of it, not as they subjectively believe the law should have been drafted.

As a judge I will follow and respect the law irrespective of my personal views. I will defend the constitution, seek justice, and do so with impartiality.

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.

<p>A. Judge Joel W. Perry Robertson County General Sessions Court Judge [REDACTED] Springfield, TN 37172 [REDACTED]</p>
<p>B. Stuart Smith Senior Vice President Morgan Stanley SWS Group [REDACTED] Nashville, TN 37205 [REDACTED]</p>
<p>C. James D. Kay, Jr., Attorney Kay, Griffin, Evans PLLC [REDACTED] Nashville, TN 37201 [REDACTED]</p>
<p>D. Ronnie Hollingsworth Former President of Hollingsworth Oil [REDACTED] Springfield, TN 37172 [REDACTED]</p>
<p>E. Sabi 'DOC' Kumar Tennessee State Representative 66th Legislative District [REDACTED] Nashville, TN 37243 [REDACTED]</p>

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] CIRCUIT COURT, DIVISION VI 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 24, 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.

Jeffery Keith Walker
Type or Print Name

Jeffery Keith Walker
Signature

MAY 24, 2023
Date

012287
BPR #

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

Not Applicable
