

Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission
Application for Nomination to Judicial Office

04/15/16

Name: Thomas J. Dancison, Jr.

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Home Address: [REDACTED]
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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 word processing 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 word processing 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. Submit by the noon deadline date an original (unbound) completed application (with ink signature) to the Administrative Office of the Courts.** In addition, submit a digital copy with electronic or scanned signature via email to debra.hayes@tncourts.gov, or via another digital storage device such as flash drive or CD.

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

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND WORK EXPERIENCE

1. State your present employment.

Self-employed.

“Of Counsel” with Harwell and Plant Attorneys at Law, Lawrenceburg, TN

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

2007. BPR 026100

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.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 1995 PA 75984

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).

Never.

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).

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THE 22ND JUDICIAL DISTRICT, CHILD SUPPORT DIVISION, Assistant District Attorney General (January 2011 through September 2014)

- I created the **F.R.I.E.N.D.S. Program** (Focus Resources on Intervention and Employment Needs to Develop Success) for the Child Support Division. This Program had a 66% success rate in helping parents obtain employment to pay their child support obligations. With ZERO (\$0.00) TAXPAYER DOLLARS, the Program utilized existing community resources to achieve success for parents. **This program significantly reduced child support contempt recidivism rates in the District.**

- In 2013, I was elected by the members of the Child Support Division of the District Attorney Generals Conference to serve as Vice-President of the Steering Committee of the Child Support Section.

- Between January 2011 and July 31, 2014 (first month to ever break 92%), I increased the IV-D Performance Measure for “Cases With Orders” from a low of 74% as of December 31, 2010 to an all-time high measure of 92.05% for the period ending July 31, 2014. This increase of nearly 20 percentage points was obtained in a little over three and a half years. (NOTE: for the 3 year period prior to my appointment, from 2008 through 2010, the average IV-D Performance Measure for “Cases With Orders” for the preceding 30 months before I took charge was 74.50%)

- By utilizing existing laws--that prior to my appointment went completely ignored and unused by prior assistant district attorney generals—I collected over NINETY-FIVE THOUSAND (\$95,000.00) Dollars in partial purge payments over an 11 month period between 2013 and 2014 by issuing 115 Attachments pursuant to §36-5-101(f)(2) of the Code.

- In addition to increasing the IV-D Performance Measure of “Cases With Orders,” I was directly involved and instrumental in increasing the “Collections on Current Support” to nearly 59% as of July 31, 2014.

- I more than DOUBLED the Performance Measure for “Collections on Arrears” from 25.39% in June 2011 to a high of 59.61% as of July 31, 2014 – an increase of 134% or \$919,691.00!

- My standard duties as Assistant District Attorney General included the preparation, approval, presentation, and trial of all paternity establishment, initial support establishment, support modification, and civil and criminal contempt proceedings in the counties of Giles, Lawrence and Wayne. In addition, I was responsible for the Maury County office in the event of any attorney conflicts or scheduling issues.

- The District Attorney General chose me to serve as the designated “Conflict Attorney” for the 17th Judicial District that is comprised of the counties of Marshall, Bedford, Lincoln and

Moore Counties.

- As the senior child support District Attorney General for the 22nd Judicial District, I was ultimately responsible for the management of a child support open caseload that was in excess of EIGHT THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED (8,700) CASES as of July 31, 2014.

- In addition to serving on the Steering Committee for Child Support, I presented a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) course entitled "A.D.A. Best Practices" at the 2013 District Attorney Generals Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

SOLO PRACTITIONER (1995 through January 2011; September 1, 2014 to present)

- My legal career began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where I established a small law practice immediately upon receipt of my license.

- For the period of 1995 until the latter half of 2007, I practiced primarily in Pennsylvania as a sole practitioner.

- I was appointed by The Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania to serve as the chairman of a three (3) member boundary dispute commission that was tasked with investigating and making a recommendation to the Court regarding the legal land boundary between the Municipality of Penn Hills and Wilkins Township. As chairman, I was responsible for scheduling and conducting public hearings in both municipalities to take evidence regarding each municipality's respective position. Then, along with the other members of the commission who were not attorneys, but rather engineers, I engaged in additional discovery so as to be able to render a thorough opinion on the issue. Finally, I authored the formal report that was presented to the presiding judge of the trial court that was adopted by the trial court, and affirmed on appeal, as the legal physical land boundary between the two respective communities.

- From approximately 1995 until coming to Tennessee, I served regularly as an arbitrator in the Arbitration Section of the Civil Division of the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. For the first five years of participation on the panels, I served as one of the three members of a given panel and would jointly hear, question, and render a verdict on a variety of civil actions ranging from landlord-tenant de novo appeals from the Magisterial District Courts to tort claims and contract actions in which the amount in controversy was under \$25,000.00. On occasion, as a "member" of the panel, I would dissent to the proposed recommendation of the board, and my dissent would be noted on the record. After five (5) years of practice, I was regularly appointed to serve as the "Chairman" of the three member panels and in that capacity, I was the attorney who ruled on all evidentiary issues during the hearings and presided over the course and conduct of the trial.

- Because much of my practice was domestic in nature, and because I was most often in the courthouse, I was regularly asked by the presiding judge on any given day to "fill in" and assist with the representation of indigent parties during contempt proceedings.

- I volunteered and actively participated in both the Protection From Abuse (PFA) pro bono program, and the Pro Se Motions program administered through the Family Division of the

Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. During the course of my tenure, I represented both plaintiffs and defendants in PFA actions, and helped numerous parties with the preparation of pro se motions that were presented in Family Division for issues pertaining to divorce, custody, and child support.

- On at least one occasion, I was appointed by the trial judge to serve as a guardian ad litem for a minor child in a custody case that was particularly controversial.

- As a general practitioner, I handled a wide variety of civil cases and minor criminal cases. My civil caseload consisted of domestic, landlord-tenant, wills and estates, contracts, and real estate cases. On the criminal side, I mainly focused on D.U.I., misdemeanor and summary offenses.

- In late 2007, I began the transition of my practice from Pennsylvania to Tennessee.

- Because I relocated to a more rural area, and because I was starting my practice from scratch, I found that my caseload consisted mainly of domestic, landlord-tenant, wills and estates, contracts, and real estate cases.

DANCISON PROPERTIES, LLC.

I serve in the capacity of the Vice President and Chief Counsel for this business which is engaged in primarily residential apartment units, but with a few commercial units as well. At one time, the company owned 4 properties with 15 units.

For nearly 18 years, I have been responsible for creating and executing all lease agreements for the company. In addition, I have prosecuted all eviction proceedings for the company that were conducted before the Magisterial District Courts and the Courts of Common Pleas. All contracts between renovation and service contractors are negotiated by me personally.

In addition to the legal side of the business, I coordinated the advertising and marketing strategy for the company. I have experience with on-line, print, and personal marketing and advertising practices for the rental business.

While many would think that the title of vice president and chief counsel sound “white collar” in nature, the truth of the matter be told is that the vice president title is more of a “sweat equity” position. The vice presidency at Dancison Properties is more akin to that of the proverbial “chief clerk and bottle washer” – or in our company’s case: carpenter, electrician, plumber, custodian, roofer, window washer, snow crewman, laborer and maintenance man. I have painted walls and removed trash, collected rent and hung dry wall, cleaned carpets and tarred roofs, and can truthfully say that I know the property rental business from all aspects.

However, as seemingly un-glamorous as my duties may be, this company helps to provide food for my family, and reminds me on a daily basis to appreciate my legal education, and to respect those who toil daily to keep buildings like mine operating, and companies moving forward. Most people in the 22nd Judicial District are hard-working, salt-of-the-earth people, who need to have a judge who can identify with their needs and concerns. A judge who personally knows the

tire of physical labor, and who can distinguish between those who willfully fail to comply with orders because they are lazy, and those who cannot satisfy certain financial penalties in a specified period simply because the money is not yet available. As a chancellor in equity, I will be a judge who will take into consideration the whole person in rendering any decision, as permitted under the 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.

Domestic Law (Divorce, Custody, Child Support) - approx. 60% +/- of caseload; practice before the Juvenile and Chancery Court bench primarily; in addition to caseload in the 22nd Judicial District, I also handle cases in the 17th and 21st Judicial Districts.

Criminal Law -- approx. 30% of caseload; practice before the General Session and Circuit Courts of the 22nd Judicial District.

Civil Law (estates, contracts, landlord tenant) – approx. 10% of caseload.

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.

Quite literally from the first day that I was sworn in as an attorney, I have been in the courtroom. Most often, the nature of the proceedings has been directly before the trial court judges of the Chancery, Juvenile, and Circuit Courts in Tennessee, and the Civil, Criminal, Family and Orphans' Court Divisions in Pennsylvania. Because I was a solo practitioner, I was responsible for EVERY aspect of the cases that I was handling. I met individually with each client to evaluate the case, researched the applicable law, drafted and typed every pleading, filed and served every action, conducted negotiations with the opposing parties, and--depending upon the results of my discussions with opposing counsel--either drafted settlement agreements or moved the case to trial. Whenever a case was set for trial, I prepared all discovery motions and conducted all depositions. Because I was a solo practitioner, I did not have the luxury of a paralegal or clerk or secretary to conduct research or type for me, and there was never a "second chair" at any of my trials. I regularly appeared in court to argue motions before the trial judges--sometimes on a daily basis because in Pennsylvania, motions' court was conducted daily--not monthly.

Due largely to the volume of cases in Allegheny County, I was exposed to a court system that

was at times—overwhelmed; at other times—efficient and expeditious; and at other times—innovative and visionary. In all instances, the courts to which I was exposed early on were very rule oriented and time-sensitive by necessity so as to be able to maintain some semblance of order in a hectic and potentially chaotic environment. I learned quickly through the pre-trial process with which I had to navigate, how to present a case to a judge in a very succinct manner and how to quickly summarize the issues in controversy during mandatory pre-trial conferences and judicial conciliations. The importance of fair and accurate discovery, narrowing of issues, timely submission of pre-trial documents, and adherence to courtroom etiquette were--and remain--essential to have a well-run court, and parameters upon which I will rely to conduct court.

In my domestic relations practice (which was the largest part of my private practice) I quickly came to realize that there needed to be more to law than simply a memorization of the Divorce Code if families were to be treated in a fair and compassionate manner, and their problems were to be resolved in an equitable and humane way. I saw my role as not only an advocate, but also, and sometimes more importantly, as a referee or the voice of reason. More important than the billable hour that I charged was what I told each client was their own “personal and emotional billable hour.” As a client’s attorney I always sought to help them find the most cost-effective and expeditious manner to get through their domestic issues, while at the same time protecting and safeguarding their emotional well-being. I have prepared divorce and custody complaints, motions for contempt and special relief, equitable distribution orders and parenting plans, negotiated settlements and tried cases before the court. From the filing of pleadings with the clerks, to ultimately arguing cases before the appellate court, I have been exposed to every facet of domestic and civil law.

Along with my domestic practice, I had a healthy amount of exposure to real estate matters, including the preparation of deeds and sales agreements, title searches, and property tax assessment appeals. I worked closely with property appraisal specialists and homeowners to argue many cases before both the Allegheny County Board of Property Tax Assessment and Appeals, and the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County to secure for homeowners a fair and just valuation of their properties.

I believe that I can bring an innovative approach to the domestic and civil trial processes that will lead to more cases being resolved without the need for a trial, and for those that do go to trial, to have them heard in a manner that is both fair and expeditious. For nearly four (4) years I have worked in what can be termed the largest firm in the 22nd Judicial District, having a total caseload of over 8,700 open cases. I personally managed the day-to-day caseload for the majority of the counties of the District, and have been successful in that I improved the efficiency of the office, increased the office’s IV-D Performance Measures, shortened wait times for hearings, and instituted courtroom practices and schedules that have assisted attorneys and their clients. As an assistant district attorney general who prosecuted literally hundreds of contempt cases, my motto was that I was “Firm but Fair.”

On a daily basis over four (4) years, I served throughout the 22nd Judicial District and worked closely with the elected and appointed clerks and masters, as well as with the office staffs, to promote a child support system that is well-run and efficient. I worked with the various offices

within the courthouses--from the clerks' offices to the sheriffs' departments—to enact courtroom procedures that best utilized the available staff, recognized the limitations imposed by certain personnel policies, and kept the courtrooms running smoothly. The importance of the size of the daily docket was addressed by me upon taking my post, with a constant emphasis and attention being placed upon the size of dockets so that the greatest number of citizens could be served on any given date and time, while at the same time ensuring that all people had adequate time for their concerns to be heard.

I was the first Assistant District Attorney General to regularly and routinely schedule “no judge” days for the consideration of new petitions to establish paternity and petitions to set support, as well as for modification petitions. By having morning and afternoon time slots that were limited to a set number of cases in the morning and afternoon, I was able to give every family the time needed to explain to them their rights under the law, the state’s role and expectations throughout the proceedings, and to discuss their concerns so that they could truly believe that justice was served. My methods were particularly successful in obtaining consent orders that were fair and reasonable under the law. To the extent that consent orders were not reached, judicial efficiency was maintained in that I was able to use the “no judge” days in an effort to narrow the issues, and thereby schedule hearings before a trial judge or magistrate on the earliest available dates and times. I can say with complete honesty and certainty that the Child Support Division of the 22nd Judicial District had never run as effectively and efficiently as it did under my control.

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

In the case of *Marcucci v. Miller*, PA Superior Court 1570 WDA 2000, I successfully argued before the Pennsylvania Superior Court that the appointment of independent counsel to represent a child’s interests in a custody dispute was not necessary. This ruling successfully reversed a trial court order that appointed a guardian ad litem and sought to have my client in contempt for failing to pay the guardian’s fees.

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

Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania Arbitration Section (Arbitrator and Board Chairman) From 1995 until coming to Tennessee full time in 2007, I actively participated as an arbitration board member, and later as a Chairman of various arbitration panels in the Arbitration Section of the Civil Division of the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania at Pittsburgh. For the first 5 years of practice, I was permitted to serve as one of the three (3) member boards of arbitration. An arbitration panel conducted hearings and rendered recommendations on all types of civil cases including: contract disputes, personal injury claims, landlord-tenant matters (evictions and damage claims), tort

claims, etc. The boards heard both de novo appeals from the magisterial district courts, and original causes of action in the civil division in which the amount in controversy was under \$25,000.00 and later \$35,000.00. The decisions that were rendered by the board were recommendations that would become final in a statutory number of days, unless a de novo appeal was filed to the trial court of the Civil Division. If no appeal was taken, the majority decision of the arbitration panel was final and binding upon the parties. As a board member, I had equal standing in any decision, and could dissent from a panel's decision if I so chose. Also, as a board member, I could be responsible for administering oaths and writing the final order/recommendation. Once I had five (5) years of experience as an attorney, I was regularly appointed to serve as the Chairman of the Board of Arbitrators. In the role of chairman, I was the board member who made evidentiary rulings that were binding on the parties. Evidentiary rulings were not subject to the majority rule of the board, but rather were made basically in the chairman's capacity as a sort of "presiding judge" of the arbitration panel.

Rule 31 Listed Civil and Family Mediator, Specially Trained in Domestic Violence Issues (2015 to present) To date, I have mediated primarily divorce and child custody cases for both pro se parties and represented people. I have had a respectable degree of success in helping parties resolve their cases without the need for trial. In my role as mediator, and as part of my resources, I bring legal documentation and forms for the parties to utilize immediately at the mediation site so that complete, court-ready documents are ready to be signed at the conclusion of the mediation process and forwarded to the judge for signature immediately following the mediation. In this manner, all parties and their attorneys can truly agree and state that the case was settled at mediation. Most important perhaps is the fact that I was personally tutored by the Honorable David Allen as a mediator and have gained invaluable information from his Honor that I utilize regularly in my mediation practice.

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

Circuit Court of the 22nd Judicial District of Tennessee; State of Tennessee Executive Order No. 34. Governor's Commission for Judicial Appointments 2014. Interviewed on October 15, 2014. Not chosen for submission to the governor at that time.

Circuit Court of the 22nd Judicial District of Tennessee; State of Tennessee Executive Order No. 34. Governor's Commission for Judicial Appointments February 2015. Not chosen for submission to the governor at that time.

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.

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF LAW, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Day Division, (1994) Juris Doctor

- Interned as the law clerk for the City of Pittsburgh Zoning Hearing Board
- Chosen as Teaching Assistant for 1st Year Legal Research and Writing Course
- Served as Student Assistant to the Associate Dean of the Law School
- Participated in the Trial Moot Court program
- Shalom Trial Moot Court Honor Society
- Elected as Student Senator
- Worked as a Student Assistant at the law library

St. FRANCIS UNIVERSITY, Loretto, Pennsylvania (1991) Bachelor of Arts; *Cum Laude Graduate of Honors Program, 3.6 QPA*; Departmental Honors in English Literature; Business Management Minor.

- Appointed as the First and Only Teaching Assistant to the Dean of Academic Affairs and of the St. Francis College Honors Program
- Elected as Student Senator
- Served as Advertising Chair of the Student Activities Organization
- Elected as the First Student Chairman of Student Affairs Committee of Faculty Senate
- Taught as a peer tutor for English Literature
- Acted in various stage productions
- Participated as a “Shakertown Conversationalist” with the Academic Vice President

PERSONAL INFORMATION

12. State your date of birth.

██████████ 1969

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

Approximately 11 years; purchased our home in November 2007.

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

Approximately 11 years; purchased our home in November 2007.

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

Giles 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.

I have not served in the US Military.

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.

Never.

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.

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.

Never.

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

Never.

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.

Kiwanis International, Lawrenceburg Chapter. (2011 to present)

Sacred heart Home and School Association (2010 to present; secretary since 2011)

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.

NEVER.

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.

Steering Committee of the Child Support Division, District Attorney Generals Conference. Vice President. (2013-2014)

Lawrence County Bar Association. (2012 to present)

Giles County Bar Association (2008 to present)

Allegheny County Bar Association. (1995 to 2007)

Matrimonial Inns of Court (Allegheny County chapter approx. 2002 to 2007)

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. However, the Office of the District Attorney General for the 22nd Judicial District Child Support Division did receive a number of performance related recommendations and honors while I served as Assistant District Attorney General. The awards themselves were either in the name of the elected District Attorney General or the Office itself, and not in my name per se.

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.

2001 Special Election for the Pennsylvania State House. Not elected. It must be noted that the special election time period only allowed this candidate less than 6 weeks to campaign for the

post between the date that the position became available to the date of the election.

ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS

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

After being in private practice for nearly twenty (20) years, plus nearly four (4) years of governmental service with the Office of the District Attorney General, for a total of twenty-four (24) years in the law, I believe that taking my talents, training, and ideas to the bench is a natural progression in my legal career. BUT MOST IMPORTANT (besides being the highest honor that I could receive) serving on the bench is a CIVIC DUTY that I owe to the State of Tennessee. I believe that Providence took me into the Office of the District Attorney General, and while there I have learned that there are people who I can serve and assist with my experience and training. There are new and novel approaches to the administration of justice that I alone can share with this District, and from which judges, attorneys, and litigants alike shall benefit. I have worked in private practice for nearly twenty years, but cherished my four year in public service the most. I want to return to public service again.

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)*

Circuit Court Judge for the 22nd Judicial District (Giles, Lawrence, Maury and Wayne Counties of middle-Tennessee). The district spans from the upscale and wealthy bedroom communities in northern Maury County to the rural and less affluent communities along the Alabama line. My selection would impact the court immediately. For 24 years, I have served and represented people at both ends of the socio-economic spectrum, and actually lived and worked in each type of community. Through my actual life experiences, I can identify and communicate effectively with people from across the economic and social spectrums. Coupled with my extensive courtroom and administrative experience, I will take the bench ready to resolve cases either through mediation, conciliation or through trial. I can offer to this District, new and alternative proven methods that could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the court and help curtail recidivism. Because of my rather intimate familiarity and dealings with the administrative offices within the courthouses, I would adopt the best practices from all of the counties and states in which I have served to achieve and maintain the high standards of justice and service that was exhibited by my predecessor and the current members of the bench

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. A judge—unlike a legislator—does not have the right to make ANY law. Only in cases in which a law is “unconstitutional” may a judge refuse to uphold a law. Even in unconstitutional

situations, the judge is still upholding the law—that law being the state or federal constitutions. However, in cases in which a law is merely “disagreeable” to the judge, or unpopular with the public, there is NO CHOICE for a judge but to UPHOLD THE LAW NONETHELESS! It is the function of the legislature to change bad or unpopular laws—not the judiciary. I am seeking to be appointed to be a JUDGE of the Circuit Court of the 22nd Judicial District—NOT the state representative or state senator from the District.

Every day as Assistant District Attorney General I applied the child support guidelines that are based on gross income, rather than net income, and which do not give 100% credit to a Respondent for other child support cases for which they are paying. I personally prefer a support calculation that utilizes net incomes and gives 100% credit for additional cases, but that is not the law. I therefore followed the law as it exists, and voiced my suggested changes through the Steering Committee of the District Attorney Generals Conference and to DHS directly at administrative meetings. The proof of my adherence to the law I believe is evidenced through the IV-D performance measures that show a steady increase from January 2011 through August 2014 in cases with orders, collections on arrears, and collections on current support. Were I not following the law, I do not believe that my orders would have been confirmed by the circuit court judges of this District.

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. The Honorable S. Louis Farino, Judge of the Civil Division, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania [REDACTED]

B. Paul B. Plant, Esq., Attorney at Law; P.O. Box 399, Lawrenceburg, TN 38464 [REDACTED]

C. William J. Eledge, Esq., Attorney at Law; P.O. Box 692, Lawrenceburg, TN 38464 [REDACTED]

D. Dr. Scott Benefield, MD Lawrenceburg, TN 38464, [REDACTED]

E. Judy McDonald, Co-President of Wayne County Helping Hands; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Waynesboro, TN 38485 [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 Circuit Court of the 22nd 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: August 28, 2018.


Signature

When completed, return this questionnaire to Debbie Hayes, 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.

Thomas J. Dancison, Jr.

Type or Print Name

Thomas J. Dancison, Jr.

Signature

Date
TN 026100

BPR #

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

Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania (PA ID#75984)

