**2016 North Carolina General Election Candidate Questionnaire**

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**Years lived in the district:** 40 years

**Questions:**

1. What inspired you to run for the North Carolina Court of Appeals and if elected what do you want your legacy to be after you leave?

Our courts need judges who are experienced and who will be fair and impartial. I possess the experience our courts need. The NC Court of Appeals primarily reviews cases that have been appealed from the trial courts of North Carolina. For 10 years as District Court Judge in Wake County, I have presided over thousands of the types of cases heard by the Court of Appeals. Only 3 of the 15 judges have judicial trial court experience prior to serving on the Court. I have been certified as a Family Court and Juvenile Court Judge and have presided over countless criminal and child support matters. I am running because I want to add my 10 years of judicial experience to the Court of Appeals.

2. In your opinion what is the biggest issue on the minds of North Carolinians right now and how do you believe you could have the biggest impact?

Currently, the inability of law­makers and judges to reach common sense and legal conclusions is a significant issue for most North Carolinians. Each election cycle, those running for office attempt to ascribe upon citizens what their biggest issues and concerns are. Once the election is over, most North Carolinians just desire to be safe and secure so that

they are able to have progress for themselves or their families. Often, the issue that they see as the barrier to them reaching the goals for their families and themselves are the people to whom they look to for solutions ­ the elected officials.

When families want jobs, they listen to “politicians” debate how to create jobs. Most citizens, however, rarely see the results of this debate offer significant or obvious change. Families want to be safe from domestic or international terrorism. Usually, they hear the debate rest upon political lines without without significant common ground being found to make progress towards increased safely. Voters want to believe that the law that are created are fair and just. We now see cases regularly being overturned or support, often with predictable outcomes based on party affiliation of the judge or the person who appointed her/him.

It is easy to find the problems. Most North Carolinians want people who will find solutions that will allow their families to progress. So, I would offer that most people are not overwhelmingly consumed by the oft stated issues such as jobs, schools, guns, bathrooms, or terrorism. Each of these is vitally important. Citizens greatly desire the people to make some great or small progress in resolving these issues. This is the most significant issue of North Carolinians.

3. What policy areas are the most important to you and if elected what changes would you make?

As a judge on the NC Court of Appeals, I would not be in a position to make policy changes. In fact, the role of a judge is to not be influenced by personal opinions about policy. Rather, it is the role of a judge to apply the relevant statutory and case law and to follow the Constitution when deciding cases.

Although judges should not advocate for policy changes, it is fine to share my observations from my time as a judge. It is through the sharing of information that I have found that being a judge allows the opportunity to have a role in certain issues while off the bench. For instance, my position as a judge has allowed me to work to establish a juvenile deferral program for Wake County students who have committed criminal offenses. My position has allowed me to work on the Wake County Youth Thrive Board to enhance programming for young people in Wake County. Through my position as a judge, I have been able to mentor, motivate, and engage with countless young people in an effort to point them in the right direction.

4. As a large community organization we don’t always agree with each other on the best way to accomplish many of our projects, but we always work together to get the job done. In what way do you believe you will be able to work together with members of the opposite party to work together?

For 10 years, I have not made any decision based on my political affiliation. I have not decided who has custody of a child because of a political belief. When deciding whether someone committed an act of domestic violence or how much someone should receive to put food on the table, politics has not influenced my decision making.

On the Court of Appeals, there is an opportunity to work with the other judges who may hold a different opinion that may or may not be based on political influence. Even when there may be a difference of opinion regarding a case, choosing to have a more narrow opinion to reach a common goal is appropriate. Occasionally, it may be necessary to respectfully write a dissenting opinion to maintain my view. This will allow all parties in a case to understand that their side was heard. It does not, however, require a combative response to the opinions of the other judges.

5. Just for fun: North Carolina doesn’t have an “official State dessert”, but if we did what would you want it to be?

As someone who grew up picking NC strawberries and regularly eating pound cake at church events and cookouts, I believe Strawberry Shortcake should be our official desert. With banana pudding as a close runner­up.