

**Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission**  
***Application for Nomination to Judicial Office***

04/15/16

Name: Charles Gordon Ward

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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](http://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](mailto: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.

Charles Gordon 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.

1991; BPR No: 015070

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; BPR No.: 015070; Date of Licensure: 1991; License is active.

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).

I have been involved in hundreds of domestic relations trials over my twenty-seven (27) year career. Further, I have been involved in numerous criminal jury trials and civil jury trials. I was a police officer while I completed law school in Murfreesboro, 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.

My practice is comprised of approximately 50% domestic relations and civil matters and 50% criminal defense matters.

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 the lead attorney in hundreds, if not thousands, of civil trials, to include both domestic and family law, numerous administrative hearings and hundreds of criminal cases, to include First Degree Murder. I have successfully represented clients in appellate cases as well, specifically in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

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

I was the lead attorney in a thirty-six (36) year-old cold case murder trial that proved to be the most challenging and difficult case in my career thus far.

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

My professional experience has provided me with a unique perspective in dealing with people in the worst situations of their lives. Further, maintaining a full-time job while completing law school made me work harder to achieve what I have achieved throughout my career. I served as Administrative Judge for the Walking Horse Owners Association for approximately eight (8) years. This position involved hearing hundreds of cases involving abuse of walking horses. Despite my personal objections to any form of animal abuse, I strived to, and believe I succeeded, in remaining fair and impartial throughout these difficult hearings.

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.

1984-Middle Tennessee State University, BS in Criminal Justice and Psychology;

1985-I was a graduate student at Middle Tennessee University for one (1) year, but did not complete the graduate program due to my acceptance into law school; and

1991-Nashville School of Law, Doctor of Jurisprudence.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

12. State your date of birth.

██████████ 1960.

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

I have lived in Tennessee my entire life.

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

I have lived in Rutherford County since 1979.

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

Rutherford 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.

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.

No.

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.

Only one (1) that I recall. I do not know what year it was, but it was an appointed criminal case out of Woodbury, Tennessee and it was dismissed by the Board of Professional Responsibility.

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.

I am a member of Belle Aire Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

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.

Rutherford/Cannon County 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.

I was a candidate for the District Attorney General for Rutherford County approximately five (5) years ago but was defeated in that election.

**ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

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

I have practiced law in this county since 1991 and have seen our county grow tremendously. I feel that my experience as a trial attorney over the last twenty-seven (27) years allows me to fairly and adequately look at each case and render a fair opinion based on the law. I believe that my background as a police officer, an attorney and a father has given me the patience and guidance to be fair and to treat everyone the same, regardless of their situation. I feel its important to follow the law, but to be fair to everyone that comes before me, whether they are rich or poor. I came from poverty and understand that everyone that comes before the Court should be treated with dignity regardless of the outcome of the case.

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 current open Circuit Court Judge position that encompasses Rutherford and Cannon Counties. The population of both counties continues to skyrocket, causing our dockets to be ever increasing. If I were fortunate enough to be selected, I would attempt to resolve cases by trial or settlement as quickly as possible. I will be available by phone, as I have seen that this helps resolve issues that come up in various matters. My goal is to be here daily working towards completing cases timely. I do not claim to know it all and will familiarize myself with any case on my docket and the laws and rules that apply to those cases. Preparation is the key to being ready for every case, and I will do my best to honor this daily.

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)*

It is not the purpose of a judge to make the law, but to enforce it as written and to follow the rules set forth as written, even if I may not agree with it. I will uphold the law as I would have sworn to do so. As a lawyer, I have represented several children who have been "indicated"

under the rules of The Department of Children's Services for doing something considered sexually inappropriate. Regardless of the severity of the incident, this indication follows these young children for the rest of their lives. I do not like these laws, but as a judge would be bound by my position to follow the statutes and regulations that uphold these rules.

**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. Howard Wilson, Chancellor. 6241 Browns Mill Road, Lascassas, TN 37085, [REDACTED]

B. Trey McFarlin, Esquire. 12 Public Square North, Murfreesboro, TN 37130, [REDACTED]

C. Susan Bradley. Room 415 Business and Aerospace Building, MTSU, P.O. Box 50, Murfreesboro, TN 37132, [REDACTED]

D. Mike Bivins, 1723 Claire Court, Murfreesboro, TN 37129, [REDACTED]

E. Debbie Holman, 3310 Valley Wood Cove, Murfreesboro, TN 37129, [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] Circuit Court of the 16<sup>th</sup> 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: July 6, 2018.

  
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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.

Charles Gordon Ward  
Type or Print Name

  
Signature

July 6, 2018  
Date

015070  
BPR #

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

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