

JUDGE STEVE STAFFORD

Recommendation: RETAIN

Commission Vote: 9 FOR RETENTION • 0 FOR REPLACEMENT

Legal Education and Experience

Judge Steve Stafford received a law degree from the Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in 1983. Upon completing law school, Judge Stafford engaged in the private practice of law in from 1983 until 1993. In 1988, Judge Stafford was elected to serve as the part time judge of the Dyersburg Municipal Court, exercising both municipal and general sessions jurisdictions. In 1993, Judge Stafford was appointed Chancellor for the 29th Judicial District and was reelected in 1998 and 2006. Judge Stafford was appointed by the Governor to the Court of Appeals in June 2008, and was elected in August, 2008.

Service to the Profession

Judge Stafford is a Fellow of the Tennessee Bar Foundation and a member of the Dyer County and Tennessee Bar Associations. He served as president of the Dyer County Bar Association in 1987-1988. Judge Stafford served as presiding judge of the Court of the Judiciary from 2004 until 2007. He has also served as president of the Tennessee Judicial Conference. In 2007, Judge Stafford was selected Judge of the Year by the Tennessee Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates. Judge Stafford is a frequent lecturer on legal topics to court clerks, lawyers, and judges, with a majority of

his lectures focusing on ethics, and is a member of the American Inns of Court.

Survey Results and Interview

Judge Stafford rated highly in some areas, with others showing some room for improvement. His professional demeanor and collegial nature were noted; however his written opinions received somewhat lower ratings from appellate judges and attorneys. During his interview, Judge Stafford regarded the results of the survey as a useful tool for self-improvement. He particularly expressed his intentions to use the results of the appellate courts' evaluations of his work to improve the overall quality of his opinions.

Recommendation

The Commission unanimously recommends Judge J. Steven Stafford be retained on the Tennessee Court of Appeals.

Judge Stafford's Response

I want to thank the members of the Commission for their hard work and thoughtful consideration. I respect the evaluation process and intend to use the information gleaned from this process to enhance my effectiveness and performance as an appellate judge in the future.