

Tennessee Trial Court Vacancy Commission
Application for Nomination to Judicial Office
3/4/26

Name: Meghan Fowler

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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 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 currently serve as an Assistant United States Attorney assigned to the Homeland Security Task Force with the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Tennessee in Memphis. In this role, I prosecute complex federal criminal matters involving violent crime, gang activity, narcotics trafficking, and related offenses. My responsibilities include evaluating investigations, presenting matters to the grand jury, litigating detention hearings and motions, trying cases before juries, and collaborating with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to ensure the fair administration of justice.

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

2009, 028297

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.

I am licensed to practice law in Tennessee and Mississippi (106588) and am also admitted to practice before the United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee. My licenses are currently 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).

Since earning my Juris Doctor from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 2009, I have devoted my legal career almost exclusively to public service and criminal litigation.

I began my career as an Assistant District Attorney for Tennessee's 30th Judicial District, where I served for more than thirteen years prosecuting cases ranging from misdemeanors to violent felony offenses. During that time, I managed extensive criminal dockets, tried more than fifty jury trials, litigated hundreds of motions and hearings, advised law enforcement agencies, supervised interns, and mentored new prosecutors. From 2017 until 2021, I instructed trial advocacy for the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference.

After a change in administrations in 2022, I entered private practice with Black, McLaren, Ryland, Jones & Griffie, where I represented clients in both civil and criminal litigation, including federal criminal matters and civil rights litigation under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

I subsequently served as an Assistant District Attorney for Mississippi's 23rd Judicial Circuit, prosecuting felony offenses through trial and sentencing while also training junior prosecutors.

In December 2023, I was appointed as a Special Prosecutor Pro Tem for the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference. In that role, I prosecuted cases statewide when local prosecutors were ethically conflicted, handling matters that included homicide, violent crime, financial fraud, and post-conviction litigation. During this time, I also instructed trial advocacy at the Tennessee District Attorneys General Trial College and provided legal research and guidance benefiting prosecutors throughout Tennessee.

I currently serve as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee assigned to the Homeland Security Task Force, prosecuting complex federal criminal cases involving gangs, narcotics trafficking, and other serious offenses. Throughout my career, I have remained committed to public service, ethical prosecution, and the fair administration of justice.

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 current practice consists entirely of federal criminal litigation.

One hundred percent of my current practice involves prosecuting complex violent crime, gang-related offenses, narcotics trafficking, firearms offenses, and other Homeland Security Task Force investigations. As part of that practice, roughly 60% of my practice consists of trial related matters including legal research, drafting motions and briefs, evidentiary analysis, and appellate-related issues arising during criminal litigation. The remaining 40% involves advising federal law enforcement agencies

during investigations, evaluating charging decisions, drafting search warrants and collaborating with state and local prosecutors on joint investigations.

My practice requires extensive courtroom advocacy, legal analysis, strategic decision-making, and collaboration with law enforcement throughout all phases of criminal prosecution.

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.

Throughout my career, I have practiced almost exclusively in trial courts at both the state and federal levels. For more than sixteen years, I have represented the United States, the State of Tennessee, and the State of Mississippi in criminal proceedings from investigation through trial, sentencing, and post-conviction litigation.

My experience includes arraignments, preliminary hearings, detention hearings, motion practice, evidentiary hearings, grand jury proceedings, jury trials, sentencing hearings, and post-conviction matters. I have litigated hundreds of contested hearings and have tried more than fifty jury trials involving offenses ranging from domestic violence and financial crimes to homicide, firearms offenses, gang activity, and narcotics trafficking.

As a prosecutor, I have practiced law in every jurisdiction in West Tennessee and some in Middle Tennessee as well as in Mississippi and federal court.

I have served as a defense attorney and as a prosecutor during my legal career.

In addition to courtroom litigation, I have experience in advising law enforcement during investigations, making charging decisions, researching complex legal issues, and preparing written motions and memoranda. I have also prepared legal research benefiting prosecutors statewide and for almost a decade, I have instructed trial advocacy for prosecutors across Tennessee.

Furthermore, I have experience in preparing suggested jury instructions in Tennessee, Mississippi, and now in federal court.

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

For the past sixteen years, my practice has encompassed a diverse range of criminal matters, from the most serious and complex cases in State court to the most mundane

class C misdemeanors in General Sessions court. I have represented the State of Tennessee in violent homicides and on the other end of the spectrum, I have prosecuted low level hunting law violations.

One of the most challenging cases I litigated involved the murder of Noah Ashene, where the defendant, Jesse Slade, stabbed a man while holding his two-year-old son. Prior to trial, the defendant pled guilty to life without parole to avoid the death penalty. *State v. Jesse Slade*.

Another significant case involved Antonio Turley, a defendant who had been on the run for ten years after attempting to murder someone. Despite the victim's passing from natural causes during the case's pendency, I was able to successfully prosecute the defendant and secure a life sentence. *State v. Antonio Turley*.

In a separate murder case, Robert Taylor was sentenced to over fifty years for the double homicide that occurred outside the Memphis Gentleman's Club. The complex details of this case served as the basis for one of the fact patterns used in the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference's Trial Advocacy course for the past eight years. *State v. Robert Taylor*.

While homicides and attempted homicides can be memorable, it's the other violent felony trials where the victims were living their ordinary lives and became crime victims, that stand out for me. For instance, in *State v. Romarcus Echols*, the defendant claimed that God instructed him to go to trial, even though he broke into his neighbor's home, tied him up and then left him there to die. In *State v. Terrell Hayes*, two Wendy's cashiers were working, closing for the night, only to become the victims of aggravated robbery. In *State v. Mario Walls*, the defendant picked the victim up from work, attacked her in the car and just left her to die on a street like trash. In *State v. Jeffrey Wilson*, the victim was sleeping in her own home when the defendant assaulted her. This case was difficult to litigate due to the "he said, she said" nature of the facts. Despite this, the jury found the defendant guilty of criminal attempt rape and sentenced him to 15 years in prison.

As for other significant litigation, I recently handled the *Donovan Daniel v. State of Tennessee* post-conviction petition. In this post-conviction petition the defendant alleged that he was entitled to reopen his original post-conviction petition because a new constitutional right had been created that was previously unavailable to him. The trial court granted the defendant's motion based on the *Tyshun Booker* case. However, the Court of Criminal Appeals reversed this ruling, primarily based on the arguments made and preserved at the trial court level.

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

In addition to my prosecutorial experience, I have served in private practice representing clients in both state and federal litigation, including civil rights actions

and federal criminal matters. This experience broadened my understanding of litigation from both the prosecution and defense perspectives and reinforced the importance of fairness, professionalism, and careful legal analysis.

Throughout my career, I have also served as a mentor and instructor for prosecutors, interns, and law enforcement officers. Teaching trial advocacy and helping develop future attorneys has strengthened my ability to communicate complex legal principles clearly and thoughtfully. I believe these experiences have prepared me to approach every matter with patience, impartiality, and respect for all participants in the judicial process.

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

Not applicable

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.

I earned my Juris Doctor from the University of Tennessee College of Law in May 2009. During law school, I completed internships with both the Tennessee Attorney General's Office and the Tennessee Sixth Judicial District Attorney's Office, where I gained practical experience in appellate advocacy, criminal prosecution, legal research, motion practice, and trial preparation. These experiences confirmed my commitment to a career in public service and criminal justice.

Prior to law school, I earned a Master of Science in Exercise and Sport Sciences from the University of Florida in May 2006. Graduate study strengthened my analytical skills, discipline, and ability to evaluate complex issues from multiple perspectives.

I also earned a Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sport Sciences, with a minor in French, from the University of Florida in May 2005. My undergraduate education developed the communication, leadership, and critical thinking skills that have served me throughout my legal career.

Each degree was completed successfully, and I did not leave any educational program prior to earning the applicable degree.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

12. State your date of birth.

1983

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

I have lived continuously in Tennessee for almost 20 years, since August of 2006.

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

I have lived continuously in Shelby County for almost 17 years, since August of 2009.

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

Shelby 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. You may wish to request a report from the appropriate supervisory authority (or authorities) for a complete history.

I am unaware of any formal complaints filed against me. I have never responded to any formal complaints filed against me.

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.

I have never been a party to any lawsuits.

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 the Memphis Jewish Community Center, a social organization in Memphis. My children attend day care here and as a result, my husband and I are active members in this social club/organization. We have been members of the Memphis Jewish Community Center since 2018. In 2024 and 2025, I served as room parent for my daughter's classroom.

I am also a member of the leadership honorary, Florida Blue Key. I was inducted into Blue Key in 2004 and have been member since induction. I am presently inactive but still interact with FBK members.

From 2021-2025, I was a member of a triathlon club where I paid dues and trained with coaches and other members as we endeavored to complete sprint triathlons, Olympic distance triathlons, Half-ironman triathlons and Ironman triathlons. During this time, I trained for and completed two half ironmans, escape from Alcatraz, and various other Olympic and sprint triathlons.

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.
- If so, list such organizations and describe the basis of the membership limitation.
 - 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.

I am a member of Alpha Delta Pi Sorority, an organization limited to female members. I have been a member since joining at the University of Florida in 2001. During college, I served as vice president of Panhellenic at UF. As an alumnae, I still write recommendations for women seeking admittance to ADPi.

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.

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS

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

On Wednesday, my daughters experienced a lockdown at their day camp because of a shooting 100 yards away. My oldest daughter silently hid in a bathroom stall for hours. This incident drives my pursuit of this judgeship. While this role marks a natural progression in my public service career, it is more personal. With over sixteen years of prosecution experience ranging from domestic violence and financial crimes to homicide, and narcotics trafficking, I have been fighting for a safe community. But it's not enough, my children were still exposed to gun violence. Therefore, I seek this position not just to serve my community but, most importantly, to protect the children. As a violent crime judge, I would hold offenders accountable, rehabilitate when possible, and impose appropriate punishment to protect this community. As a judge, I would bring integrity, preparation, humility, and a commitment to the fair application of the law.

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)*

This judgeship serves Shelby County, Tennessee, by presiding over violent crimes as defined by the Tennessee General Assembly. These cases significantly impact individuals, families, victims, defendants, and the community. Trial judges must decide legal issues, manage court proceedings efficiently, ensure fair treatment, and maintain public confidence in the judicial system.

With my courtroom experience in criminal litigation across state and federal courts, I am well prepared for this role. My background includes serving as a local prosecutor, Special Prosecutor Pro Tem, and Assistant United States Attorney, in every criminal courtroom in Shelby County, every judicial district in West Tennessee, courts in Middle and East Tennessee, as well as circuit court in Mississippi and US Federal Court. This diverse experience gives me unique insight into efficient docket management and judicial demeanor. My experience, professionalism, and commitment to fairness would allow me to contribute immediately, promoting efficiency, respect, and impartiality.

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)*

I believe in fundamental fairness and the rule of law regardless of personal feelings or views. In 2011, I was assigned to Criminal Court 9, before Judge Ward. One of my initial trial cases involved an assault on a police officer, set for trial by another prosecutor. During my preparation, it was clear that while the assault occurred, I couldn't meet the beyond a reasonable doubt standard. As a young prosecutor, I hesitated to raise this issue, because a senior ADA had already reviewed the case and set it for trial. I knew my oath required dismissal when I couldn't prove the case, irrespective of the victim's feelings, prior prosecutor actions, or my own beliefs. I dismissed the case, because the law mandated dismissal, regardless of my feelings about guilt.

In the same vein, the rule of law demands judges apply the law as enacted and interpreted by the higher courts, without personal bias or beliefs. A judge's oath demands impartiality. Just as a prosecutor, where my duty has never been to seek specific outcomes, only to pursue justice ethically. As a judge, I will do the same.

My past experiences underscore that public confidence in the legal system relies on judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys who faithfully apply the law, exercise sound judgment, and treat everyone with fairness, dignity, and respect. If appointed, I will uphold those responsibilities in every case before the Court.

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. D. Michael Dunavant- United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, [REDACTED]

B. Stephen Crump- Executive Director Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference, [REDACTED]

C. Betsy Wiseman- Member, Tennessee Inmate Disciplinary Oversight Board, [REDACTED]

D. Gray Bartlett- Attorney, Moskowitz, McGhee, Brown, Cohen, and Moore, [REDACTED]

E. Josh Davis- Sargeant MPD- ICAC, [REDACTED]

F. Greg Lotz- Corporate Real Estate Portfolio Manager- Barnhart, Crane, and Rigging (formerly Sr. VP of Development and Asset Management for the Carlisle Corporation), [REDACTED]

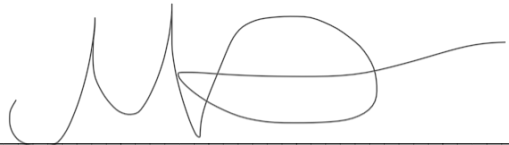
AFFIRMATION CONCERNING APPLICATION

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 Shelby County Violent Crime Criminal Court 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, 12, 2026.



Signature



TENNESSEE TRIAL COURT VACANCY COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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