

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

Name: Dewun R. Settle

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(including county)

Shelby County

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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.

Law Office of Dewun R. Settle

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

1992; 015258

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.

Not applicable

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).

Not applicable

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).

JUDICIAL & QUASI-JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

Deputy Divorce Referee, Shelby County Government 2022–Present

- Review divorce filings for statutory compliance and readiness for hearing.
- Provide judicial oversight ensuring proper posture for adjudication.

Clerk & Master, Chancery Court, Shelby County Government 2006–2011

- Keeper of records for all Chancery Court matters.
- Conducted tax sales.
- Served as Special Chancellor and Special Master, presiding over adoptions, breach of contract matters, divorces, contempt hearings, and other civil cases.

Judge Ad Hoc Appointments

- Shelby County General Sessions Criminal Court
- Shelby County General Sessions Civil Court
- City of Memphis

LEGAL EXPERIENCE**Law Office of Dewun R. Settle, Memphis, TN 2011–Present**

- Trial attorney focusing on Personal Injury, Wrongful Death, Criminal Defense (State & Federal), and Employment Matters.
- Conducted a significant number of jury trials in State and Federal courts.
- Extensive motion practice, trial preparation, and courtroom advocacy.

Law Office of Dewun R. Settle, Memphis, TN 2004–2006

- Criminal Defense, Wrongful Death, and Divorce litigation.
- Numerous jury trials and contested hearings.

Senior Partner / Managing Partner, Perkins, Johnson & Settle, Memphis, TN 2000–2004

- Managed firm operations, personnel, and payroll.
- Supervised trial attorneys.
- Led litigation teams in State and Federal Criminal matters, Civil litigation, Wrongful Death cases, and Divorce proceedings.

Adjunct Faculty, LeMoyne-Owen College, Criminal Justice Department 2004–2005

- Instructor for Constitutional Law.
- Developed syllabi, lesson plans, and examinations.

Law Office of Johnson & Settle, Memphis, TN 1996–2004

- Criminal Defense, Wrongful Death, and Divorce litigation.
- Numerous jury trials and contested hearings.

Law Office of Dewun R. Settle, Memphis, TN 1992–1996

- Criminal Defense, Wrongful Death, and Divorce litigation.
- Numerous jury trials and contested hearings.

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.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Family Law-30%
- Criminal Law (State & Federal)-40%
- Appellate Practice (Tennessee & Sixth Circuit)-10%
- Collections-5%
- Mediation (Rule 31 Listed Mediator)-5%
- Personal Injury-5%
- Real Estate Closings-5%

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.

Judge Ad Hoc Appointments

- Shelby County General Sessions Criminal Court
- Shelby County General Sessions Civil Court
- City of Memphis

Law Office of Dewun R. Settle, Memphis, TN 2011–Present

- Trial attorney focusing on Personal Injury, Wrongful Death, Criminal Defense (State & Federal), and Employment Matters, with over thirty years of experience.

- Conducted a significant number of jury trials in State and Federal courts.
- Extensive motion practice, trial preparation, and courtroom advocacy.

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

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Significant number of jury trials in State and Federal courts
- More than 30 years of courtroom experience
- Proven judicial temperament through multiple judicial appointments
- Extensive experience reviewing, evaluating, mediating, and adjudicating complex legal matters
- Strong administrative leadership in court operations
- Commitment to fairness, integrity, and public service

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

Not applicable

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.

Southern University Law Center, Baton Rouge, LA Juris Doctor, 1991

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, 1987

PERSONAL INFORMATION

12. State your date of birth.

1964

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

I was born and raised in TN and returned home after college and law school and have lived in the state of TN continuously since I began my practice in 1992.

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

I was born and raised in Shelby County and returned home after college and law school and have lived in Shelby County continuously since I began my practice in 1992.

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.

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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 filed a class-action lawsuit against Shelby County Headstart. The lawsuit consisted of over 200 employees. While I did receive the consent form from all other plaintiffs, I inadvertently included one individual in the lawsuit without having a consent form. She later filed a board complaint against me with the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility and I was disciplined.

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.

An IRS federal tax lien was instituted against me in 2024. I have since made payment arrangements and am making monthly installment payments.

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

Not applicable

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 was the plaintiff in a divorce proceeding that was filed in Shelby County Circuit Court, Memphis, TN, on November 01, 2016, under docket number CT-004426-16. The divorce was finalized on June 08, 2017.

I was named as a Defendant, in a personal tort claim and legal malpractice lawsuit, regarding a post-conviction filing, that was filed by a Pro Se plaintiff, Ronnie Henry, in Shelby County Circuit Court, Memphis, TN, on March 08, 2016, under docket number CT-000988-16. The lawsuit was dismissed on July 29, 2016.

I was named as a Defendant, as the Shelby County Chancery Court Clerk and Master, in an age

and race discrimination lawsuit that was filed by Cynthia Stovall, a former employee, in Shelby County Circuit Court, Memphis, TN, on May 04, 2012, under docket number CT-002025-12. The lawsuit was dismissed on August 03, 2012.

I was named as a Defendant, as a partner of Perkins, Johnson, and Settle, in a breach of contract lawsuit, for delinquent rent payments, that was filed by Pendelton & Associates, in Shelby County Circuit Court, Memphis, TN, on August 13, 2010, under docket number CT-003985-10. A judgment was granted and the case was administratively closed on August 15, 2013.

I was named as a Defendant, as the Shelby County Chancery Court Clerk and Master, in a lawsuit that was filed by ANK Properties, Inc., in Shelby County Chancery Court, Memphis, TN, on July 23, 2010, under docket number CH-10-1330; the plaintiffs were seeking monies to be released that were being held by Shelby County Chancery Court. The lawsuit was dismissed on May 27, 2011.

I was named as the Plaintiff, as the Shelby County Chancery Court Clerk and Master, in a lawsuit seeking additional employees, along with salaries and benefits for newly hired employees and current employees; the lawsuit was filed in Shelby County Circuit Court, Memphis, TN, on August 25, 2009, under docket number CT-004005-09. A Consent Order of Judgment was entered on November 01, 2010.

I was named as a Defendant in a claim that was filed by M. Stanley Shipp in Shelby County General Sessions Civil Court, Memphis, TN, on January 16, 2008, under docket number 1262344 after I represented him in Chancery Court. The case was dismissed in Chancery Court. Mr. Shipp then filed a lawsuit against me in Shelby County General Sessions Civil Court. The lawsuit was dismissed on June 24, 2008.

I was named as a Defendant regarding a breach of contract claim, that was filed by Curtis D. Johnson and Florence M. Johnson, in Shelby County General Sessions Civil Court, Memphis, TN, on August 07, 2007, under docket number 1230854. The lawsuit was dismissed on February 01, 2008.

I was the plaintiff in a divorce proceeding that was filed in Tipton County Court, TN, in November of 1991. The divorce was finalized.

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.

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

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.

I am and have been a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. since 1986. Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc. does not admit women. It is a fraternity focused on community service, scholarships, mentoring, and the development of men from all backgrounds.

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.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Tennessee Bar Association-1993-present
- Tennessee Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers-1996-present
- National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers-2004-present
- Memphis Bar Association-1998-present
- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated-1986-present
- Leadership Memphis-2010-present

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.

COMMITTEES, PANELS & HONORS

- Memphis Bar Fellow
- Criminal Justice Administration Federal Defender Panel

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.

ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS

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

My judicial philosophy in criminal law is grounded in the belief that a criminal court must protect both individual constitutional rights and the safety and stability of the community. These responsibilities are inseparable. A judge must ensure that every defendant receives due process, while also recognizing that victims and the public depend on the court to uphold the law, deter violence, and maintain order.

After more than thirty years practicing in Tennessee courts—including a significant number of jury trials in both State and Federal court—I have seen firsthand how crime affects victims, families, and neighborhoods. Victims come to court seeking acknowledgment, fairness, and closure. They deserve a judge who listens carefully, treats them with dignity, and ensures their rights are respected throughout the judicial process. A criminal court judge must be attentive to the trauma victim's experience and must ensure that proceedings do not compound that harm.

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 judgeship position in the Criminal Court of Shelby County, Tennessee, for the Thirtieth Judicial District at Memphis. This judgeship hears felony cases, to include murder, rape, abuse, and other serious felonious criminal charges. There is currently a total of nine judges on the bench. There is one vacancy in Division Nine, with another division to be added, Division XI. My selection would impact the court because with my over thirty years of experience as a criminal defense attorney and my extensive knowledge of the law, I will be postured to protect both individual constitutional rights and the safety and stability of the community. These responsibilities are inseparable. A judge must ensure that every defendant receives due process, while also recognizing that victims and the public depend on the court to uphold the law, deter violence, and maintain order.

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 will uphold the law even if I disagree with the substance of the law at issue. For example, I represented a client who was a prohibited person in possession of a handgun. He came in possession of the gun because he drove his friend to work. The gun belonged to his friend and unbeknownst to him, his friend left his gun in the car when he dropped him off at work. His

friend called him and asked him to take the gun out of the car and take it to his mother's house. As he was taking the gun into his friend's mother's house, another gentleman approached the house and began firing at my client, thinking my client was his friend. My client shot and killed the other gentleman.

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. Bishop Sidney P. Malone, pastor and founder of New Growth in Christ Christian Center,

B. Van Drayton, business owner of Justice Network,

C. Marc Willis, founder and president of Aye Leigh Projects, LLC,

D. Mark Allen, Attorney at Law and Compliance Officer for Texas A&M University,

E. Michael Scholl, Attorney at Law

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 [Thirtieth Judicial District at Memphis, in the 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: 7-13, 2026.


Signature