

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

1/17/23

Name: Susan "Joanne" Sheldon

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(including county) [REDACTED]

Home Phone: [REDACTED] Cellular Phone: [REDACTED]

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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](http://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.

**Tennessee 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney General's Office**

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

**2001 - 021186**

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 only licensed in the state of Tennessee with my number stated above, and the date of my licensure being April 25, 2001, and I am 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).

***TN 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney General's Office* *September 1, 2011 to present***  
Maintain current Cocke County Circuit Court caseload for prosecution of cases ranging from misdemeanors to First Degree Murder. Oversaw the Child Protective Investigation Team (CPIT) as a member of the District Attorney's Office from 2011 until 2017. The members of CPIT work together through a collaborative, inter-agency approach to ensure the best possible outcome for children who are victims of sexual abuse and severe physical abuse. Upon the implementation of the Vulnerable Adult Protective Investigative Team (VAPIT) on January 1, 2017, began oversight and leading all meetings for the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. VAPIT is a multi-disciplinary team appointed by the District Attorney, which includes Adult Protective Service, Law Enforcement Agencies, and other Agencies the District Attorney's Office chooses. In the 4<sup>th</sup> District additional members include CREVAA (Collaborative Response to Elderly and Vulnerable Adult Abuse), Long-Term Care Ombudsman, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation

TBI (TBI), and various other first responders including paid and volunteer Fire Departments. The purpose of VAPIT is to coordinate investigations of suspected instances of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult. From 2018-2023 lead Prosecutor of the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Elder Abuse Unit which consisted of prosecution of all cases relating to abuse, neglect, homicide and/or financial exploitation of elderly/vulnerable adults in Cocke, Grainger, Jefferson, and Sevier Counties until such time as the duties were divided amongst each office. Extensive experience in complex jury trials, pretrial litigation, Grand Jury duties, and White-Collar Crime prosecution based upon advanced financial training and undergraduate degree in accounting. Involved in various multidisciplinary teams and/or Coalitions for the purpose of protecting the elderly/vulnerable adults in Tennessee, in addition to on-going training throughout the state of Tennessee. Assisted in drafting the Tennessee Elderly and Vulnerable Adult Protection Act of 2018 as a member of the Elder Abuse Committee with the Tennessee District Attorney General Conference which was endorsed by the Conference and submitted/sponsored by both the Tennessee Senate and Tennessee House of Representatives resulting in new statutory laws for protecting the Elderly and Vulnerable Citizens of Tennessee. Continue to educate law enforcement, first responders, prosecutors, financial institutions, and the community in areas related to elder/vulnerable adult abuse, mandatory reporting, and domestic violence. As additional education related to clinical addiction and counseling progressed, critical insight relating to stigmatism, cultural diversity, and misinformation provided necessary guidance for incorporating sentencing alternatives in plea negotiations (*as opposed to straight prison where permissible and/or appropriate*) for individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs) and/or co-occurring disorders by incorporating participation in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Recovery Court, Tennessee Jail Chemical Addiction Program (TNJCAP), and/or the Tennessee Rural Opioid Compliance (TNROC) docket review to reduce substance abuse, crime, and recidivism.

***S. Joanne Sheldon, Attorney at Law***

***June 2003 to August 31, 2011***

Sole practitioner of law handling contested family law cases, estate planning and, primarily, criminal defense, during which time becoming “Death Qualified” by the Tennessee Supreme Court to serve as lead counsel in capital cases. Complex litigation in business practice relating to advanced accounting issues ranging from conversion to fraudulent inducement based upon inflated financial statements. In addition to criminal defense at the state level, practiced federal defense as a member of the Federal Defense Panel, being sworn in before the Eastern District of Tennessee, the United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and in person before the United States Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. by Chief Justice John G. Roberts. Appeared before numerous Municipal, General Sessions and Circuit Courts throughout Tennessee for jury trials and/or hearings as well as the Tennessee Court of Appeals, the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals, the United States Eastern District of Tennessee (Knoxville and Greene Counties), and in Cincinnati, Ohio for hearing before the United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

***TN 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney General’s Office***

***February 2002 to June 2003***

Prosecutor for Cocke County General Sessions Court and Circuit Court. Trained by then ADA James B. “Jimmy” Dunn on fundamentals of prosecution and case evaluation. Handled cases ranging from misdemeanors to homicides.

***Stapleton & Ellis, P.C.***

***January 2001 to January 2002***

Partner beginning private practice after passing the bar. Focused on general practice consisting of family and law and criminal defense. Sat as City Judge for Gatlinburg, Tennessee periodically when requested by the sitting Judge.

***Creative Wood, Inc.***

***May 1996 to March 2003***

Cost accountant for manufacturing facility which necessitated advanced financial understanding for computation of the overall cost of production, *i.e.*, cost of goods sold. Solely responsible for the preparation of all financial documentation/statements, and the conversion of financial to tax basis where necessary in procuring various advantages which assisted for tax purposes. Strategy and skill were necessary in obtaining maximum tax deductions without resulting in the appearance of underperformance of the manufacturing facility. Utilization of Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP) and Generally Accepted Auditing Procedures (GAAS). Note: The Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) originated in 2002 and was not utilized, *i.e.*, the business was not public or governmental.

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.

As a Prosecutor, my current caseload is 100% criminal. However, I continue to stay updated on civil laws such as Family Law, Divorce, and Dependency and Neglect.

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.

As a sole practitioner in a rural community, I adapted very quickly to the pace and particularities of each Court. Being “aware” and possessing the ability to adapt has been a blessing. When I was a legal secretary the attorney I worked for was telling “war stories” of his early days as a lawyer. He looked over at me and said “you have to know how to speak to your clients so they trust you, you have to learn how to speak to the jury so they trust you, and if you don’t know when to stop talking and listen to the Judge, nothing you’ve done up to that point’s going to matter!” None of what he said made sense at the time, but as I began trying cases all over East Tennessee, I realized just how valuable his advice turned out to be. Something so basic was the blueprint to structure my practice around. I prepared my clients and ensured they understood the law and what standards the Court would be applying to their case. An informed client, even if the ruling fell short of what was sought, could adapt and move forward in life. It’s the ability to “be heard” at every stage and have a vested interest in the outcome of their case. The Courts have always been up front and respectful to me, but I believe a lot of the respect was earned from being prepared the moment I walked into the Courtroom. The same interaction holds true be it in a forum where you may be advocating for change before the Courts at an appellate level,

or simply humanizing your client to an Administrative Law Judge on a review. The Court is quick to gage your intentions and that of your client. As I now have more years behind me practicing and as younger faces enter the Courtrooms, the environment seems to be shifting away from formality, but embracing impatience. The change is concerning, but society as a whole is moving faster and demanding quicker results. Justice should move swift, but it's becoming a very slippery slope.

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

My very first jury trial was a first degree murder case in front of Judge Rex Henry Ogle. I was terrified. However, he encouraged me to be a better lawyer, a trial lawyer. It was from his suggestion that I became death penalty qualified. The more knowledge I obtained, the more confident I became in approaching cases. I could make a list of cases by name, include the citation and holding, but what I would note as important would be the learning curve and the implementation of what you ascertained to better serve your client's interests. Understanding how the Court "thinks" was a turning point. When I began my practice, I would check out each court file to review the same. Chancellor Telford Forgety, Jr. would review the files and would make a faint "line" on the pleadings as he reviewed. I quickly discovered that he was outlining the elements contained in the documents before him. By applying what I learned from each Judge and tailoring the same, I became extremely successful for my clients. Those are the areas that are noteworthy. Walking out successful and reaching the best outcome to ensure a child is protected all because you developed a pliable trait that can be adapted based upon observation and preparation.

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

Based upon my legal training and skills I have obtained through my advanced education pursuit, General Dunn has graciously allowed me to give back to not only our local Community, but the state as well. Below is a list of a portion of the trainings I have provided:

#### **PRESENTATIONS and INVITED LECTURES**

***4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Stakeholder Training*** – Vulnerable Adult Protection Investigation Team (VAPIT) and Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse; Sevierville, Tennessee

***Avalon Hospice*** – Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse; Sevierville, Tennessee

***Cocke County Fire Department and Newport Fire Department*** – Joint Training on

Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse

***Cocke County Sheriff's Department*** – In-Service Training (2011 to present)

***Cocke County Sheriff's Department Town Hall Speaker Series*** – What is Elder Abuse & What Can I Do to Help? (November 2023)

***Covenant Home Health & Hospice*** – Elder Abuse and Mandatory Reporting: Ethics in Healthcare; Alcoa, Tennessee

***Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church*** – Recognizing Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Financial Scams Directed to Our Aging Community

***Jefferson County Detective Division*** – Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Casefile Development

***Jefferson County VIP (Volunteers in Policing)*** – Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse

***Newport Federal Bank*** – Elder Abuse Laws and Resources Available to Financial Institutions in Combating Financial Exploitation

***Newport Police Department*** – In-Service Training (2011 to present)

***Northview Academy*** – The Role of Prosecution and Constitutional Guarantees; Kodak, Tennessee

***Pigeon Forge City Police Department 4<sup>th</sup> District Training*** – Overview of Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Casefile Development/Investigation

***Pigeon Forge Fire Department*** – Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse

***Sevierville Fire Department*** – Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse

***Southeast Area Agency on Aging and Disability Annual Conference*** – Minimizing Re-Victimization in Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Cases; Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee; comprised of 11 states.

***Southeast Area Agency on Aging and Disability Annual Conference*** – Utilizing First Responder Skills in Combating Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse; Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee

***Smoky Mountain Weekend Fire/First Responder Expo*** – Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse; (2018 and 2019); Gatlinburg, Tennessee

**Swannsylvania Baptist Church** – Recognizing Elder Abuse and Current Scams Directed to Our Aging Community

**Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads (TARS) Annual Conference** – Elder Abuse and Mandatory Reporting; Gatlinburg, Tennessee

**Tennessee Bureau of Investigation – Medicaid/TennCare Division** – How to Identify Elder Abuse, Neglect & Financial Exploitation: Investigation and Compliance Through OIG

**Tennessee District Attorney General Annual Conference** – How to Successfully Prosecute Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Cases; Murfreesboro, Tennessee

**Tennessee District Attorney General Annual Conference** – VAPIT: The Statutory Requirements, Mandatory Reporting, and Multidisciplinary Dynamics; Murfreesboro, Tennessee (October 2022)

**Tennessee District Attorney General’s Annual Conference & Victim Witness Conference for the Tennessee District Attorney General’s Conference** – Domestic Violence and Revictimization: Telling My Story; Murfreesboro, Tennessee (October 2023) (Emphasis on Elder Abuse and proper charging in domestic violence scenarios.)

**Tennessee Elder Justice Annual Conference** – Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse: First Responders are Essential; Gatlinburg, Tennessee (2019 and May 2022); Elder Protection: A Gerontological Approach to Prosecution (October 2024)

**Tennessee Domestic Violence Symposium** – “What did she do to lose her kids?” Bias in Gender Roles Relating to Non-Custodial Mothers and Gaslighting; Knoxville, Tennessee (April 2024)

**Victim Witness Conference for the Tennessee District Attorney General’s Conference** – Signs of Elder Abuse; Nashville, Tennessee

**Victim Witness Conference for the Tennessee District Attorney General’s Conference** – Sexual Abuse of the Elderly, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

**Walters State Community College** – Preliminary Hearings and Cross Examination Skills for Law Enforcement; Greeneville, Tennessee

**White Pine Community Speaker Series** – Child Abuse and Elderly/Vulnerable Adult Abuse

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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.

|             |   |                      |
|-------------|---|----------------------|
| <b>JD</b>   | University of Tennessee College of Law – Knoxville<br><i>Juris Doctorate</i>  | May 2000             |
| <b>MAG</b>  | University of Southern California<br>Leonard Davis School of Gerontology<br><i>Master of Arts in Gerontology</i>  | December 2020        |
| <b>MSW</b>  | East Tennessee State University<br>College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences<br><i>Master of Social Work</i> (currently obtaining)   | May 2027 Anticipated |
| <b>CERT</b> | East Tennessee State University<br>Post Graduate Certificate<br>College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences<br><i>Clinical Addiction and Counseling Studies</i>                | August 2023          |
| <b>BS</b>   | Carson-Newman College<br><i>Bachelor of Science in Accounting</i> , cum laude   | May 1997             |
| <b>CNA</b>  | Ballad Health Care System<br>Johnson City, Tennessee<br><i>Tennessee State Certified Nursing Assistant #00211321</i><br><i>North Carolina Certified Nursing Assistant Via Reciprocity</i> | April 2022           |

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

12. State your date of birth.

[REDACTED]



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

**53 years; since date of birth – 12/02/11970**

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

**21 years; since June 2003**

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

**Cocke 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.

**Tennessee State Guard; HHC; Johnson City; 2LT Social Services Officer (03-2022 – 01-2023; in process of reenlistment; will be attached to 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Jefferson City; likely moved to 1LT.**

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.

**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.

**Five (5) times during the 23+ years of being a license attorney in Tennessee. Each case was investigated and dismissed.**

A copy of the Board of Professional Responsibility's Letter of Active and Good Standing is attached hereto along with an Attorney Disciplinary History

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)?

**Yes. 2:16-BK-51404 (2016)**

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.

**Yes.**

**Docket Number: 2003-CV-684**

Filed: 06/18/2003 Closed: 06/18/2003 Court: Sevier County Circuit Court

***S. Joanne Ellis v. Fredrick Dennis Ellis, Jr.***

Divorce; Irreconcilable Differences; Parenting Plan; Marital Dissolution Agreement; and Final Order. (Married 06/17/2024 – 2 Children)

**Docket Number: 2004-CV-209**

Filed: 05/08/2004 Closed: 04/10/2014 Court: Cocke County Circuit Court

***S. Joanne Sheldon v. Patrick James Sheldon***

Legal Separation; Amended to Divorce; O/P (*as Petitioner*) merged by operation of law from General Sessions to Circuit Court; Grounds; Agreed to Irreconcilable Differences; Parenting Plan; Marital Dissolution Agreement; and Final Order. (Married 04/24/2004 – 2 Children)

**Docket Number: 37,061-I**

Filed: 06/10/2024

Court: Cocke County Circuit Court

***S. Joanne Sheldon vs. Chadwick Allen Gregg***

Divorce; Grounds & Irreconcilable Differences; informal reconciliation with case remaining on docket. (Married 02/22/2222)

**Docket Number: 2013-CV-796**

Filed: 04/26/2013 Closed: 05/28/2013 Court: Hamblen County General Sessions Court

Emergency Coverage Corp. v. Susan Sheldon

Default Judgment (*unaware initially*) – contested bill associated with medical event; restitution paid.

**Docket Number: 2013:CV-787**

Filed: 04/26/2013 Closed: 05/18/2024 Court: Hamblen County General Sessions Court

***Hamblen Anesthesia v. Susan Joanne Sheldon***

Default Judgment (*unaware initially*) – contested bill associated with medical event; restitution paid.

**Docket Number: 2015-CV-160**

Filed: 2015

Closed: 2015

Court: Cocke County General Sessions Court

Cocke County HMA, LLC (Medical Center) vs. Susan J. Sheldon

Default Judgment – medical event

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.

**East Tennessee Elder Justice Coalition** (current); *previously Member at Large on Board of Directors (2019)*

**Sevier County Elder Watch** (current)

**Tennessee 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Recovery Court Program** (current)

**Tennessee Federation of Aging (TFA)** (current); *previously Elder Abuse Advocate on Board of Directors; previously Vice President of Board of Directors (2018 & 2019)*

**Tennessee Vulnerable Adult Coalition (TVAC)**; *previously Vice President Board of Directors (2019)*

***Member of the Department of Justice's Elder Abuse Task Force – Middle Tennessee***

***Member of the Tennessee Medical Reserve Corps (MRS)***

***Prior Member of the Federal Defense Panel for the Eastern District of Tennessee***

***Prior Member of the Tennessee District Attorney General Conference Elder Abuse Committee***

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.

**Yes.**

(a.) Cocke County Federated Republicans – membership is restricted to women.

(b.) If resignation of my membership as a member of the Cocke County Federation of Republican Women is necessary for my selection and service as Judge for Part IV of the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Circuit Court Judge, I will do so accordingly.

**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.

**AllRise** (*previously known as the National Association of Drug Court Professionals*) (current)  
**American Society on Aging** (current)  
**Fraternal Order of Police** (current)  
**Gerontological Society of America (GSA)** (current)  
**National Association of Social Workers** (current)  
**National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)** (current)  
**National District Attorney Association (NDAA)** (current)  
**National Institute of Justice** (current)  
**National Network of Elder Justice Coalitions** (current)  
**The National Society of Leadership and Success** (current)  
**Newport Bar Association** (current); *previously Vice President*  
**Newport Elder Watch** (current)

**Sigma Alpha Pi** (current)  
**RCORP-ET** - Rural Communities Opioid Response Program for East Tennessee (current)  
**Southern Gerontological Society** (current)  
**Tennessee Association of Recovery Court Professionals (TARCP)** (current)

\*\*\*General Member in All of the Above.

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.

***2019 Tennessee District Attorney General Conference (TNDAGC) President's Award***

The President's Award is "[i]n recognition of exceptional service to the Criminal Justice System of Tennessee, the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference, and the citizens we serve."

***2024 Certified Economic Crime Forensic Examiner (CECFE)***

Conferred based upon attainment of a certain point level through education, training, and classes. The Certification consists of various areas of proficiency including, *but not limited to*, the following: the theory and history of financial conduct; common economic crimes and fraud schemes, currencies, financial instruments, and payments; financial analysis; fraud prevention; and legislative, legal, and regulatory framework. (National White Collar Crime Center – NW3C)

***2024 National District Attorney Association & Department of Justice's Elder Justice Initiative (EJI)*** – selected as a member to engage in a "round-table" discussion with members of Congress (Federal Bi-Partisan) in the "boots-to-grounds" experiences relating to elder/vulnerable adult abuse/neglect/and financial exploitation. 2025 is the anticipated year for public hearings on aging before Congress. Selection to this group was an extreme honor given that each individual's reputation/work in the field of aging was used as a basis for invitation. An **extremely** small number of participants across the United States were invited.

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.**

<sup>1</sup> Sigma Alpha Pi (ΣΑΠ) is an honor society for members of the National Society of Leadership and Success.

**ESSAYS/PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

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

Fall 1988 I worked for the Sevier County Property Assessor's Office during work study as a Senior at Sevier County High School. I would sneak to the Courtroom and watch the jury trials and motion hearings. I would observe the Judges, and I would watch the people as they left the Courtroom when the decisions were rendered. I was amazed at the faces of the people and the reactions. I want to take the education I have and implement real change and continue Judge Slone's legacy to the bench. I would have cases in his Court, and you could see the immediate change on the faces of people when he rendered his decisions. The defendants and the victims were walking out with closure and hope. Justice is necessary and accountability is a given. Our caseloads are increasing exponentially, individuals are suffering from substance use disorders, and you have the cooccurring mental health issues that need addressed. As Judge, I will hit these issues head on and do so with the community needs placed first.

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 appointment as Circuit Court Judge for Part – IV of the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. The 4<sup>th</sup> is comprised of Cocke, Grainger, Jefferson, and Sevier Counties. I grew up in Sevier County, lived for a time in Jefferson, my Mammaw's family is from Grainger, and I have lived in Cocke County since 2003. I know the 4<sup>th</sup> District and the people. We are a proud Community who works hard, cares about our neighbors, and are surrounded by beauty at every turn. As Judge I would ensure that the values of our people would be respected, and I would apply and uphold the law. I genuinely care about the people who come before the Court, but caring for someone also means you must make the hard decisions the law requires – even when it's heartbreaking.

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)*

The answer is yes. I would uphold the law even if I disagreed with the substance of the law. However, there are limits. I take issue with the blind application of a statute that could have constitutional ramifications even though the legislative intent was not to do so. The role of the Judge is broader and carries more responsibilities in weighing the law that may be new and/or novel. Judge Ogle ruled from the bench that a statute was unconstitutional. He stood firm and set out the overreaching aspect of the statute. In addressing the example portion of this question, I take issue with the statute of where someone can be charged with having a handgun while being under the influence of alcohol or some other intoxicant. The issue boils down to the possession, or the constructive possession. I simply disagree with the statute, but as a Prosecutor I uphold the law and it is a chargeable offense. I understand the reasoning for the statute, but as written, I take issue with the same. However, I follow the law and as the Judge I would do the

same.

**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. Shannon Ball**

Tennessee State Hazards Mitigation Officer  
Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA)  
3041 Sidco Drive  
Nashville, Tennessee 37204  
[REDACTED]

**B. Aaron Bradley, Director East Tennessee Area on Aging and Disability**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
abradley@ethra.org  
(423) 691-2551  
[REDACTED]

**C. Representative Jeremy Faison**

425 Rep. John Lewis Way N.  
Suite 604 Cordell Hull Bldg.  
Nashville, TN 37243  
Phone: (615) 741-6871  
Fax: (615) 253-0225  
[REDACTED]

**D. Dottie Saxon Greene, PhD, CPRS, LCSW, LADAC II, CAADC, QCS, RYT**

Associate Professor  
ETSU, Department of Social Work  
greeneds@etsu.edu  
[REDACTED]

Executive Director, Johnson City Recovery Center

**E. Lisa Zavogiannis,**

Prior TN District Attorney General for the 31<sup>st</sup> District  
Prior Chair of Tennessee's Elder Abuse Task Force  
Prior Special US Attorney (SUSA)  
[REDACTED]



**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.

Susan "Joanne" Sheldon

Type or Print Name

Signature

October 23, 2024

Date

021186

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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**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] **4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Tennessee, Part IV**, 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: October 23, 2024.



Signature

When completed, return this questionnaire to John Jefferson at the Administrative Office of the Courts, 511 Union Street, Suite 600, Nashville, TN 37219.



**BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**  
of the  
**SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE**

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TIFFANY D. TANT-SHAFER  
DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

August 28, 2024

Ms. Susan Joanne Sheldon  
355 E Broadway  
Newport, TN 37821-3105

Re: Susan Joanne Sheldon  
BPR #021186

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

On December 18, 1975, the Tennessee Supreme Court established the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Supreme Court of Tennessee to supervise the conduct of attorneys licensed to practice law in this state.

The records of the Board of Professional Responsibility indicate that the attorney referenced above was licensed in Tennessee to practice law and sworn in on 4/25/2001. The attorney's license is currently Active and is in good standing.

Enclosed for your review is a report generated from our case management system. A blank report indicates that our office has never opened an investigative file on this attorney.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Leins".

Molly Leins  
Registration Manager

ML/lw

Enclosure



Board of Professional Responsibility of the Supreme Court of Tennessee

## Attorney Disciplinary History

8/28/2024

Susan Joanne Sheldon - 021186

License Status: Active

### Sanctions

| Cases | Opened | Closed | Status |
|-------|--------|--------|--------|
|-------|--------|--------|--------|

No Cases

| Investigations | Opened | Closed | Status |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|

|            |           |            |                                     |
|------------|-----------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| 35092-1-ES | 4/12/2012 | 10/15/2012 | Closed: Dismissed by Investigations |
| 34998-1-ES | 3/13/2012 | 7/23/2012  | Closed: Dismissed by Investigations |
| 34448-1-BM | 9/6/2011  | 4/23/2012  | Closed: Dismissed by Investigations |
| 34048-1-BM | 4/25/2011 | 4/2/2012   | Closed: Dismissed by Investigations |
| 31446-1-JV | 9/16/2008 | 9/29/2009  | Closed: Dismissed by Investigations |

| Complaints | Filed | Complainant | Status |
|------------|-------|-------------|--------|
|------------|-------|-------------|--------|

|                 |           |                   |                                       |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2012-11395-COMP | 4/12/2012 | Given, Tammy      | Closed: Transferred to Investigations |
| 2012-10976-COMP | 3/13/2012 | McNealy, Trudy M  | Closed: Transferred to Investigations |
| 2011-13505-COMP | 9/6/2011  | Parton, Joy Dr. B | Closed: Transferred to Investigations |
| 2011-11576-COMP | 4/25/2011 | Faison, John      | Closed: Transferred to Investigations |
| 2008-14056-COMP | 9/16/2008 | Bailey, Tip L     | Closed: Transferred to Investigations |

| Overdrafts | Received | Bank | Status |
|------------|----------|------|--------|
|------------|----------|------|--------|

|                |           |         |                    |
|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| 2009-144-OVDFT | 5/12/2009 | US Bank | Closed: Bank Error |
|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|