SIXTH CIRCUIT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
PLATTE COUNTY, MISSOURI
APPLICATION FOR CIRCUIT JUDGE

*PLEASE NOTE: RESPONSES TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE MADE PUBLIC IF THE APPLICANT IS SELECTED AS ONE OF THE NOMINEES FOR THE VACANCY.*

1. State your full name.

**Christie Elizabeth Jess**

2. State your date and location of birth.

**May 8, 1962; Oklahoma City, OK**

3. State your present occupation, place of work, and job title.

**Attorney, Employee Rights Law Firm, Partner**

4. Provide the following information concerning your eligibility for the office of Circuit Judge:

(a) Are you at least thirty years of age? **Yes**

(b) Are you licensed to practice law in Missouri? **Yes**

(c) Have you been a citizen of the United States for at least ten years? **Yes**

(d) Have you been a resident of Platte County for at least one year? **Yes**

5. State whether you are able, with or without a reasonable accommodation, to perform the essential functions of a Circuit Judge, including the ability to preside over trials, conduct legal research and analysis, attend court anywhere in the State of Missouri, communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing, and expeditiously decide issues coming before the court.

**Yes**

6. State the year of your admission to the Missouri Bar and whether your license is and always has been in good standing. If not, please explain.

**1996. Yes my license has always been in good standing.**

7. List any other states, courts, or agencies in which you have been licensed as an attorney, and state whether your license is and always has been in good standing.

**United States Virgin Islands. I am currently and have been in an inactive status since 2004. In 2010 I was suspended for failure to pay inactive bar dues which have since been paid.**

8. Provide the following information for all colleges or universities, other than law schools, you have attended:

(a) Name and location of institution

(b) Dates attended and degrees received

(c) Significant activities, achievements, honors, and awards

**Oscar Rose Jr. College, Oklahoma City, OK 1979 – 1981 (attending two summers during my high school career and one fall semester upon my return to Oklahoma from Texas). I received the President's Honor Roll Award for two of those semesters.**

**Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX, 1980-1981 (attended my freshman year)**

**University of Central Oklahoma (Formerly known as Central State University), Edmond, OK, 1982-1984. I obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Finance.**

9. Provide the following information for all law schools you have attended:

(a) Name and location of law school

(b) Dates attended and degrees received

(c) Significant activities, achievements, honors, and awards

**Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma City, OK, 1990-1993.**

**I received my Juris Doctorate Degree in May 1993. I received the highest score in my Secured Transactions class. I also received the OCU Commercial Law Award in 1992.**

10. State whether you have ever been suspended or expelled as a student from any school or educational institution. If so, please explain.

**No**

11. List, in chronological order, all non-legal and legal employment you have held post-high school. Include the name and location of each employer, job title, dates of employment, and reason for termination of employment.

**Sooner Federal Savings and Loan, Oklahoma City, OK, 1981-1984. I worked as an extended hours teller while I was in college. I left this employment upon my graduation and upon my acceptance of a job with a local public accounting firm.**

**Snipes & Ley, PC. Oklahoma City, OK, 1984-1986. I was an administrative assistant for the partners of the firm. In addition to my duties supporting the partners in their day to day practices I aided in the preparation of tax forms for submission to the various taxing authorities as well as handling client files and client communications. I left to accept a job in the accounting office of a large commercial construction company.**

**Yordi Construction Inc., Oklahoma City, OK, 1986-1987. I took a job with the construction company in the accounting department. I was responsible for the accounts payables for the commercial construction operations. I was transferred to the Fort Worth, Texas office and continued to handle the accounts payable for the Texas operations. I left for an opportunity to be an accounting manager at another company.**

**Lestek Manufacturing Inc., Fort Worth, TX, 1987-1988. I was an accounting manager for this company that manufactured high output alternators. The company was sold and I left for a lateral move to JPI Inc.**

**JPI, Inc., Fort Worth, TX, 1988-1990. I was an accounting manager for this HVAC company. I resigned to go to law school in Oklahoma.**

**Paul Harris Inc., Oklahoma City, OK, 1991-1993. I was a sales person in this clothing store while I attended law school in Oklahoma City. I left upon my graduation from law school in May 1993.**

**I moved to Christiansted, St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands ("USVI") upon graduating from law school and sat for the USVI bar in July 1993. I passed the bar exam at that time.**

**Joel Holt, Esquire, Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI, 1993. I worked for Mr. Holt as a law clerk while I studied for the USVI bar exam.**

**Legal Services of the Virgin Islands, Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI, 1993. I provided assistance to attorneys and clients as it related to their legal matters, primarily domestic relations cases. This was a volunteer position.**

**Hunter, Colianni, Cole & Turner, Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI, 1994. I worked primarily with partner Rick Hunter in preparation of research briefs in transactional matters and pending civil litigation.**

**My then husband's job transferred us to St. Thomas in 1995. In 1995 the island was hit by three hurricanes, Marilyn being a direct hit and the most severe. We left the island shortly thereafter in 1995 and moved to St. Louis Missouri to live with family.**

**Robert Half Inc., St. Louis, MO, 1995-1996. I worked with a temporary accounting agency while I sat for the Missouri bar and began to look for employment in the legal field.**

**Catholic Charities, St. Louis, MO, 1996. I worked as an attorney for indigents in domestic relations matters. This was a short term**

**assignment while the regular attorney was out for medical reasons.**

**Volunteer Lawyers Program with Eastern Missouri Legal Services, St. Louis, MO 1996. I represented indigent men and women in different types of legal matters such as dissolution of marriage, landlord tenant issues and collections. This was fairly soon after the flood of 1993 and low income people had been greatly affected with no resources to rebound. In addition to legal services, we provided information and guidance in helping individuals apply for state aid, federal aid, charitable and non-profit aid. It was a very rewarding and humbling experience.**

**Volunteered with Advocates For Abused Women Organization, St. Louis, MO, 1996. Represented women who were victims of domestic violence and helped them with orders of projection, obtaining safe shelter, and providing information regarding their rights as victims.**

**Missouri State Public Defender System, 1996-1998, Joplin, Missouri and 1998-2000 in the City of St. Louis. I was hired as a trial attorney and worked in Jasper County until I transferred to St. Louis in 1998 and continued to try cases. While employed with the Public Defenders Office I tried twelve jury trials and second-chaired an additional ten trials. In 2000, I resigned with the intent of opening my own law practice, however, I was offered a position by my prior Public Defender team leader who was now working for Cordell and Cordell. I was excited to work with her again. Cordell and Cordell offered me a job which I accepted.**

**Cordell and Cordell, P.C., St. Louis, Missouri, 2000-2001; Kansas City, Missouri 2001-2003, 2005-2007. I accepted an associate position in the firm which solely represents men in domestic relations litigation. I was asked after 9 months to move to Kansas City and open an office for the firm there. I was the managing attorney for the Kansas City office until 2003 when I left to open my own practice with two attorneys in Liberty, Missouri. In 2005 I was asked to come back to Cordell & Cordell by the then managing attorney. I stayed until 2007 at which time I reopened my own law practice.**

**Law Office of Christie Sherman, Liberty, MO, Platte City, MO and**

**Kansas City, MO, 2007 – 2009. I had my own legal practice concentrating on men's rights litigation in domestic relations. I closed my practice to work with my husband, Mark Jess, in his plaintiff's employment law practice, Employee Rights Law Firm.**

**Employee Rights Law Firm, Kansas City, MO, 2009 – present. I am a partner in the firm. We represent employees in cases of discrimination and retaliation. I have tried two jury trials with Mark since 2009. In addition, I have continued to represent individuals in domestic relations matters as well as representing biological parents in appointed juvenile matters in Jackson County, Missouri.**

12. Describe the nature and extent of your experience as a practicing attorney in the trial and appellate courts, and explain how such experience demonstrates the quality of your legal work.

**I have been practicing for 17 years and my legal experience has ranged from civil and domestic to criminal matters. While I was a public defender for the State of Missouri I had to handle a high-volume caseload. While in the Jasper County office, I handled between 150-200 cases at a time. I was the public defender that handled the entire public defender felony case-load through preliminary hearing. I worked with the court personnel, the sheriff's department, the prosecuting attorney, as well as the family members of defendants and primarily the defendants themselves whose cases were being heard. I learned the importance of being effective yet efficient, balancing the needs of my client with the court's need to keep the docket moving. I also had the pleasure of being a public defender in the City of St. Louis and the differences between the two settings, rural and urban, helped me to appreciate the value of diversity. Ultimately, I learned from my mentors such as Judge Copeland and Judge Dermot to be courteous yet firm, to listen and to demand respect of the judicial process.**

**After six years doing criminal defense work, I began a domestic relations practice, both in a law firm setting and as a sole practitioner. I have learned that litigants that come before a judge will likely be coming at a time in which they are dealing with many stressors and may not be at their best. This requires on the part of the court and the attorneys to be cognizant of this fact and treat litigants with some patience and to listen intently to their story as it is told at trial. While in**

**my domestic relations practice I learned that my role as counselor was equally if not more important than the role of advocate. I learned that a domestic relations docket is most efficiently run when a judge is consistent in his/her decisions and attorneys can discuss and make decisions with their clients based on that consistency.**

**While working as a sole practitioner, I learned a great deal about time management, organization and efficiency. I have worked with many wonderful and talented lawyers from whom I learned so much about the practice of law, especially that it should be viewed not as a business but as a profession. I learned that courtesy in the courtroom and in dealings with opposing counsel is paramount to the process working smoothly and to cutting down on unnecessary motions and/or litigiousness.**

**I have been the sole attorney in twelve criminal jury trials, second chaired ten criminal jury trials and second chaired two civil employment law jury trials. I have been the sole attorney on numerous bench trials including criminal, adult abuse, collections, domestic relations, juvenile, and civil matters. I have argued before the Missouri Western District Court of Appeals and have practiced in 29 counties in the state of Missouri as well as the City of St. Louis. In my 17 years of practice before so many judges in so many circuits, I have had the opportunity to observe and learn the traits that I believe help make an effective judge: decisiveness, being even-tempered, having a willingness to learn, remaining neutral, following the rule of law and being consistent.**

13. Provide a representative list of at least ten cases in which you served as the primary attorney at trial or an administrative hearing. The list should include the style of each case, court or administrative agency, identification of your client, and the nature and date of disposition.

**I have attempted to obtain information regarding the specifics of all of the jury trials in which I was the primary attorney. Unfortunately, after contacting the Supreme Court Administrator and the Public Defenders Office in Jefferson City, the only records that could be located due to the time that has lapsed since the cases were tried are provided below.**

**State of Missouri v. Danny Baker, CR496-1043M – This case was tried in the Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri in 1996. I represented Mr. Baker in a misdemeanor assault case in which we were able to obtain a not guilty verdict.**

**State of Missouri v. Troy Carter, CR597-3423FX – This case was tried in the Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri in 1997. I represented Mr. Carter in a felony possession of a controlled substance case in which Mr. Carter was found guilty and sentenced to 5 years in the Missouri Department of Corrections. Mr. Carter had a prior conviction for a similar offense and did not testify.**

**State of Missouri v. James Bailey, CR597-2260FX – This case was tried in the Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri in 1997. I represented Mr. Bailey in a felony possession of a controlled substance case in which we were able to obtain a not guilty verdict.**

**State of Missouri v. Gay Pedersen, CR297-525FX – This case was tried in the Circuit Court of McDonald County, Missouri in 1997. I represented Ms. Pedersen in a felony possession of a controlled substance case in which we were able to obtain a not guilty verdict.**

**State of Missouri v. Anthony Mitchell, CR598-1215FX – This case was tried in the Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri in 1998. I represented Mr. Mitchell in a felony possession of a controlled substance case in which we were able to obtain a not guilty verdict.**

**Michael Barnes v. Nell Barnes, 0716-FC01735 – This case was tried in the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri in 2007. I represented Mr. Barnes in dissolution of marriage action. This was an unusual case in which the children were both over the age of 21 but mentally disabled. In addition, the oldest child was the ward of an estate through probate court in which both his parents were his appointed guardians and conservators.**

**Tracy Barrow v. Laurie Barrow, 05AE-CY03963-00 and 05AE-CY03963-01. These cases were tried in the Circuit Court of Platte**

**County, Missouri beginning in 2005 with a dissolution of marriage action and subsequent modification action in 2008. I represented Mr. Barrow in both matters. These cases involved high conflict custody matters in which multiple experts were used by both parties, a guardian *ad litem* was appointed in both cases, false allegations of abuse were alleged by Respondent and allegations of alienation of affection were presented by my client. The court ultimately found that the mother's allegations of abuse were false and that she, in fact, was responsible for the alienation of affection between my client and the children.**

**Nancy Asheton Blair v. William Jeremy Blair, 01CV-84655-02. This case was tried in the Circuit Court of Platte County, Missouri in 2004. I represented Mr. Blair in this modification of a dissolution of marriage action. The main focus of this litigation was financial in nature, as Mr. Blair filed his motion to modify to have his maintenance obligation terminated due to Ms. Asheton Blair having access to a family trust which had a substantial monetary value and which Ms. Asheton Blair accessed for her own use.**

**Christina Daniel v. John Timothy Daniel, 03F-209585. This case was tried in the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri in 2004. I represented Mr. Daniel in this dissolution of marriage action. This was an interesting case in which the parties lived in different countries, one in the United States and one in Germany. Both parties petitioned the court for full custody. Ultimately the court divided the children and placed one child with the father and one child with the mother.**

**Richard Pollard v. Anne Brown Pollard, 04CV85203-01, 04CV85203-02 and 04CV85203-03. These cases were tried in the Circuit Court of Platte County, Missouri in 2006, 2007 and 2010. I represented Mr. Pollard in all three matters. These cases were all modification of dissolution of marriage actions. These cases involved high conflict custody matters in which multiple experts were used by both parties, a guardian *ad litem* was appointed in two of the cases, false allegations of abuse were alleged by Respondent and allegations of alienation of affection were presented by Petitioner, Mr. Pollard.**

14. If you have appellate experience, provide a representative list of cases in which you served as the primary attorney on appeal. The list should include the style of each case, appellate court or administrative agency, identification of your client, and the nature and

date of disposition.

**Loraine Jenkins v. Paul Austin, WD68302 – Missouri Western District Court of Appeals. This appeal was filed by Petitioner in 2007. The original case was a paternity action in which Petitioner appealed the lower court's order to change the child's name at the request of the father. Petitioner alleged that the court did not have jurisdiction to change the name of a child if the request did not come from the mother as father did not have standing to make such a request. This case was submitted after oral argument was heard. The Court of Appeals upheld the lower court's ruling.**

15. If you are serving or have served in a judicial capacity, describe the nature and extent of your judicial responsibilities, the types of dockets handled, and any special expertise developed.

**Not Applicable**

16. If you are serving or have served in a judicial capacity, provide a representative list of at least ten cases over which you have presided to completion. The list should include the style of each case and the nature and date of disposition.

**Not Applicable**

17. If you do not have significant experience in litigation or in a judicial capacity, describe any other legal experience or accomplishments in the legal profession that may qualify you to serve in the office of Circuit Judge.

**I believe I have provided my experience as a litigator in previous questions.**

18. List all bar associations and law-related organizations of which you are or have been a member, with any offices held and dates of membership.

**Missouri Bar Association 1996-Present**
**Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association 2009 - Present**
**Clay County Bar Association 2003 - 2009**
**Platte County Bar Association 2009 - Present**
**Kansas City Chapter National Employment Lawyers Association 2009 - Present**
**National Employment Lawyers Association 2010-2012**

**Virgin Islands Bar Association 1995 – Present (inactive since 2004)**
**Phi Alpha Delta 1991**

19. List any published articles or books you have authored and any significant programs or events for which you served as a primary speaker.

**I was a primary speaker at the 2006 and 2007 annual Cordell & Cordell sponsored Domestic Litigation Forum CLE's held in St. Louis, Missouri.**

**I was a primary speaker at Cordell and Cordell's public seminars titled "Mistakes Men Make When Facing Divorce". The events in which I spoke were in 2006 and 2007 in Overland Park, Kansas and Independence, Missouri.**

20. Do you now or have you ever held any elective or appointive public office or position? If so, please explain.

**No**

21. Provide the branches and dates of any military service or other public service not otherwise covered in this application. If discharged from the military, state whether the discharge was other than honorable.

**None**

22. Describe your community and volunteer service activities, including any organizations (outside the legal profession) with which you are affiliated and any offices held.

**Kansas City Alzheimer's Association – Volunteer**

23. List any significant honors or awards you have received that otherwise have not been covered in this application.

**None**

24. Are you delinquent in the payment of any federal, state, county or city taxes? If so, please explain.

**No**

25. Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony or received a suspended imposition of sentence in any federal, state, or military court? If so, please explain and provide the style of the case (including case number), the court, the date of the conviction, and the sentence or fine imposed.

**No**

26. Have you ever been held in contempt of court? If so, please explain.

**No**

27. Have you ever been sued by a client or been a party to any litigation, other than as a guardian ad litem, plaintiff ad litem, or defendant ad litem? If so, please explain and provide the style of each case, the court, your role as plaintiff or defendant, and the nature and date of disposition.

**Christie Sherman Muniz v. Ernest Muniz , case number unknown. This was a dissolution of marriage action filed in Dallas County Texas. The action was uncontested and the dissolution was granted in 1991.**

**Christie Sherman v. Ernest Muniz, 7CV103002038. This was a dissolution of marriage action filed in Clay County Missouri in 2003. The case was dismissed by the parties.**

**Christie Sherman v. Ernest Muniz, 04FC200485. This was a dissolution of marriage action filed in Jackson County, Missouri. The action was uncontested and the dissolution was granted in 2004.**

**Capital One v. Christie Sherman, 08CY-CV11712. This was a breach of contract case filed in Clay County, Missouri in 2008 and was subsequently dismissed. This was a marital credit card which did not get paid pursuant to the divorce decree. Upon filing of this action and receipt of service the debt was immediately paid and the case was dismissed by the Plaintiff.**

28. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for breach of ethics or professional conduct by a court or by any bar association or committee thereof? If so, please explain.

**I have not been disciplined or cited for breach of ethics or professional conduct by any court, bar association or committee.**

29. If you are or were a member of the judiciary of the State of Missouri, please state:

(a) Whether an order of reprimand, removal, retirement, suspension or other disciplinary action has ever been entered against you by the Supreme Court of Missouri for breach of the Code of Judicial Conduct or the Canons of Judicial Conduct? If so, explain the details of such breach and the date, nature, and duration of the discipline imposed.

(b) Whether a reprimand or admonishment has ever been entered against you by the Commission on Retirement, Removal and Discipline for any of the causes specified in Rule 12.07 of the Supreme Court Rules Governing the Judiciary. If so, explain the details of such cause and the date and nature of the discipline imposed.

C Whether, to your knowledge, you are the subject of a complaint that is currently under investigation by the Commission on Retirement, Removal and Discipline. If so, explain that nature of such complaint and the status of the investigation.

**Not Applicable**

30. Provide any additional information that you consider relevant to your qualifications for the office of Circuit Judge.

31. List the names and contact information (title, mailing address, telephone, and email address) of the five persons whom you have requested to provide letters of reference regarding your character and judicial qualifications. Do not list as a reference any judge who currently sits in the Sixth Judicial Circuit.

**The Honorable Elizabeth Davis**
**Judge of the Circuit Court, Division 3**
**Clay County Courthouse**
**11 S. Water**
**Liberty, Missouri 64068**
**(816) 407-3930**
**edavis@courts.mo.gov**

**The Honorable Susan Long**
**Commissioner of the Circuit Court, Division 43**
**Jackson County Courthouse**
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# CERTIFICATION OF ACCURACY AND AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

By my signature to this form, I certify that all statements made in my application for the office of Circuit Judge and attachments thereto are truthful and correct. I further certify that if I am nominated by the Sixth Circuit Judicial Commission and appointed to the office of Circuit Judge, I will accept the appointment and perform the duties of that office as provided by law.

By my signature to this form, I authorize: (1) the Commission, through its Chairperson, to obtain relevant information, including but not limited to documents, records, and files, with respect to my medical, law enforcement, or disciplinary records; and (2) the Commission and its members to obtain additional relevant information regarding my qualifications, as well as the accuracy of my responses to the questions on this application. It is my understanding that the information obtained pursuant to this authorization shall be made available only to the members of the Sixth Circuit Judicial Commission and their staff as necessary to perform their duties.

Notwithstanding the above, in accordance with Supreme Court Rule 10.28 (e), if I am one of the three nominees listed on the certificate of nomination sent to the Governor, I authorize the Commission to send a complete copy of this application to the Governor and publicly release a copy of the application with personal and confidential information redacted as identified on the cover page of this application.

This certification and authorization shall remain in full force and effect until revoked by me in writing.

Christie Jess

Signature of Applicant

11-3-13

Date

Christie Elizabeth Jess

Printed Full Name of Applicant