

JUDGE CAROLYN JENNINGS THOMPSON, NC COURT OF APPEALS (SEAT 12)



For all candidates:

- What is your background in politics? If you are an incumbent, please state which offices you have held and when.

I am the incumbent judge for seat 12 on the North Carolina Court of Appeals. Before my appointment by Governor Roy Cooper, I served my community and state for over 27 years as a trial attorney, District Court Judge, Superior Court Judge, and Deputy Commissioner in the NC Industrial Commission.

- Why were you drawn to run for office?

I am running to retain my seat because I am qualified to continue to do the job and committed to serving the people of North Carolina by rendering opinions without bias or political agendas. I believe in the oath I have repeatedly taken as a civil servant, which is to uphold the laws and Constitution of this state with fairness, impartiality, and without favor. The people need judges who will defend their promise to uphold precedence regardless of political policies and activism.

- If you had to pick three issues (housing, economy, schools, policing, etc), which would you say are most important to you?

Public Education, Economy, and Housing

- If elected, how would you work with fellow representatives on the other side of the political aisle?

I already work with fellow representatives on the other side of the political aisle. We sit in panels of three when deciding appellate opinions for North Carolinians. The current political makeup of our NC Court of Appeals is: Republicans 11, Democrats 4.

Based on basic math, I am more likely to be on a panel of judges registered in the other party. We do not engage in political discussions, and we should not. We are not assigned to blue or red files. We receive files with people's issues needing a final answer after going through the legal process of asking the NC Court of Appeals to make the final decision. The courts must be transparent as an independent branch of government about decisions that impact generations.

- What do you see as the role of the office you seek?

The NC Court of Appeals is an error-correcting court for decisions made in lower courts all over this state. I review the record of the lower courts with a commitment to fairness and impartiality. My prior trial experience as a lawyer and judge prepared me for doing this job effectively and efficiently on day one.

- Which city do you live in, and what are your three favorite things about it?

I live in Oxford. It is rural, friendly, and quiet to the hustle and bustle of a metro community.

For judicial races:

- What is your judicial philosophy?

True justice is independent of political affiliation, divisive ideologies, and social differences. The laws and Constitution must be upheld equally and without favor.

- Have you ever been publicly sanctioned by the State Bar, and if so, why and what did you learn?

No.

- What would you do to improve the overall judicial system?

Work with community stakeholders and citizens to educate the public about what the Court of Appeals does as the second-highest state appellate court. I want people to know that it is not a barrier to justice but a resource for justice. In recent months, the judicial system has come under the microscope of criticism for being politically influential. I will continue encouraging transparency and access to the courtroom regardless of zip code, financial status, or socioeconomic barriers.

- Judges in NC hear cases related to abortion access. Are you pro-choice? How would you respond to those types of cases?

Because of our judicial standards and ethics codes, I cannot disclose how I would rule on cases before hearing them. I will, however, share that NC Pro-Choice and Planned Parenthood Votes endorse me! South Atlantic.