

Explain the nominee’s background, history of professional achievement and leadership skills for her category.

Judge Robin Robinson is a true standout in our community. One word best exemplifies her – service. She believes in service to her family, to her community, to her friends and to her colleagues. Since 1986, our community has benefited from her dedication and service.

Judge Robinson is selfless, humble, and never “toots her own horn,” preferring to let others be recognized. But she rises to the top in every endeavor she undertakes because of her compassion, her intelligence, her dedication, and her grace.

Judge Robinson’s belief in the value of women in our society, particularly as leaders in their communities, was formed early, through her parents, Wallace and Rozelle Wicks. She was raised in a faith filled home and taught to give to others, to follow her interests and passions, to give one hundred percent to whatever she did, and to set goals and to achieve them. Her faith provides her with an enduring foundation for her personal and professional life and informs everything that she does.

Judge Robinson is a 1982 graduate of Converse College, an all women’s college in Spartanburg, SC, where she made Dean’s List every semester and received a Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Politics. She was honored in 2017 with the Converse College Alumnae Association Career Achievement Award.

Judge Robinson received her Juris Doctor degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1985 where she won the Book Award for Trial Advocacy and was a valuable member of Women in Law, a student organization. She is licensed to practice law in North Carolina and has practiced since 1986 in the Fifth Judicial District (New Hanover and Pender counties).

The judge began her legal career in Wilmington in 1986 as an associate with the law firm of Ryals, Jackson & Mills. She found her niche as a litigator and began to gravitate to a family law practice. She continued her legal career as a member and owner of Pennington & Wicks. Later, she formed the firm of Ryals, Robinson & Saffo, PC, and subsequently formed her own firm, Robin Wicks Robinson, PC, where she practiced law from 2005 until she became a District Court Judge in 2011.

While in private practice, Judge Robinson provided legal representation to thousands of New Hanover County citizens, a significant number of whom were women and many of whom were underprivileged and in need of pro bono or reduced fee services in order to have equal access to justice. In her family law practice, she demonstrated keen legal knowledge and litigation skills, balanced with compassion, and forthrightness in providing legal services to people facing the difficult issues associated with divorce, including custody, child support, alimony and property distribution. Judge Robinson was a well-regarded attorney by her colleagues and the judiciary for her significant expertise, integrity and fairness in all her dealings.

Judge Robinson has been recognized as a leader in her profession by numerous appointments and selections to leadership roles on boards and committees of professional organizations

including the following: member of the North Carolina State Bar Ethics Committee; Secretary/Treasurer, Vice President and President of the Fifth Judicial District Bar; member of North Carolina Bar Association Family Law Council Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Committee; speaker for numerous CLE programs; member of the Executive Committee of the New Hanover County Bar Association; executive officer of its Young Lawyer Division (YLD) and chairman of YLD's Law Day (the Ask a Lawyer project); and CLE speaker for the Coastal Women Attorneys chapter of the North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys. She is a graduate of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce leadership institute, "Leadership Wilmington" and of the NC Center for Women in Public Service Summer Institute. In addition, she has been recognized by Super Lawyer as being in the top 5% of lawyers in North Carolina and has been named by the New Hanover County Commission for Women as a "Woman of Success."

Explain the impact of the nominee's accomplishments in the community, including any success stories, awards, and recognitions.

In 2002, Judge Robinson's expertise in family law was noted with the ultimate recognition provided by the North Carolina State Bar, certification as a specialist in family law. This reflects her substantial experience, ongoing extensive continuing legal education, and rigorous peer review and examination process. At the time she became a North Carolina State Bar Certified Specialist in Family Law, Judge Robinson was one of only two certified family law specialists in the Fifth Judicial District, the only woman so certified, and was one of only eight women so certified in eastern North Carolina.

Judge Robinson's propensity for constructive problem-solving, empathy, and calm, studied dispute resolution is reflected in her being a pioneer in the local bar's alternative dispute resolution process. In 1993, she was in the initial class of attorneys to become certified as an arbitrator of District Court cases involving various issues. In 1996, she was, again, an early recipient of certification as a mediator of Superior Court cases involving such issues as business disputes and personal injury. With the advent of the Family Court System in 1999, she was in the initial group of attorneys to qualify as a mediator of Family Court cases. She is also a Certified Family Financial Mediator and a Certified Parent Coordinator. While in private practice, Judge Robinson was frequently sought out by her family law colleagues to mediate various family law issues because of her success in facilitating the settlement of the cases. All of these certifications are indicative of her knowledge, judgment, experience, integrity and special training. Through her leadership in alternative dispute resolution, she has enhanced the esteem of her profession and the quality of life of people in conflict.

Judge Robinson recognized that her skills, knowledge, and temperament were well-suited for a judicial role and she sought a position as a District Court Judge for the Fifth Judicial District. She was honored to be appointed by Governor Beverly Purdue in 2011 and has been overwhelmingly re-elected since then. Judge Robinson serves as a Family Court Judge; DWI and Drug Treatment Judge; and also presides over Juvenile Court, and other District Court cases, including domestic violence, child support, mental health commitments, criminal, and civil. As a judge, Judge Robinson believes that every person appearing before the court deserves to be treated fairly and with respect. She believes every litigant deserves the opportunity to have his/her point of view expressed and heard. She is an exceptional listener and her calm, quiet

demeanor serves her well in the courtroom. Judge Robinson is firm, but fair in her dealings with litigants in her courtroom. She is always motivated by what is right and seeks a just result that will serve the ends of justice, benefit the community, and advance the interests of everyone affected by her ruling.

Explain community involvement and/or volunteer activities. List leadership positions, if applicable.

Judge Robinson pursues her passions through her community activities, spending her free time serving organizations she truly cares about in leadership roles. Her diverse interests prove that she is a real renaissance woman.

Judge Robinson loves music and has been a member of First Presbyterian Church's Chancel Choir since 1988. She is dedicated to the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra and has served on its board of directors from 1991 to 1999 and from 2003 to the present, serving on its executive committee and as its Treasurer, Vice President and President.

Judge Robinson's faith informs everything she does and this is evident through her dedication to her church, First Presbyterian. She has served as the ruling elder since 2005, and has served and currently serves as a deacon. She has also served on the board of directors of the preschool, as an adult Sunday school teacher and as the chair of various ministries.

Judge Robinson has pursued her passion in history by sitting on the board of directors of the Cape Fear Museum Associates, Inc. and serving as its president and vice president. She was recognized at its volunteer awards banquet for service on its board of directors and substantial volunteer hours in service to the museum. Her father was an aviator in World War II and she holds World War II veterans in high esteem. She was able to honor them through her service as a member of the U.S.S. North Carolina Battleship Commission.

As a small business owner and an attorney who has represented small business, Judge Robinson provided her expertise as a member of the Cape Fear Community College Small Business Center Advisory Board. Our community has also been the beneficiary of her expertise through her position as a member to the New Hanover County Planning Board.

In furtherance of her desire to give back to her community, Judge Robinson has served on the board of directors of Mercy Homeless Shelter, Inc., and was a member of the Junior League of Wilmington, Inc. where she chaired several committees and was the recipient of the Esther Elliott Sparkman Community Service Award.

As the mother of James Hendry Robinson, III, and Wallace Katherine Mclean Robinson, Judge Robinson has been very involved in their education and has been a PTA member at Alderman Elementary School, Williston Middle School and New Hanover High School. At Alderman she was a member of the board of directors and served as the newsletter editor; at Williston, she was a member of the board of directors, and at New Hanover HS she is a graduate project judge. She was a Junior Achievement volunteer teacher for many years and has been a Teen Court volunteer.

Describe how the nominee has shown commitment to or support of the YWCA's Mission of eliminating racism and empowering women.

Judge Robinson has lived a life committed to empowering women and eliminating racism through her faith, her community service, her legal representation, and her dedication to others. Her resume is replete with examples, a few of which are shared here.

Judge Robinson believes in lifting up girls and women and, as a woman who has been mentored and helped by those before her, seeks to give back to the next generation. She has demonstrated her leadership and her devotion by encouraging the participation of women in the legal profession, advocating for the rights of women under the law, and advancing the cause of equal justice.

Judge Robinson is honored to serve under a gubernatorial appointment to the North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement since 2010. The mission of the Council is to advise the Governor, the North Carolina legislature and state departments on the issues impacting women in North Carolina by raising awareness of the impact of violence against women and directing available resources to serve victims in communities across the State; by collecting and distributing information about the status of women in North Carolina; by acting as a resource for local and regional Councils/Commissions for Women; by collaborating with other groups and individuals working on behalf of women; by assuring that necessary services, policies and programs are provided to those in need and strengthening existing programs; and by reviewing applications, awarding grants and monitoring programs providing self-sufficiency development for women and families in transition.

While in private practice, Judge Robinson evidenced her devotion and commitment to women by accepting hundreds of cases referred through the YWCA's former Women's Resource Center, the Domestic Violence Shelter, and Legal Aid of North Carolina. She regularly conducted family law clinics at the YWCA, donating her time and knowledge to educate women on family law issues.

Judge Robinson's commitment to giving back and lifting up is further evidenced by being a recipient of a Legal Aid of North Carolina pro bono award for New Hanover County for three years in recognition of her many hours of time and service to indigent people who otherwise would not have equal access to justice and by being a two time winner of the Addison Hewlett Award presented by the New Hanover County Bar Association for extraordinary pro bono work.

Judge Robinson has been honored by the Domestic Violence Shelter for her many hours of service for her volunteer work in Women's Empowerment program and for assisting clients on a pro bono and reduced fee basis.

Judge Robinson has been a leader in promoting and fundraising for YWCA Teen Leader scholarship since 1996 and has assisted with the former YWCA Teen Leadership Experience Program and the "Take Your Daughters to Work" program.

From her experience with community service and pro bono work, to her legal career, pioneering the local bar's alternative dispute resolution process, and qualification as a family law specialist, to her judgeship Judge Robinson has shown herself to be an outstanding member of our community. She has set high goals for herself and has achieved them with quiet dignity, intelligence, humility and grace. She always finds the right words for every situation; she is affirming of others, never jealous or envious, but takes joy in their accomplishments. Judge Robinson for all of her years of tireless service truly deserves to be honored as a Woman of Achievement.