

CAN I MEET WITH THE JUDGE?



Hon. Debora A. Faulkner
Probate Judge for Greenville County
1200 Greenville County Square
301 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29601
(864) 467-7170
www.greenvillecounty.org/probate

Dear Fellow Citizens:

First, I want to express to you my sincere sympathy in the loss of your loved one. My office will make sure that your experience here will be as simple and painless as possible.

"I voted for you and now I need help. May I meet with you about my case?" I hear that quite often, and many times I am not able to discuss your case with you. I would like to take this opportunity to explain why.

The Canons of Judicial Ethics govern how Judges preside over cases. One of the rules is the following:

"A Judge shall not initiate, permit, or consider ... communications made to the Judge outside the presence of the parties concerning a pending or impending proceeding ..."

As such, I am not allowed to communicate with anyone individually about a pending case or about a matter that could be a case in my court. This is to ensure fairness and impartiality to all. Therefore, if you are not able to meet with me, it is because I am to remain impartial without any outside

influences whatsoever. Everyone involved has a right to a fair and impartial hearing.

However, I do encourage you to seek legal advice. Your attorney can advocate for you and you alone. He or she can explain to you what legal remedies are available. If you need help choosing an attorney, you may call the South Carolina Bar Attorney Referral Service at 1-800-868-2284 or go to www.scbbar.org. If you are unable to afford an attorney, you can call the South Carolina Bar's Pro Bono Program at 1-888-346-5592 to see if you qualify for legal assistance at a free or reduced rate.

The Probate Court office has free classes on basic probate procedures available for you. You may register for these classes online with homccoy@greenvillecounty.org or call Holly McCoy at 864-467-7614.

Thank you for your kind support and understanding.

Very truly yours,
Debora A. Faulkner
Probate Judge
Greenville County