**Description of Forms for tracking cases and orders in District Court**

1. **Order Status List**—This is an Excel spreadsheet and is the master list of every hearing or trial. I filled in the cases as I called the calendar or before court each day and updated it during the day as each case was heard. Due dates for orders are noted. I color-coded cases on which orders were outstanding and cleared the highlighting once the order was filed. There is also a column for hyperlinks to other documents, such as Case Notes, so these documents can be opened directly from the Order Status list.

2. **Case Notes**—I maintained a Case Notes file for nearly every case I heard but especially complex cases or cases with multiple issues to be considered at different times. This form includes the basic information for the case at the start and you can add a section for each new hearing, so that there is one file which includes all of the hearings.

3**. Timeline**—This includes every important date, including dates based upon actions in the court, such as filing dates, hearing dates, dates order are entered, etc., as well as factual dates—date of marriage, date of separation, dates of relevant events in the case. I maintained one timeline for each case and updated as the case came back to court for additional matters. In a simple case, it may be included in the Case Notes, but in a complex case it would normally be a separate document.

4**. Exhibit List**—Used mainly during complex cases with many exhibits. Note court action as to the exhibit as well as relevant testimony regarding documents.

5. **ED Spreadsheet**—This is an Excel spreadsheet which lists the property and debt values and distribution in table form, with calculations.

6. **Financial Affidavit analysis form**—This is an Excel spreadsheet which was based upon the Wake County financial affidavit at the time. This should be adapted to match up with the financial affidavits used by your district. This form also includes calculations, so I could put in whatever numbers I wanted and the form does the math for me.

7. **Financial Affidavit analysis form with PSS/alimony calculation**—This is an Excel spreadsheet which is based upon the Wake County financial affidavit at the time. This should be adapted to match up with the financial affidavits used by your district. This form includes calculations to determine the need for alimony and ability to pay.

8. **Notation of Court Action--** This first part of this form matches the Case Notes form, so you can copy and paste the introductory information from the Notes to this form. I used this to provide counsel and parties with a written notation of the ruling as rendered. It also includes instructions as to who will prepare the draft order, a deadline, and findings of fact about any disputed issues which are likely to cause problems in getting the order completed. I also attached any spreadsheets needed, such as the Financial Affidavit analysis or ED spreadsheet with my findings noted. DO NOT SIGN this form since it is not an order.

9. **Various tables to keep track of required findings of fact for claims**:

Deviation from Child Support guidelines factors

Alimony Factors

ED unequal distribution factors

Copy and paste the appropriate form into your Case Notes for the particular case to use during the hearing. Insert your findings during hearing or note lack of credible evidence on factor if there is none. These forms may also be an attachment to the Notation of Court Action to guide the attorney who is drafting the order and to make sure that all of the required factors are addressed. Whenever you encounter a case with a new list of required findings of fact, make a new template for that issue, based on a particular statute or case, and then when you have another case in the future, you’re ready for it. (Just make sure the statute or law hasn’t changed! And always check to make sure the form is current—and that includes these forms since they haven’t been updated recently! )

The best things about this method:

1. You do your work DURING court – since you don’t have time after.

2. You always have the entire history of the case easily available, without searching through the court file, and you can quickly find anything you are looking for with a word search. So when you do take something under advisement, you have everything you need to get started.

2. You don’t have to reinvent the wheel at each hearing for those cases which keep coming back.

3. You can immediately answer any questions from attorneys about what should be in the order, or check a draft to make sure that it includes what you wanted.

4. You don’t lose track of cases with outstanding orders.