

§ 7A-104. Disqualification; waiver; removal; when judge acts.

(a) The clerk shall not exercise any judicial powers in relation to any estate, proceeding, or civil action:

- (1) If he has, or claims to have, an interest by distribution, by will, or as creditor or otherwise;
- (2) If he is so related to any person having or claiming such an interest that he would, by reason of such relationship, be disqualified as a juror, but the disqualification on this ground ceases unless the objection is made at the first hearing of the matter before him;
- (3) If clerk or the clerk's spouse is a party or a subscribing witness to any deed of conveyance, testamentary paper or nuncupative will, but this disqualification ceases when such deed, testamentary paper, or will has been finally admitted to probate by another clerk, or before the judge of the superior court;
- (4) If clerk or the clerk's spouse is named as executor or trustee in any testamentary or other paper, but this disqualification ceases when the will or other paper is finally admitted to probate by another clerk, or before the judge of the superior court. The clerk may renounce the executorship and endorse the renunciation on the will or on some paper attached thereto, before it is propounded for probate, in which case the renunciation must be recorded with the will if it is admitted to probate.

(a1) The clerk may disqualify himself in a proceeding in circumstances justifying disqualification or recusement by a judge.

(a2) The parties may waive the disqualification specified in this section, and upon the filing of such written waiver, the clerk shall act as in other cases.

(b) When any of the disqualifications specified in this section exist, and there is no waiver thereof, or when there is no renunciation under subdivision (a)(4) of this section, any party in interest may apply to a superior court judge who has jurisdiction pursuant to G.S. 7A-47.1 or G.S. 7A-48 in that county, for an order to remove the proceedings to the clerk of superior court of an adjoining county in the district or set of districts; or he may apply to the judge to make either in vacation or during a session of court all necessary orders and judgments in any proceeding in which the clerk is disqualified, and the judge in such cases is hereby authorized to make any and all necessary orders and judgments as if he had the same original jurisdiction as the clerk over such proceedings.

(c) In any case in which the clerk of the superior court is executor, administrator, collector, or guardian of an estate at the time of his election or appointment to office, in order to enable him to settle such estate, a superior court judge who has jurisdiction pursuant to G.S. 7A-47.1 or G.S. 7A-48 in that county may make such orders as may be necessary in the settlement of the estate; and he may audit the accounts or appoint a commissioner to audit the accounts of such executor or administrator, and report to him for his approval, and when the accounts are so approved, the judge shall order the proper records to be made by the clerk. (C.C.P., ss. 419-421; 1871-72, cc. 196, 197; Code, ss. 104-107; Rev., ss. 902-905; 1913, c. 70, s. 1; C.S., ss. 939-942; 1935, c. 110, s. 1; 1971, c. 363, s. 4; 1977, c. 546; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 15; 1989, c. 493, s. 1.)