

NEWS RELEASE

R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

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Jury convicts habitual felon and judge sentences him to 12-15 years

Collel Steele, 44, was tried before a Mecklenburg County jury beginning on Monday, April 18. The Honorable W. Robert Bell, Superior Court Judge, presided over the trial in courtroom 5150. The jury found Steele *guilty* of 1) felony larceny after breaking or entering and 2) felony possession of stolen goods. Steele admitted his status as a habitual felon and was sentenced to 146-185 months in prison. Steele's prior convictions in Mecklenburg County include common law robbery, robbery with a dangerous weapon, larceny from the person, and breaking or entering. Additionally, Steele was previously convicted of being a habitual felon in 1998.

Having previously pled *not guilty* and requesting a trial by jury, Aaron Gladden, 33, changed his plea to *guilty as charged*. Gladden was sentenced for 1) possession with intent to sell or deliver a cocaine within 1000 feet of a school and 2) being a habitual felon. Judge Bell sentenced him to 67-90 months in prison.

Tavaris Fowler, 30, was called for trial in courtroom 5130 before The Honorable Forrest D. Bridges, Superior Court Judge. Fowler pled guilty to two counts of possessing cocaine before the jury was empanelled. He received 14-18 months in prison; that sentence to begin at the expiration of a 21-26 month sentence currently being served in a North Carolina prison.

James Thompson, 41, was called for trial in courtroom 5370 before The Honorable H. William Constangy. Thompson was charged with 1) possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine, 2) sell cocaine, 3) deliver cocaine, and 4) being a habitual felon. Thompson was alleged to have sold cocaine to an undercover police officer. Yesterday, a Mecklenburg County jury found Thompson *not guilty* of the three felony drug charges; as a result of the verdict, the defendant's habitual felon status could not be considered by the jury.

Tyrus Winslow, 39, pled guilty to two counts of possession of cocaine. Winslow was sentenced to 24-30 months in prison. This sentence is to begin at the expiration of 95-123 month sentence currently being served in a North Carolina prison.

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