

NEWS RELEASE

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Eighteen felons sent to prison

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Twenty-one defendants entered guilty pleas in Mecklenburg County Superior Court before The Honorable Richard D. Boner, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge. Eighteen were sentenced to prison; some of the twenty-one were not habitual felons under North Carolina Law. The defendants entered guilty pleas in administrative courtroom 5350 on Tuesday, July 31, Wednesday, August 1, and Friday, August 3, 2012.

Among those convicted were:

Richard Gregory, 48, pled guilty to 1) two counts of common law robbery and 2) being a habitual felon. Gregory was sentenced to 66-91 months in prison. Gregory's prior criminal record includes sixteen common law robbery and four attempted common law robbery convictions.

Brandon Moore, 27, pled guilty to 1) felony possession of stolen goods and 2) being a habitual felon. Moore was sentenced to 66-89 months in prison. Moore's prior criminal record includes common law robbery, felony breaking or entering, and three robbery with a dangerous weapon convictions.

Willie Simpson, 40, pled guilty to 1) sale of cocaine and 2) possession of cocaine with intent to sell or deliver. Simpson was sentenced to 25-39 months in prison. Some of Simpson's prior convictions include robbery with a dangerous weapon, possession of a stolen motor vehicle, and felony breaking or entering.

Melvin Young, 37, pled guilty to 1) delivery of cocaine and 2) being a habitual felon. Young was sentenced to 67-93 months. Some of Young's prior convictions include larceny of a motor vehicle, possession of cocaine, and being a habitual felon.

Jeremy Beachem, 21, pled guilty to 1) felony larceny and 2) being a habitual felon. Beachem was sentenced to 44-65 months in prison. Some of Beachem's prior convictions include felony breaking or entering a motor vehicle and conspiracy to commit larceny from the person.

Jerry Elliot, 56, pled guilty to 1) felony larceny from a merchant and 2) felony possession of stolen goods. Elliot was sentenced to 32-49 months in prison. Elliot's prior criminal record includes sale or delivery of cocaine, felony larceny, and over thirty misdemeanor larceny convictions.

Eric Zakobielski, 34, pled guilty to common law robbery. Zakobielski was sentenced to 31-47 months in prison. Some of Zakobielski's prior convictions include possession of cocaine, larceny of a firearm, and common law robbery.

Donald Blakney, 23, pled guilty to 1) felony breaking or entering, 2) felony larceny after breaking or entering and 3) being a habitual felon. Blakney was sentenced to 53-76 months in prison. Blakney's prior criminal record includes four felony breaking or entering and two larceny after breaking or entering convictions.

Barbara Torrence, 49, previously pled guilty to felony obtaining a controlled substance by fraud or forgery. At the defendant's request, Judge Boner continued sentencing until a later date. The defendant failed to report to court for sentencing, and as a result Judge Boner issued an order for her arrest. Torrence was later arrested, and was sentenced to 10-21 months in prison. Torrence's prior criminal record includes five convictions for obtaining a controlled substance by fraud or forgery.

Note: Almost all guilty pleas entered in criminal administrative court are the result of an agreed upon plea arrangement between the State and the defendant, which is then approved by the sentencing judge. For more information about why most cases must be resolved by plea negotiation instead of jury trial, please visit the "Understanding Criminal Court" section of the DA's website at www.charmeckda.com.

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