

# NEWS RELEASE

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**January 30, 2019**

## **48 convicted of drug crimes; 24 referred to recovery courts**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of January 14, 2019, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 48 defendants, including eight defendants who were convicted of drug trafficking offenses. The defendants entered their guilty pleas in courtroom 5310 before The Honorable W. Robert Bell and The Honorable Carla N. Archie, Superior Court Judges. The convictions were for crimes that included possessing, selling and trafficking in illegal drugs. Based on the structured sentencing laws in North Carolina, sentences ranged from probation to active prison sentences.

While the team works to hold drug sellers and traffickers accountable for their crimes, prosecutors also connect defendants facing addictions with treatment services. Since December 1, 2018, a total of 24 defendants have been referred to Mecklenburg County Recovery Courts. There were seven referrals to District STEP Recovery Court, nine referrals to Superior STEP Recovery Court, four referrals to Wellness Court (formerly Mental Health Treatment Court) and four referrals to DWI Recovery Court. Additionally, one participant successfully graduated from DWI Recovery Court on January 17, 2019.

Among the defendants who pled guilty and were sent to prison were:

Cirilo Olvera-Yanez, 29, pled guilty to trafficking in cocaine by possession. Judge Bell sentenced Olvera-Yanez to 70-93 months in prison. In November 2017, officers with a Department of Homeland Security Task Force seized approximately 2 kilograms of cocaine after conducting a traffic stop on Olvera-Yanez' vehicle.

Dallas Walters, 26, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in heroin by possession and 2) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Judge Archie sentenced Walters to a total of 30-55 months in prison. In August 2017, Matthews police executed a search warrant at Walters' home, discovering more than 4 grams of heroin and a firearm.

Devin Pearson, 23, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in opiates by possession and 2) felony possession of marijuana. Judge Bell sentenced Pearson to 25-42 months in prison. Pearson was also sentenced to an additional 4-14 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 18 months of supervised probation. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police seized more than 900 dosage units of fentanyl from Pearson's home.

Trevon Hampton, 25, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in opiates by possession and 2) attempted trafficking in opiates by transportation. Judge Bell sentenced Hampton to 15-27

months in prison. He was also sentenced to an additional 15-27 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation.

Tereika Jackson, 34, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in cocaine by possession and 2) possession with the intent to sell or deliver cocaine. Judge Bell sentenced Jackson to 11-23 months in prison. Jackson was also sentenced to an additional 5-15 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending her successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation.

Nathanael Smith, 30, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in cocaine by possession and 2) felony maintaining a vehicle for controlled substances. Judge Bell sentenced Smith to 10-21 months in prison.

Ishaq Syed, 25, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in cocaine by possession and 2) attempted trafficking in cocaine by transportation. Judge Bell sentenced Syed to 10-21 months in prison. Syed was also sentenced to an additional 10-21 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation.

*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](http://www.charmeckda.com).*

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