

NEWS RELEASE

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Juries convict 2 defendants in Misdemeanor Appeals Team trials

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Mecklenburg County juries recently convicted two defendants who were tried by the District Attorney's Misdemeanor Appeals Team in Superior Court. Six others entered guilty pleas, and another defendant remanded his case to District Court for sentencing. Motions were also held in other matters. The proceedings were held during the week of February 10, 2020, in courtrooms 5170 and 5110 before The Honorable Forrest D. Bridges and The Honorable Donnie Hoover, Superior Court Judges.

The Misdemeanor Appeals Team prosecutes cases in which the defendant was convicted in District Court, and then appeals his or her conviction to Superior Court for a jury trial as allowed under North Carolina law.

Susan Houghtaling, 64, was tried for driving while impaired. A jury returned a verdict of *guilty* as charged. Judge Bridges sentenced Houghtaling to 60 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail; that sentence was suspended pending her successful completion of 12 months of unsupervised probation.

William Carwile, 62, was tried for assault on a female. A jury returned a verdict of *guilty* as charged. Judge Bridges sentenced Carwile to 20 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 12 months of unsupervised probation.

Jose Bustillo, 61, pled guilty to driving while impaired. Judge Bridges sentenced Bustillo to 12 months in prison.

Jeffrey Dorsey, 34, pled guilty to driving while impaired. Judge Bridges sentenced Dorsey to 30 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 12 months of unsupervised probation.

David Bausman, 50, pled guilty to driving while impaired. Judge Bridges sentenced Bausman to 120 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 12 months of unsupervised probation.

Edmund Lockamy, 44, pled guilty to 1) assault on a government official and 2) resisting a public officer. Judge Hoover sentenced Lockamy to 60 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 18 months of supervised probation.

Luis Morales-Pegueros, 23, pled guilty to driving while impaired. Judge Bridges sentenced Morales-Pegueros to 60 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 12 months of unsupervised probation.

Christopher Seiferlein, 29, pled guilty to assault on a government official. Judge Bridges continued judgment in the matter.

Note: Misdemeanors and infractions are originally prosecuted in district court in North Carolina. In criminal district court, a judge determines guilt, not a jury; this is commonly referred to as a “bench trial.” However, defendants have a right to appeal a conviction from the district court to the superior court for a trial de novo. The new trial in superior court must be a jury trial, not a bench trial. In a de novo trial, the jury cannot be informed that a district court judge previously found the defendant guilty; further, a record of any evidence, including testimony, from district court may not be introduced. While the DA’s Office prosecutes nearly 225,000 misdemeanors and infractions each year in district court in Mecklenburg County, each defendant is entitled to exercise his/her right to appeal to the superior court. When a misdemeanor or infraction occupies the limited time available in our superior courtrooms, it the intent of the DA’s Office to keep the public informed of the results through news releases like this one. Due to the volume of misdemeanors and infractions prosecuted in district court each day, reports like this are not possible for all of those cases.

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