

NEWS RELEASE

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21 convicted of drug crimes; 10 others graduate from Recovery Courts

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of April 29, 2019, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 21 defendants in courtroom 5310 before The Honorable W. Robert Bell, Superior Court Judge. 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 March 22, 2019, a total of 15 defendants have been referred to Mecklenburg County Recovery Courts, and five defendants have enrolled. Five were referred to Superior STEP Recovery Court, five were referred to District STEP Recovery Court, four were referred to Wellness Court (formerly Mental Health Treatment Court) and one defendant was referred to DWI Recovery Court.

In addition, 10 Recovery Court participants successfully graduated during the quarterly graduation ceremony held April 11, 2019. One graduated from Wellness Court, five graduated from DWI Recovery Court and four graduated from District STEP Recovery Court.

Among the 21 defendants who pled guilty and were sent to prison were:

Larry Williams, 44, pled guilty to trafficking in cocaine by possession. Williams was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison. When Charlotte-Mecklenburg police conducted a search of Williams' vehicle and house in October 2018, they located approximately 2 kilograms of cocaine.

Chai Xiong, 48, pled guilty to trafficking in opiates by possession. Xiong was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison.

Damion Geter, 41, pled guilty to 1) trafficking in cocaine by possession, 2) trafficking in cocaine by transportation, 3) possession with the intent to sell or deliver cocaine and 4) resisting a public officer. Geter was sentenced to 35-51 months in prison.

Kenneth Black, 55, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in cocaine by possession and 2) possession with the intent to sell or deliver cocaine. Black was sentenced to 12-24 months in prison. He 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.

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