

NEWS RELEASE

Spencer B. Merriweather III
District Attorney

June 2, 2020

DA Merriweather responds to public call to action

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The following is a statement from Mecklenburg County District Attorney Spencer B. Merriweather III:

“I have struggled with how to make sense of the events of the last week because the problems that confront us have layers. Public demonstrations locally and across the country have focused our collective attention on law enforcement-involved killings of African Americans. Despite the intentions of so many of the finest among us who have dedicated their lives so that others can live in peace, goodwill alone is no defense from the affliction of systemic racism. I’ve come to know this through a lifetime of experiences as a black man in the United States, and I continue to recognize this as a principal actor in the criminal justice system.

“Prosecutors have the capacity to wield great influence over the people’s lives and their communities. We are at our best when that influence is governed by humility and by an enduring appreciation that we are called to *serve, not rule*. My profession has often fallen short to the detriment of historically disenfranchised people, but I do believe the Mecklenburg County District Attorney’s Office has a history of aspiring to be better. We will do that today by actively listening to voices for change and being willing partners with the community in achieving it.

“The vibrant exercise of free speech in our community in recent days should be celebrated as a means by which we can fully realize our promise as a country. And yet, that vibrant exercise is rightfully differentiated from mayhem. Damaging a grocery store frequented by senior citizens in a food desert during a pandemic, or other acts of senseless destruction, enfranchise no one and make no one more free. We will seek to uphold the law because we believe people are entitled to protection under it no matter what they look like or what zip code they reside in. We recognize our moral and professional obligation to value black and brown life, liberty and property. To fully honor that obligation, my staff and I stand ready to join with the community in advancing change that truly secures justice for all people.”

Note: For more information about the District Attorney’s Office, visit www.charmeckda.com. For updates and other information, “like” the DA’s Office on Facebook at www.facebook.com/charmeckda and follow us on Twitter: @CharMeckDA.

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