

NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney

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Jury convicts habitual felon; 3 plead guilty

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Habitual Felon Team convicted four defendants during its latest trial session. The proceedings were held during the week of July 1, 2019, in courtrooms 5110 and 5370 before The Honorable Karen Eady-Williams and The Honorable Louis A. Trosch, Jr., Superior Court Judges. Court was closed on July 4, 2019, in observance of Independence Day.

Lester Artis, 63, was tried for 1) felony flee to elude arrest with a motor vehicle and 2) being a habitual felon. A jury found Artis *guilty* of felony flee to elude arrest with a motor vehicle. Artis then admitted his status as a habitual felon. Judge Trosch sentenced Artis to 59-83 months in prison. Artis' prior convictions include escape from state prison and common law robbery.

Andy Gantt, 57, was tried for 1) failure to register as a sex offender and 2) being a habitual felon. A jury found Gantt *not guilty* of failure to register as a sex offender. The State could not proceed on Gantt's status as a habitual felon due to the verdict for the underlying felony.

Bryon Cooper, 51, pled guilty to 1) felony flee to elude arrest with a motor vehicle, 2) driving while impaired and 3) being a habitual felon. Judge Eady-Williams sentenced Cooper to 78-106 months in prison. Cooper's prior convictions include two prior counts of possession with the intent to sell or deliver cocaine and possession of cocaine.

Steve Martin, 39, pled guilty to possession with the intent to sell or deliver cocaine. Judge Trosch sentenced Martin to 16-37 months in prison.

Eric Smith, 50, pled guilty to misdemeanor larceny by trick. Judge Eady-Williams sentenced Smith to 120 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

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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