

NEWS RELEASE

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21 defendants convicted by Drug Team; 16 referred to Recovery Courts

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of August 19, 2019, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 21 defendants in courtroom 5310 before The Honorable W. Todd Pomeroy, Superior Court Judge.

While the team works to hold drug sellers and traffickers accountable for their crimes, prosecutors also connect defendants facing addictions with treatment services. Since July 24, 2019, a total of 16 defendants have been referred to Mecklenburg County Recovery Courts, and eight have enrolled. Two were referred to Superior STEP Recovery Court, two were referred to District STEP Recovery Court, seven were referred to Wellness Court (formerly Mental Health Treatment Court), and five were referred to DWI Recovery Court.

In addition, five Recovery Courts participants successfully graduated during this period. Two participants from District STEP Recovery Court and one participant from Superior STEP Recovery Court were honored in quarterly graduation ceremonies held on August 1, 2019. Graduation ceremonies were also held for two Wellness Court participants during their regular court sessions.

Among those defendants who pled guilty were:

Sharieff York, 31, pled guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Judge Pomeroy sentenced York to 12-24 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, York must serve 90 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

Sara Shipes, 33, pled guilty to selling cocaine. Judge Pomeroy sentenced Shipes to 15-27 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending her successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As a condition of her probation, Shipes must serve 60 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

Jenni Nguyen, 34, pled guilty to possession with the intent to sell or deliver marijuana. Judge Pomeroy sentenced Nguyen to 5-15 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending her successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As conditions of her probation, Nguyen must complete 75 hours of community service and pay a \$1,000 fine.

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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