

Year in Review



2016

District Attorney's Office
*26th Prosecutorial District
of North Carolina*
Mecklenburg County

A message from DA Andrew Murray

Andrew Murray is currently serving his second term as Mecklenburg County's elected District Attorney. Under his direction, the District Attorney's Office works to seek justice on behalf of the community in every case.



“ When I look back on the year, I see a team of dedicated public servants in my office who made a very successful year possible. They work on the front lines of the criminal justice system every day, supporting crime victims, seeking out the truth in every case and working to fairly and effectively hold defendants accountable for their actions. ”

R. ANDREW MURRAY,
District Attorney

As I look back on 2016, I feel tremendous pride for the hard work my office has done to protect Mecklenburg County.

My Crimes Against Property Team convicted a man who financially exploited an elderly woman with dementia. Prosecutors connected drug users with treatment programs to help them combat addictions. My staff worked with students of all ages to teach them about the criminal justice system. My prosecutors stood up in court for rape survivors and secured convictions of their attackers. A murderer who took the life of an innocent child will now spend the rest of his life behind bars.

When I look back on the year, I see a team of dedicated public servants in my office who made a very successful year possible. They work on the front lines of the criminal justice system every day, supporting crime victims, seeking out the truth in every case and working to fairly and effectively hold defendants accountable for their actions.

And yet, I know 2016 has been a tumultuous year both locally and nationally. Frustrations boiled over in our own community following the September officer-involved shooting death of Mr. Keith Lamont Scott. After an exhaustive review of the case, I released a detailed report containing evidence from the investigation and my office's legal analysis of the case.

While I hope the report will help bring closure to this case, I know we are grappling as a community to determine how to move forward together, build trust in the criminal justice system and ensure that all people are treated fairly under the law.

I look forward to being part of the ongoing discussion, and fortunately, we live in a community with government and civic leaders who are committed to seeking out solutions. My office and I have a responsibility to help lead the way, and we have already undertaken initiatives to create a more fair criminal justice system. (See

page 7 to learn more about how the District Attorney's Office is working to seek equity in justice.)

I believe I have some of the most skilled and thoughtful prosecutors in North Carolina. When I gather my employees together for staff meetings, I always end with these words imparted by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson: “[T]he citizen's safety lies in the prosecutor who tempers zeal with human kindness, who seeks truth and not victims, who serves the law and not factional purposes, and who approaches his task with humility.”

I pray my prosecutors and I rise to that duty every day.

Sincerely,


R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

Mission & introduction

District Attorney Andrew Murray provides this annual report to the public as part of his ongoing commitment to openly communicate about the work that he and his prosecutors do on behalf of the community. This report offers a look back at 2016 and an opportunity to learn about each prosecutorial team, local initiatives, the office’s work with students and more.

The District Attorney’s Office represents the State of North Carolina and prosecutes crimes and traffic offenses that occur in the State’s 26th Prosecutorial District, which covers Mecklenburg County and includes Charlotte,

Mint Hill, Matthews, Pineville, Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson.

The office prosecutes approximately 10,000 felonies and more than 200,000 misdemeanor and traffic offenses every year.

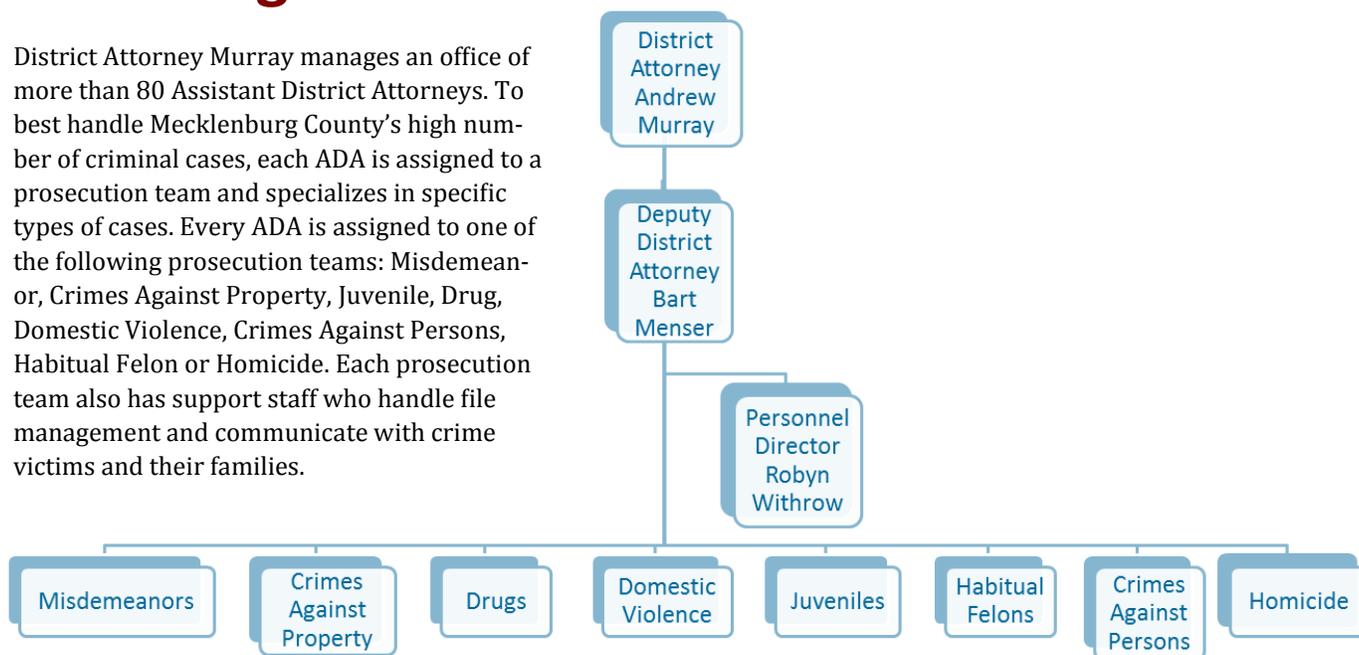
In every case, the goal of the District Attorney’s Office is to seek justice. Prosecutors must consider all evidence in each case and weigh a number of factors — such as public safety, strengths and weaknesses of the case, opportunities for rehabilitation and sentencing laws — in an effort to reach a just result for victims, defendants and the community as a whole.

“ The vision of the Mecklenburg County District Attorney’s Office: To provide fair and equal justice to the people of Mecklenburg County by doing the right thing — every time. ”

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Office organization

District Attorney Murray manages an office of more than 80 Assistant District Attorneys. To best handle Mecklenburg County’s high number of criminal cases, each ADA is assigned to a prosecution team and specializes in specific types of cases. Every ADA is assigned to one of the following prosecution teams: Misdemeanor, Crimes Against Property, Juvenile, Drug, Domestic Violence, Crimes Against Persons, Habitual Felon or Homicide. Each prosecution team also has support staff who handle file management and communicate with crime victims and their families.



The Misdemeanor Team

The Misdemeanor Team, which prosecutes all traffic citations and misdemeanor crimes that occur in Mecklenburg County, has the highest caseload of any prosecution team in the District Attorney's Office. The team typically prosecutes more than 200,000 traffic and misdemeanor offenses each year. These charges range from speeding tickets to misdemeanor assaults and even misdemeanor death by vehicle.

The Misdemeanor Team leads a number of innovative courts aimed at improving the courts' efficiency. Citizens Court provides an opportunity for mediation between parties involved in privately-initiated, non-violent cases. Environmental Court addresses cases related to housing, community health and other violations.

The Misdemeanor Team also prosecutes cases in which a defendant was convicted of a misdemeanor offense in District Court and then appeals his or her conviction to Superior Court for a jury trial, as allowed under North Carolina law. Over the course of 2016, Misdemeanor Team prosecutors

led a number of three-week trial sessions in Superior Court, allowing these prosecutors to try 47 cases in 2016. These trial sessions frequently targeted impaired drivers who threaten the safety of the community's roadways.

At the direction of District Attorney Andrew Murray, the Misdemeanor Team continues to place an emphasis on impaired drivers, particularly those who repeatedly drive while impaired. In December, a jury found Donald Johnson guilty of habitual impaired driving. He was sentenced to 18-31 months in prison. Another habitual impaired driver, Robert Stewart, pled guilty in August and was sentenced to 25-39 months in prison.

The three-week trial sessions also have the benefit of tackling what was once a high volume of misdemeanor cases awaiting trial in Superior Court. Thanks to the team's aggressive trial schedule, that number has been reduced, allowing the District Attorney's Office to more quickly seek justice in these cases.

The Juvenile Team

The District Attorney's Juvenile Team recognizes the importance of connecting at-risk youth with community resources that can help them reach their full potential. While the team strives to hold young people accountable for their actions, these prosecutors also work to ensure that juveniles receive treatment and rehabilitative services.

In North Carolina, defendants who are age 16 and older are prosecuted as adults in the criminal justice system. Those who are age 15 and younger fall under the jurisdiction of the state's Juvenile Court. In 2016, the District Attorney's Juvenile Team prosecuted 471 juveniles charged with 2,309 crimes ranging from misdemeanors to violent felonies.

In early 2016, two of the team's prosecutors (pictured above with Shawna Pagano of Safe Alliance) attended the N.C. Conference of District Attorneys' Forensic Interviewing of Children training. Participants learned about forensic interviewing and the best practices for obtaining a statement from a child in a developmentally sensitive, unbiased and truth-seeking manner to be used in court. In September, another prosecutor attended the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina's 22nd Annual Symposium on Child Abuse and Neglect, where he learned about abusers' use of technology and how to secure digital evidence.

The team continues to represent the District Attorney's Office in the local initiative Race Matters for Juvenile Justice, a collaboration of judges, police, social workers, school system personnel, service providers and community partners to reduce the disproportionality of children and families of color in the juvenile justice system.



ELECTRONIC SYSTEM MORE EFFICIENTLY RESOLVES TRAFFIC CITATIONS

In summer 2016, a new electronic system launched across North Carolina to give people the opportunity to resolve certain traffic violations without visiting the courthouse.

The Electronic Compliance and Dismissal (ECAD) system reduces the amount of time needed to review and process dismissals by creating a one-click approval process for prosecutors. This gives Mecklenburg County prosecutors more time to focus on driving while impaired cases, serious assaults and repeat offenders in District Court.

"This is a great tool that not only assists the public in fairly resolving traffic compliance matters but also creates a smarter and more effective means of addressing high caseloads," District Attorney Andrew Murray said in August. "My prosecutors and I are grateful for the state's efforts as we work together to improve the efficiency of the court system."

Through ECAD, defendants can request the dismissal of traffic violations pertaining to driver's licenses, registration and inspection if they have obtained compliance with the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) since receiving the citation. ECAD directly links to the DMV database to verify compliance.

Requests for a dismissal through ECAD must be made prior to seven business days from a defendant's scheduled court date. ECAD notifies the defendant via email when a request is approved or denied and if the defendant must appear in court on the assigned date.

Visit onlineservices.nccourts.org for more information.

The Drug Team

The Drug Team's top priority is targeting drug traffickers who bring large quantities of dangerous drugs into the community. With heroin remaining as a deadly and prevalent drug in Mecklenburg County and across the state, prosecutors worked hard in 2016 to take heroin traffickers — some of whom have ties to drug cartels — off of the streets.

In July, the team convicted Marco Robles-Cruz of trafficking in heroin after detectives discovered more than 6 kilograms of heroin. He was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison. Another defendant, Roberto Contreras-Gonzalez, was sentenced in August to 134-186 months in prison for attempted heroin trafficking charges after Charlotte-Mecklenburg police found 91 grams of heroin in a shed and more than 700 grams of heroin buried in a flower bed. Contreras-Gonzalez admitted that he typically sold \$700 worth of heroin each day.

While the Drug Team aggressively targets drug traffickers and sellers, the

District Attorney's Office recognizes the critical need for treatment programs for drug users. Mecklenburg County's drug treatment court programs serve defendants who face drug or alcohol addictions and who are accused or convicted of non-violent offenses. These programs connect them with the treatment and counseling services necessary to combat addictions and prevent future crime.

Mecklenburg County's treatment courts served a total of 396 people over the course of the 2016 fiscal year.

In December, the Drug Team's supervisor, Assistant District Attorney Jeff Davis, was honored with a Patriot Award by the Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program. Two prosecutors supervised by ADA Davis are U.S. Army Reservists, and one nominated him for this award, which honors those who contribute to national security and protecting liberty and freedom by supporting employee participation in America's National Guard and Reserve force.

Assistant District Attorney Regina Hinson, a prosecutor on the District Attorney's Drug Team, speaks with students.



Mecklenburg County's treatment courts, which connect defendants with counseling to combat addictions and prevent future crime, served 396 people over the course of the 2016 fiscal year.

The Crimes Against Property Team

The District Attorney's Crimes Against Property Team is responsible for prosecuting a wide range of crimes, including breaking or entering, obtaining property by false pretense, felony larceny, embezzlement, possession of stolen goods, identify theft and burglary.

While these offenses are not frequently violent, property crimes have the potential to disrupt victims' lives and result in the loss of hard-earned property. Crimes such as burglary and breaking or entering have an even greater impact on victims, who lose their sense of security. Community members should feel safe in their own homes. That is why the Crimes Against Property Team places an emphasis on the prosecution of defendants who commit residential break-ins, particularly those who repeatedly commit such crimes.

When Jordan Allen Williams and another man broke into a Charlotte home, the

victim was inside but fled when she heard her dog barking and window blinds being disturbed. Hiding behind a neighbor's car, she called 911 and watched as Williams and the other man entered her home. In May, Williams was convicted as a habitual breaking or entering status offender and sent to prison.

The Crimes Against Property Team utilizes habitual larceny and habitual breaking or entering laws to seek longer prison sentences for defendants who repeatedly do harm to the community.

When Joseph Bellamy was arrested for stealing clothing from a store in Northlake Mall, he already had convictions for more than a dozen counts of misdemeanor larceny. State law sets the maximum punishment for misdemeanor larceny as only a few months in jail. But Mecklenburg County prosecutors pursued the charge of habitual misdemeanor larceny, a felony offense. Bellamy was

convicted in April and sentenced to 16-29 months in prison.

The Crimes Against Property Team also has Assistant District Attorneys who prosecute financial crimes.

Brad Norwood befriended an 83-year-old woman, who suffered from dementia, after helping her up from a fall. Within weeks, Norwood had the victim sign a document that gave him power of attorney over all of her finances. Then, he had the victim give him \$35,000 to renovate her bathroom and build an outbuilding. When the victim's family learned what was happening, they revoked Norwood's power of attorney. The projects were never completed, and Norwood did not return the money. In August, a jury found him guilty of exploitation of a disabled or elder adult.

DA Murray retires from U.S. Coast Guard



District Attorney Andrew Murray, a Captain (O-6) in the United States Coast Guard, was honored with a retirement ceremony in September 2016 at Coast Guard Base Charleston, South Carolina.

After 35 years of faithful service to his country in the United States Coast Guard, District Attorney Andrew Murray retired from the military in 2016. He requested permission to go ashore for the last time during a retirement ceremony at Coast Guard Base Charleston, South Carolina on September 23.

As a Coastguardsman, Mecklenburg County's chief prosecutor was known as Captain Murray (O-6). He credits the Coast Guard for teaching him the skills he applies to his daily work as leader of the District Attorney's Office.

At his retirement ceremony, District Attorney Murray was presented with the Coast Guard Meritorious Service Medal for his leadership of a contingency force of 870 reservists assigned throughout the Coast Guard's largest district, which is comprised of seven sectors, spans 26 states and contains more than 12,000 miles of river and coastline. His previous awards include the Coast Guard Commendation Medal (three awards), the Coast Guard Achievement Medal and the Coast Guard 9/11 Service Medal.

District Attorney Murray's Coast Guard career began in 1980, when he enlisted after graduating from high school. He served six years of active duty. During that time, he worked as an aviation electronic technician and crewman aboard helicopters. Then, he became a reservist and was commissioned as an officer in 1989 after graduating from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Throughout his career as an attorney and eventually as district

attorney, he typically served 14 days each year, as well as one weekend every month, as an officer in the Coast Guard Reserve. He served in a number of roles. He was responsible for the coordination of law enforcement and search and rescue operations, and he worked as an analyst in the Coast Guard's Office of Counterterrorism and Defense Operations. Most recently, he acted as the Western Rivers and Coastal Region Senior Reserve Officer for the Coast Guard's Eighth District, monitoring the readiness of reservists assigned to seven sectors and providing technical advice, guidance and counsel on Reserve matters to the District Commander.

District Attorney Murray's service in the Coast Guard Reserve also included occasional calls to active duty. In 2013, he was called to active duty to work as a legal officer with the Gulf Coast Incident Management Team. His legal work contributed to Operation Deepwater Horizon, the federal cleanup effort for the massive 2010 oil spill — the largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history — that resulted from an explosion aboard the BP oil drilling rig Deepwater Horizon.



DA MURRAY CALLS ATTENTION TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN RADIO PSA

Why would a domestic violence victim stay in an abusive relationship? District Attorney Andrew Murray took to the airwaves in 2016 to address this question and call attention to the threats victims often hear from their abusers.

The “Be Their Hope” radio public service announcements were made possible by Beasley Media Group, which partnered with District Attorney Murray for the third year to raise awareness of domestic violence in the community. The public service announcements aired in May and June on Beasley Media Group’s local radio stations.

Although the reasons that victims may stay in an abusive relationship are varied and complex, one common factor frequently cited by victims is the threats they receive from abusers. An abuser may display a firearm in a menacing manner or threaten to take the victim’s children. Or victims may hear this threat: “If you leave me, I will kill you.” Many victims of domestic violence try to leave their abusers many times before they’re able to leave for good.

That is why victims need the public’s help, District Attorney Murray said. In the public service announcement, he asked community members to reach out and provide support to anyone who they suspect is a victim of domestic violence.

“As Mecklenburg’s chief prosecutor, I need you to call police, come to court and take a stand if you see abuse,” he said. “Please, stand with me, and be their hope.”



Created by District Attorney Andrew Murray in 2012, the Domestic Violence Team is made up of Assistant District Attorneys, support staff and law enforcement who work to seek justice for victims of domestic violence.

The Domestic Violence Team

Throughout 2016, the District Attorney’s Domestic Violence Team collaborated with community organizations to build partnerships with non-profits, law enforcement, advocates and others to help protect victims of domestic violence.

The Domestic Violence Team, which was established in 2012 by District Attorney Andrew Murray, prosecutes misdemeanor and felony crimes that occur between people in intimate relationships. District Attorney Murray is committed to providing this team with the resources needed to help domestic violence victims end the cycle of abuse. In 2016, Mecklenburg County graciously provided funding for an additional prosecutor, creating a group of seven attorneys who exclusively prosecute these crimes.

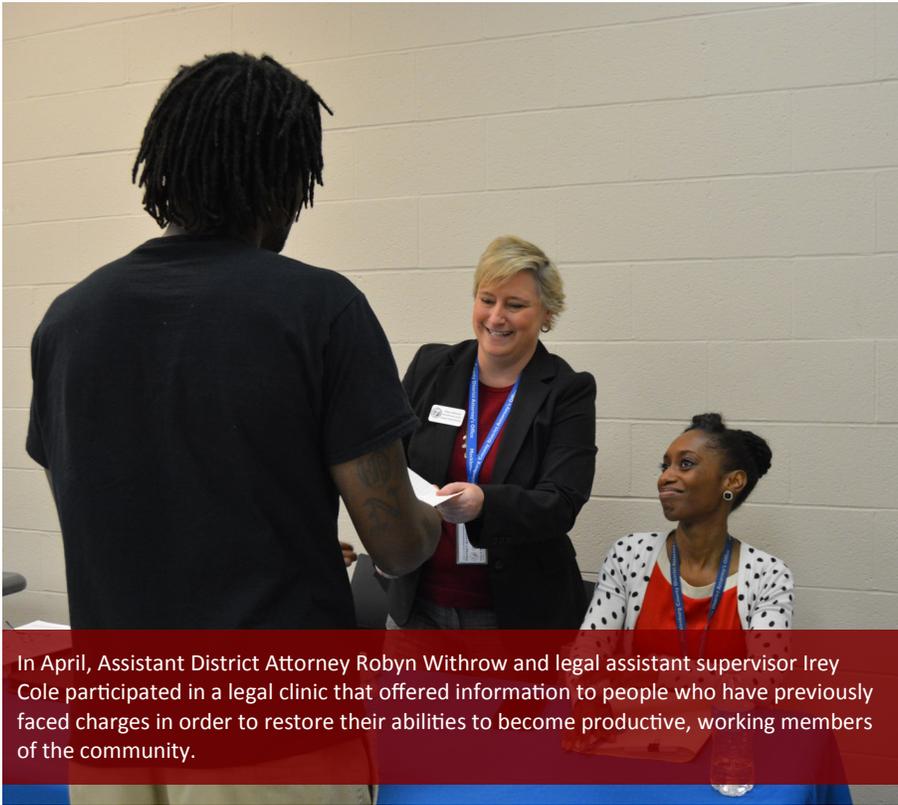
In July, Clifford McKnight was sent to prison after a jury found him guilty of assault by strangulation and felony habitual misdemeanor assault. The following month, Robert Barringer was sentenced to 60-84 months in prison after he was convicted of discharging a weapon into occupied property.

Assistant District Attorney Max Diaz (pictured at right), supervisor of the Domestic Violence Team, organized a meeting of his team, police, Safe Alliance and Legal Aid of North Carolina to share resources and ideas. During October, which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, ADA Diaz and his fellow prosecutors participated in a number of panel discussions, working to raise awareness and help victims navigate the court system.

Through a partnership with Mecklenburg County Domestic Violence, Substance Use and Violence Prevention Services, prosecutors began providing safety cards to victims in 2016. The cards are a simple but effective tool to make victims aware of resources that can help them safely leave abusive relationships. The discreet cards, which are available in English and Spanish, offer tips to help victims develop a safety plan for leaving an abusive partner.

“The simple act of informing victims about the services available here in Mecklenburg County empowers victims to become survivors,” District Attorney Murray said in February. “We’re so grateful to have such dedicated community partners who stand by my office as we work toward eliminating domestic violence.”





In April, Assistant District Attorney Robyn Withrow and legal assistant supervisor Irey Cole participated in a legal clinic that offered information to people who have previously faced charges in order to restore their abilities to become productive, working members of the community.

Seeking equity in justice

District Attorney Andrew Murray believes the people of Mecklenburg County deserve the confidence that every case in the local criminal justice system is handled with fairness and equity. Since District Attorney Murray took office in 2011, his office has taken several innovative steps toward that goal.

The District Attorney's Office uses a "roundtable" process in which plea offers and other important decisions about felony cases are made by groups of prosecutors to ensure the fair and consistent application of law to every defendant without regard to race or other non-relevant factors. In 2015, District Attorney Murray mandated that all prosecutors attend implicit bias training led by renowned experts.

The office remains dedicated to hiring a more culturally inclusive workforce. District Attorney Murray has expanded recruitment and taken steps to better compete for talented applicants who mirror the community because the justice system benefits when prosecutors from all walks of life contribute to decision making. The District Attorney's Office is not seeking diversity to simply fill quotas; the office needs inclusion and equity to make certain prosecutors are providing justice.

District Attorney Murray participates in the American Prosecutors Association's Use of Force Working Group, which includes representation from prosecutors, law enforcement and civil rights leaders, to improve prosecutorial responses to issues associated with officer-involved shootings. The District Attorney's Office incorporated nationally-recognized best practices into its fatal officer-involved shooting protocol, which is designed to ensure a thorough, impartial and responsibly transparent review of every officer-involved shooting that results in a fatality in Mecklenburg County.

The District Attorney's Office is not working alone. Mecklenburg County's courts are fortunate to have leaders and partners who work every day to advocate for efficient, researched-based strategies to make the courts fair and effective. Prosecutors continue to play an active role as partners in local initiatives such as Race Matters for Juvenile Justice and the Mecklenburg County coalition participating in the Safety and Justice Challenge, a national initiative aimed at creating fairer justice systems by exploring effective and safe alternatives to excessive jail incarceration.

OFFICER-INVOLVED SHOOTING PROTOCOL ENSURES THOROUGH, IMPARTIAL REVIEW

Confrontations between police and citizens in which deadly force is used are among the most important cases the District Attorney's Office will ever handle. District Attorney Andrew Murray believes it is critical to have a protocol that ensures a thorough, impartial, verifiable and transparent review is conducted of every such case in Mecklenburg County.

In 2016, the District Attorney's Office made its fatal officer-involved shooting protocol available to the public as part of the office's efforts to promote responsible transparency and help the community understand how these incidents are investigated and reviewed. The protocol, which incorporates nationally-recognized best practices, outlines prosecutors' duties and roles, the review of the investigations and the legal standards that must be applied to these cases.

When any officer-involved shooting occurs in Mecklenburg County, an experienced prosecutor responds to the scene and monitors the investigation. When the investigation is complete, the District Attorney's Homicide Team begins a comprehensive review of the evidence.

When determining whether charges should be sought, prosecutors must weigh applicable laws and legal standards, particularly those relating to imminent threat, self-defense and the defense of others. The review does not examine issues related to tactics or whether officers followed correct police procedures because the District Attorney has no administrative or civil authority in these matters.

[Click here](#) to read the Officer-Involved Shooting Resulting in a Fatality Protocol.

Community outreach

Attending meetings hosted by neighborhood associations, church groups, civic organizations and more, the District Attorney's Office continued its commitment in 2016 to create an open dialogue with residents of Mecklenburg County about the criminal justice system.

District Attorney Andrew Murray led discussions at citizen academy classes, and he spoke with a men's group at a local church. More than 60 prosecutors were invited to attend 31 National Night Out events across Mecklenburg County in August. It was the fifth year that District Attorney Murray sent his prosecutors to meet with neighbors and answer their questions about the courts during this annual crime prevention event.

In 2016, the District Attorney's Office placed a special emphasis on reaching out to young people. Over the course of the year, prosecutors were invited to speak about issues affecting young people today and community relations with law enforcement. Employees of the District Attorney's Office also shared their passion for their work, helping students of all ages explore potential careers in the criminal justice field.

Assistant District Attorneys met students at a number of schools to talk about the role of a prosecutor. They also engaged students learning about the courts during educational summer camps. In February, Assistant District Attorney Clayton Jones created a mock crime scene in the hallway of Trinity Episcopal School. The longtime homicide prosecutor explained forensic science and evidence collection as he guided students through

the scene to help them solve the crime.

A prosecutor visited Queens University of Charlotte in April to talk with students during a campus safety event about the impact of impaired driving and drug use, and another prosecutor participated in a

workshop for local teens to raise awareness of teen dating violence. Following an officer-involved shooting, Assistant District Attorney Bruce Lillie joined law enforcement on a panel at Central Piedmont Community College, where panelists spoke with students about the relationship between police and the community.

The District Attorney's Office also hosts its own program for students through a partnership with the Boy Scouts of America. The Exploring program allows high school students to learn about the criminal justice system by participating in monthly meetings, culminating with mock trials in which students act as the prosecutors and defense attorneys.

To request a prosecutor to speak at a community meeting, event or school, please visit the District Attorney's website at www.charmeckda.com.



Assistant District Attorney Clayton Jones, a prosecutor on the District Attorney's Homicide Team, leads Trinity Episcopal School students through a mock crime scene in February as he discusses forensic science and evidence necessary to prosecute a case.

DEPUTY DA HONORED WITH N.C. BAR ASSOCIATION AWARD

Deputy District Attorney Bart Menser, a longtime prosecutor and a highly respected member of the legal community, was honored with the N.C. Bar Association's Peter S. Gilchrist III Award in February for his outstanding and ethical service as a state prosecutor.

Deputy DA Menser consistently works to ensure that the entire judicial process — from arrest to resolution — is effective and fair. He was nominated by District Attorney Andrew Murray, who described his deputy as a mentor who is very aware of the power and responsibility that come with being a prosecutor.

"His sense of right and wrong and his constant evaluation of ethical duties — whether as a prosecutor or simply as a member of this community — make him the moral compass of the DA's Office," District Attorney Murray said.

Also supporting his nomination was Mecklenburg Public Defender Kevin Tully, who wrote that Deputy DA Menser has mentored generations of lawyers and is a model for all prosecutors who must balance their zeal for prosecution with the requirements of fairness.

"Bart's use of the authority and power possessed by prosecutors is always tempered by what is just and fair," Mr. Tully wrote.

The award is named for former District Attorney Peter Gilchrist, who served as Mecklenburg County's chief prosecutor for 36 years before retiring in 2010.



In April, District Attorney Andrew Murray joined police, child advocates, social workers and school officials to sign an agreement between agencies regarding the investigation, assessment and intervention in incidents of suspected sexual abuse of children.

The Crimes Against Persons Team

Working to protect Mecklenburg County and seek justice for victims of violent crimes, the District Attorney's Crimes Against Persons Team prosecutes defendants such as armed robbers, offenders who commit felony assaults and felons in illegal possession of firearms.

One such defendant was Ramar Crump, who was convicted by a jury in June of multiple charges, including assault with a deadly weapon with the intent to kill and nine counts of armed robbery. Crump robbed several people at gunpoint at a local business, and days later, he fired gunshots at police. One of the shots hit a truck behind the spot where an officer had been standing — only 12 inches from the officer's head. Crump was sentenced to a minimum of 72 years in prison.

In May, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Kerr Putney presented the Chief's Award for Excellence in Policing to Assistant District Attorney Ellie Coludro, a Crimes Against Persons Team prosecutor. ADA Coludro was recognized for her work with investigators on the Shooting Into Occupied Dwelling Task Force to protect the community from violent crimes. She is pictured at right with District Attorney Andrew Murray and Assistant District Attorney Bruce Lillie, who supervises the Crimes Against Persons Team.

The Crimes Against Persons Team also has a group of dedicated Assistant District Attorneys who exclusively prosecute sex offenders. In 2016, these prosecutors stood up in court for rape survivors whose willingness to testify at trial helped ensure convictions that protect the entire community from dangerous offenders.

In June, prosecutors called Derek Antonio Smith, Jr. to trial for sexually assaulting a woman while holding her captive in her Charlotte apartment for hours. The jury found him guilty of first-degree rape and several other offenses, resulting in a prison sentence of at least 82 years. Another defendant, Anthony Wyrick, was sentenced in May to 260 years in prison after a jury found him guilty of raping two teenage girls in 1985. The case went cold until the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Sexual Assault Cold Case Unit found DNA evidence that linked Wyrick to the crimes and arrested him in 2014.



The Habitual Felon Team

The Habitual Felon Team prosecutes a wide range of felony offenses ranging from larcenies to violent crimes, but the cases share a common thread: habitual offenders who do harm to the community.

To qualify for prosecution as a habitual felon under North Carolina law, a defendant must have three prior felony convictions and then commit another felony. A conviction as a habitual felon allows prosecutors to seek longer prison sentences to protect the public. To determine how to proceed in these cases, Habitual Felon Team prosecutors work together to evaluate each case individually and weigh each defendant's criminal record and his or her threat to the community.

In 2016, the Habitual Felon Team convicted a total of 232 defendants. Of that number, 95 defendants received enhanced sentencing as habitual felons, and another 10 defendants were sentenced as habitual breaking or entering offenders. Over the course of

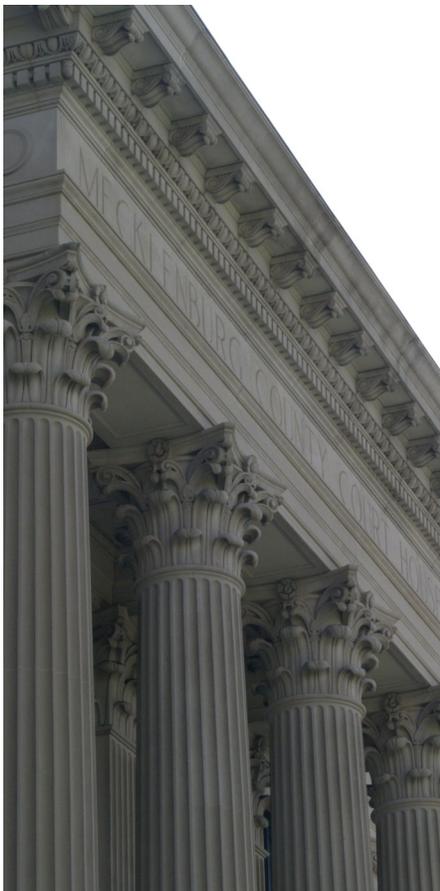
the year's 12 trial sessions, the team tried 28 defendants.

Andrea Crowder, a habitual felon with multiple prior convictions for obtaining property by false pretense, was convicted by a jury in August after prosecutors proved at trial that Crowder had skimmed cash from daily sales and falsified entries into company sales ledgers at the Charlotte bakery where she worked as part of a prison work release program. She was sentenced to 111-146 months in prison.

The Habitual Felon Team frequently prosecutes defendants who commit break-ins, which destroy victims' sense of security in their homes. Habitual felon Joshua Lee Bradley, whose DNA was discovered near a broken window at the scene of a Charlotte break-in, was sent to prison in April for 100-129 months. In November, habitual felon Kenneth James Lane was sentenced to 178-238 months in prison after a jury found him guilty of charges connected with a break-in.



The Homicide Team



The District Attorney's Homicide Team is responsible for prosecuting Mecklenburg County's most violent offenders. The team, which is comprised of experienced Assistant District Attorneys, prosecutes cases of murder, manslaughter and felony death by vehicle.

The prosecutors on this team respond to the scenes of homicides across Mecklenburg County to advise law enforcement and gain first-hand knowledge of the evidence.

The Homicide Team also responds to the scenes of fatal officer-involved shootings and monitors the investigations as they unfold. (For more information about officer-involved shooting cases and the office's protocol, please see page 7.)

The Homicide Team tried eight defendants in 2016.

In March, prosecutors obtained the conviction of Todd Boderick, who was found guilty of abusing and murdering his 6-month-old daughter, Keyoni. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole, as well as an additional 110-144 months in prison.

Both prosecutors and legal assistants who work with the Homicide Team are passionate about seeking justice on behalf of victims and their families. Once a month, an Assistant District Attorney attends a meeting of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Homicide Support Group to meet with victims' loved ones and answer their questions about the criminal justice

system.

One of the victims for whom the team sought justice in 2016 was 18-year-old Azjee "AJ" Pierce. Ms. Pierce was killed and a male victim was injured when Deon McDonald and his codefendant shot into a car occupied by the victims. Before they fled, the defendants robbed the male victim of one ounce of marijuana.

"Her life was worth more than an ounce of marijuana," Assistant District Attorney Max Diaz told jurors during his closing argument as he showed them a photograph of Ms. Pierce. "Her life was priceless."

The jury found McDonald guilty as charged in September. He was sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison.



In December, District Attorney Andrew Murray presented awards to individuals who have provided outstanding service to the community. Pictured from left to right are Assistant District Attorney Gabrielle Kelly, Heather Taylor and her son, Dallas, Christi Milledge, District Attorney Murray, Norma Messer, Detective Tim Jolly and Detective Carl Albanese.

DA presents awards for outstanding service

In December, the District Attorney's Office hosted its second annual awards ceremony to recognize individuals who have provided outstanding service to the community. The awards are presented to victims or witnesses who make a difference in the outcome of a case, law enforcement who go above and beyond the call of duty and District Attorney's Office employees who work outside of the courtroom to better Mecklenburg County.

Above and Beyond Citizen Award: Christi Milledge

Ms. Milledge was working as a nurse at Carolinas Medical Center when a woman arrived at the emergency room after being beaten by her boyfriend and strangled to the point that the cartilage in her throat was fractured. Ms. Milledge took the time to meet with a prosecutor to discuss 400 pages of medical records and explain how those records showed signs of domestic violence. Ms. Milledge took the stand at trial, testifying before a jury. Her insight into the medical records was crucial, and the jury found the defendant guilty of assault by strangulation.

Above and Beyond Citizen Award: Norma Messer

In December 2014, Ms. Messer was attacked and robbed in her home by two adults and a juvenile. When the defendants left, they thought they had killed her. Ms. Messer quickly became a fixture in District and Superior Court, serving as a reminder to judges, defense attorneys and court personnel that all victims have

faces and names. She attended every juvenile detention hearing, coming to court on average once a week for a year. In Superior Court, she helped prosecutors obtain substantial prison sentences for the adult defendants.

Above and Beyond Law Enforcement Award: Detective Carl Albanese

After police recovered a purse that had been snatched from a woman, Detective Albanese went to her home to return it to her. When he arrived, he learned that the 73-year-old victim has two 8-year-old children who had come from a bad situation. The woman took them in and adopted them as her own. They lived together in a two-bedroom house, and she gave them each a bedroom. When Detective Albanese asked her where she slept, she pointed to a cot on the sun porch in the home, which did not have air conditioning. Detective Albanese and members of his family got an air conditioning unit and installed it for her.

Above and Beyond Law Enforcement Award: Detective Tim Jolly

Detective Jolly has served with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for more than 20 years, most recently as a homicide detective. His work to seek justice on behalf of families who have lost loved ones to violence is truly extraordinary. He has been known to work extremely long hours for days and weeks at a time, sacrificing sleep and time with his own family in order to bring closure to another family that is grieving. Detective

Jolly is a tireless and incredibly skilled detective.

The Bryan Crocker Award: Heather Taylor and her son, Dallas

Ms. Taylor, a victim/witness legal assistant who works with the District Attorney's Juvenile Team, saw a need in her west Charlotte neighborhood to encourage people, particularly children, to read. With the help of son, Dallas, and her family, Ms. Taylor built a miniature library that she placed in the front yard of her home, joining the national "Little Free Library" program, which promotes literacy and the love of reading. On the library's shelves, Ms. Taylor provides books for kids and adults free of cost. Neighbors stop by to borrow a book or leave a book for others to read.

The Bryan Crocker Award: Gabrielle Kelly

For the last four years, Assistant District Attorney Kelly has spent every other Sunday working with children in the special needs class at Central Church of God. The program aims to create a safe environment where these young people are shown how much God and their church family care about them while their parents attend church services knowing that their children are in loving hands. ADA Kelly works with children who range in age from 3 to 16 and have an array of disabilities. Most of the children are non-verbal, and many are confined to wheelchairs. ADA Kelly has touched the lives of numerous special needs children and their families.



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