



FROM THE DESK OF DA MERRIWEATHER

The District Attorney's Office is responsible for the prosecution of criminal offenses in Mecklenburg County. Each month, this newsletter provides information about court happenings, initiatives being used to combat crime, the DA's work in the community, and more.



Mecklenburg
County
District
Attorney's
Office

WELCOME

Launching a new communication tool

After a year of court closures due to COVID-19, Mecklenburg County courts have been expanding operations since mid-March, allowing my prosecutors to call more cases for trial as we continue our work to seek justice for all.



As we more fully resume our work in court, it is more important now than ever to openly communicate with the people of Mecklenburg County about how we are prioritizing cases, taking steps to combat violent crime and ensuring that justice is equitable. Today, we launch this monthly newsletter, which will share what we are doing in *and* out of the courtroom. We will report on case outcomes, provide news about initiatives, share crime prevention tips, answer your questions about the criminal justice system, and more.

So often, people view us as "the system," but the reality is that we're an office of people—your neighbors and friends—who care deeply about this place we call home, and we are working hard every day to keep our neighborhoods safe and to do that work in a way that is fair.

We invite your feedback and questions (email us at community@charmecda.com), and we hope this newsletter will allow you to learn more about what is happening in your District Attorney's Office.

PROTECT KIDS

This month, CMPD reported a startling statistic: a 210 percent [increase in sex assaults](#) involving children since 2020. The spike may be due to a delay in reporting as children were isolated during the pandemic. Remember, state law requires anyone who suspects child abuse to report it, and [everyone can play a role in protecting children](#). The N.C. Chief Justice recently tapped DA Merriweather to [join a task force](#) to address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the court system.

COURT NEWS

Although the courts continued critical court proceedings throughout the pandemic, most hearings came to a halt for a year, resulting in a significant backlog. As a result, DA Merriweather last fall announced [sweeping changes](#) to the organization of his office and prioritization of cases to ensure we are focusing resources on violent crimes. In March, the courts began to expand operations, allowing us to resume jury trials. Our prosecutors are working to utilize all available trial time to seek justice for victims and the community. In District Court, where misdemeanors are prosecuted, this week marked the beginning of a [10-week trial session](#) that will focus exclusively on the prosecution of driving while impaired cases to ensure accountability and safety on our roads.



FAQ: Who sets defendants' bonds, and why?

Decisions on pretrial release conditions, including bonds, are made by magistrates and judges. Unless someone is charged with first-degree murder or meets specific criteria, N.C. law says bond or other release conditions must be set. The DA's Office considers equity and safety when we determine whether to argue for someone to remain in custody. [DA Merriweather continues to advocate](#) for changes to the state's bond laws.

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