



# 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

## COURT NEWS

### Court operations will soon expand

Over the last month, your prosecutors have been working hard to utilize all available court time as we tackle the backlog of cases caused by COVID-19 court closures. We are pleased that, with improving COVID conditions, court officials decided to open a second Superior Court trial courtroom, where felonies are prosecuted, on July 6. DA Merriweather recently spoke with the [Tuesday Morning Breakfast Forum Charlotte](#) about our courts, the challenges ahead, and a community initiative to support survivors.

Late last month, a [jury found a habitual felon guilty](#) of trafficking in fentanyl, a dangerous drug that is responsible for a significant number of overdose deaths.

During a two-week administrative court session in June, the DA's Felony Crimes Team convicted 47 defendants. The Violent Crimes Team spent the week of June 21 working in administrative court, prosecuting some of Mecklenburg County's most dangerous offenses. Over the course of the week, the team convicted 43 defendants. Among them was Shonntez McCain, 25, who pled guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, injury to personal property and four counts of discharging a weapon into occupied property. After a relative got into a fight at school, McCain fired gunshots into a rival's home in 2019. McCain, who also admitted to violating probation for a previous offense, was sentenced to 44-65 months in prison.

In District Court, the DA's Misdemeanor Team is about half-way through a special [10-week session](#) that is devoted to prosecuting driving while impaired cases. Thus far, the team has resolved more than 190 DWI cases.

## COMMUNITY

Members of the DA's Office are looking forward to joining communities across Mecklenburg County on Aug. 3 for National Night Out, an annual crime prevention and community building celebration! Do you want a DA's Office representative to attend your neighborhood event to discuss our work and answer questions about the criminal justice system? Email us at [community@charmekda.com](mailto:community@charmekda.com) or [submit our online form](#). We are available to attend community events year-round.



## RESOURCES

DA Merriweather has been [sounding the alarm](#) about the N.C. Senate's [budget](#), which would [eliminate](#) a prosecutor position in Mecklenburg County at a time when this office—and the entire court system—needs significantly more [resources](#). DA Merriweather has expressed his deep [concerns](#) about how this could directly impact victims and families, who are waiting for justice. The N.C. House of Representatives is expected to vote on a budget this month, and then both chambers will work to develop a final version to be presented to Gov. Roy Cooper.

### FAQ: What does it take to declare someone a habitual felon?

N.C. law allows us to seek a habitual felon indictment if someone has three prior felony convictions and then commits a new, fourth felony. A conviction as a habitual felon increases one's sentence. However, there are many nuances to this law, and not everyone with a significant criminal record qualifies under the law. Our Habitual Felon Team works to determine who is eligible and also uses discretion to evaluate each person's previous felonies and how long ago they occurred to decide whether it is just to pursue this enhanced punishment. See our [online FAQs](#) for details.

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