

NEWS RELEASE

Spencer B. Merriweather III
District Attorney

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Violent Crimes Team's 2-week trial session leads to multiple convictions

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During a two-week trial session, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Violent Crimes Team tried three defendants. Another two defendants entered guilty pleas. The proceedings were held during the weeks of January 9 and January 16, 2023, before The Honorable David H. Strickland, The Honorable Matthew J. Osman, and The Honorable George C. Bell, Superior Court Judges. Court was closed on January 16, 2023, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Craven Withers, 29, was tried for 1) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and 2) misdemeanor carrying a concealed gun. The jury found him *guilty* as charged. Judge Osman sentenced Withers to 18-31 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Withers was ordered to serve 90 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

Charles Bender, 48, was tried for assault with a deadly weapon with the intent to kill inflicting serious injury. The jury found Bender *not guilty*.

Darius Davis, 30, was tried for 1) felony hit and run causing physical injury and 2) flee to elude arrest with a motor vehicle. The jury found him *not guilty*.

During jury selection for his trial, Christian Smith, 21, pled guilty to 1) robbery with a dangerous weapon, 2) attempted robbery with a dangerous weapon, and 3) conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon. Judge Bell sentenced him to 38-58 months in prison.

Malik Benson, 26, pled guilty to 1) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and 2) possession of drug paraphernalia. Judge Bell sentenced him to 12-24 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 18 months of supervised probation.

Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit www.charmeckda.com. For updates and other information, follow @CharMeckDA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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