

NEWS RELEASE

**Spencer B. Merriweather
III**
District Attorney

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DA Merriweather presents awards to honor service

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A sexual assault nurse examiner who, among other accomplishments, helped develop and implement the first strangulation protocol to assist in treating victims of domestic violence who report strangulation, a devoted former Crimes Against Children detective, and two recent retirees who committed their careers to making our community a better place were among those honored today by Mecklenburg County District Attorney Spencer B. Merriweather III.

The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office hosted its annual awards ceremony today to recognize individuals who have provided outstanding service that advances the mission of the District Attorney's Office, to seek justice and pursue outcomes that provide a safe and vibrant community where every person can live in peace.

Detective Andrew Key received the 2025 Above and Beyond Law Enforcement Award, a recognition of local law enforcement members who have exhibited exemplary work in the field and have gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the community is safer and that victims feel more secure.



DA Merriweather provided awards to individuals who have provided outstanding service to the District Attorney's Office and the entire community.

The 2025 Above and Beyond Citizen Award was presented to Taneika Torres. This award recognizes a citizen who has demonstrated outstanding leadership within our community for standing up for what is right despite adversity, conflict, or competition.

DA Merriweather presented a Bryan Crocker Award to Alecia Brown. This award recognizes employees of the District Attorney's Office who have worked outside of the courtroom to make the community a better place. The award is named for Assistant District Attorney Bryan Crocker, who dedicated his career to public service. He passed away in 2015 following a battle with cancer.

Additionally, recently retired CMPD Chief Johnny Jennings and Ann Glaser, most recently of Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center, were both presented with a District Attorney's Commendation for a Career of Exceptional Service.

The Above and Beyond Law Enforcement Award: Detective Andrew Key

Detective Andrew Key is a 12-year veteran of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. The nominators said of Det. Key, “He exemplifies the highest standards of dedication, professionalism, and compassion in law enforcement.” Before joining the Fraud Unit, Det. Key served with distinction in the Crimes Against Children and Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Units with CMPD, where he investigated and helped successfully prosecute some of the most difficult and disturbing cases imaginable. “Few understand the toll and courage required to review such evidence and pursue justice for the most vulnerable victims, yet Det. Key performed this work with unwavering professionalism and empathy,” the nominators said. Over his 20-year law enforcement career, including 13 years devoted to protecting children and at least three years as an ICAC detective in both Florida and North Carolina, he has demonstrated exceptional skill, intelligence, and integrity.



The nominators added, “Even after transferring units, Det. Key continues to collaborate closely with our team, ensuring cases are prosecuted effectively and victims’ voices are heard. His commitment extends far beyond his official duties—whether coming in on his day off to prepare materials for trial or offering his expertise whenever needed. Colleagues praise his intelligence, sense of humor, and genuine care for victims and partners alike. For those of us who have worked up or tried cases with him, we can say there is no one more reliable, dedicated, or capable in both investigation and trial preparation. Detective Key’s continued passion for justice and service makes Mecklenburg County a safer place and makes him truly deserving of this recognition.”

The Above and Beyond Citizen Award: Taneika Torres

Taneika Torres is a sexual assault nurse examiner who has dedicated the last 15 years of her nearly 25-year career to treating adult and pediatric patients who come to the hospital reporting a sexual assault in Mecklenburg County. In addition to conducting sexual assault exams of at least 1,000 patients, she helped develop and implement the first strangulation protocol to assist in treating victims of domestic violence who report strangulation. The person who nominated Ms. Torres said, “Almost everyone who has worked on or tried sexual assault or domestic violence cases in this office has worked with Taneika, and to see her name in the medical records is to know that survivor got the best care—as well as the best documentation of findings—available in Mecklenburg County. It is not possible to overstate her level of expertise; her experience and knowledge not only benefits her patients’ health but has also led to the successful prosecution of countless domestic violence and sexual assault cases. Every time she testifies, one can be confident that, if nothing else, jurors will be disabused about myths surrounding how rape survivors present and respond to trauma. She also helps prepare new sexual assault nurse examiners for their first time testifying. To work with her is to know that she does this work not because it is easy but because it is a calling, and sexual assault survivors in Mecklenburg County have a better chance of seeing justice done in their case when Taneika is by their side.”



Bryan Crocker Award: Alecia Brown

Alecia Brown has worked with the District Attorney’s Office for 15 years, the last 12 of those as a support staff supervisor. Earlier this year, Alecia and her husband started a church called Go Church and have since been involved in organizing outreach events in the community. Alecia and her husband have spearheaded events like back-to-school backpack drives, assisting schoolteachers with much needed supplies, and have recently donated produce to families in



need during the government shutdown. Her church also has women and men’s support groups that serve as an emotional and spiritual support to people in their congregation. Alecia’s community outreach didn’t just begin last January. In her early twenties, she participated in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in her home state of Alaska, where she mentored two troubled teenagers. She still speaks fondly of her time with these two young girls and holds them close to her heart. The person who nominated Mrs. Brown said, “Alecia has a humble and natural spirit of service. Her thoughtfulness—whether it be through her community outreach or in just offering a kind smile every single day—inspires me to embody her spirit of compassion.”

District Attorney’s Commendation for a Career of Exceptional Service: Ann Glaser

Ann Glaser retired this year after decades of service to our community as a pioneer in child advocacy and 11 years with Pat’s Place Child Advocacy Center. Pat’s Place is a one-stop shop for children who have experienced child abuse. When Pat’s Place needed a new professional to help guide the agency in 2014, Ann Glaser was exactly the hero our community needed. Ann moved her entire family from New England to North Carolina and provided Charlotte with her much-needed expertise, skill, and spunk.



Ann frequently provided expert testimony in felony child abuse cases prosecuted by the District Attorney’s Office, using her mastery and knowledge to help jurors understand how child abuse affects children and how abusers exploit vulnerabilities to groom not only children, but also their families. When prosecutors asked Ann to lend the benefit of her expertise in review of a case, she was always willing and ready. As Chief Program Officer for Pat’s Place CAC, Ann was responsible for several roles including cultivating multidisciplinary agency relationships, securing grant funding for critical programming, engaging with community partners, and forensically interviewing children and teens about the worst moments of their lives.

An ADA with the DA’s Felony Special Victims Team said, “Ann is a clinician guided by her mastery in the field. Her warmth and spirit radiate with healing energy, not only reaching the children and families impacted by abuse and trauma, but also those of us in the professional world.” Ann served as a mentor and guide to those she supervised at Pat’s Place, as well as the professionals in her orbit. When you called Ann with a problem, she always listened, eager to help find a solution. Even when faced with the darkest parts of humanity, Ann’s spirit of resiliency and warmth is contagious.

While Ann has retired from Pat’s Place, she continues her work helping others, using her clinical skills to provide therapy to those in the community.

District Attorney’s Commendation for a Career of Exceptional Service: Johnny Jennings

With 33 years of service to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community, CMPD Police Chief Johnny Jennings retired this month after leading his department to new heights in innovation and accountability, community engagement, and officer well-being. After first serving with distinction as a patrol officer and a homicide detective and then rising through CMPD’s ranks of command, Chief Jennings assumed office as Chief of Police on July 1, 2020, amid a world in tumult. Every institution in our society—including our justice system—had been badly shaken by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the middle of that disruption, communities across the country found themselves reeling from the killing of George Floyd in



Minneapolis and all the questions it revisited about the relationship between our residents and those who make daily sacrifices to police their communities.

In his years at the helm, Chief Jennings would go on to demonstrate that the best police leadership can emphasize public safety and public service, without subverting one value in the name of the other. Chief Jennings would launch the “CMPD Serves” program in 2021, introducing the nation’s first formal customer service curriculum for law enforcement. Program principles emphasizing professionalism, de-escalation, and community centric-policing contributed to significant decreases in Use of Force incidents, external and internal complaints, and officer-involved shootings over the course of Chief Jennings’ tenure.

Chief Jennings has guided his department to steady reductions in both violent and property crime and has implemented strategies that have continued to decrease the number of illegal guns on Charlotte streets. Chief Jennings was the lead champion for the passage of the 2023 Pretrial Integrity Act, which, at the time, was the most significant meaningful change to the law of pretrial release in a generation, ensuring that more violent and repeat offenders remained in custody as they awaited trial. This effort, combined with monumental efforts around enhancing officer recruitment and promoting employee wellness, has created a lasting impact in the advancement of public safety in Charlotte.

DA Spencer Merriweather said of Jennings, “Perhaps, the most seminal hour of his leadership of CMPD—and the larger Charlotte community—was in the wake of the deadliest attack on law enforcement in our state’s history. At a time of unspeakable grief for our officers and for the people they serve, Chief Jennings always embodied the character and dignity of the department he served for three decades. He has been, through that tragedy and throughout his time in law enforcement, steadfast in his commitment to professional ethics, empathy for victims of crime, and the promotion of public service to one’s community.”

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

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