

DA DISPATCH

JANUARY 2024

2024



LEWIS B. SLATON COURTHOUSE

130

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FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 Pay Day	10
11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17
18	19 President's Day	20	21	22	23 Pay Day	24
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JANUARY IS... HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH



Standing united against human trafficking! Members of the Fulton County District Attorney's Office stood in solidarity while donning shades of blue to raise awareness on Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Together, we can make a meaningful difference.



MLK DAY CELEBRATION

BIG BETHEL A.M.E CHURCH | ATLANTA.GA

January 19, 2024

BIG BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH THE REVEREND JOHN FOSTER, PH.D. – SENIOR PASTOR

The Honorable Fani T. Willis Fulton County District Attorney 141 Pryor Street SW


Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear District Attorney Fani Willis,

On behalf of Big Bethel A.M.E. Church, We want to express our gratitude for the blessing of your presence at our annual Martin Luther King, Jr. worship service on Sunday January 14, 2024. Your transparency and authenticity were heartfelt. It was an incredibly meaningful experience for everyone.

We are truly grateful that you took time out of your packed schedule to share your God walk and life experiences with the congregation. Your words were an example of the role God has in and on our lives when we put our faith in Him. We pray for your family's continued safety as you fight injustices throughout Fulton County. Thank you again for so generously giving your time and talents to enrich our faith community. With appreciation for all that you gave to us, I pray that God will be with you always in your important work.

Yours in Christ,


Rev. John Foster, Ph.D
Senior Pastor



BOOKS & BADGES



Assistant Chief Saul Alter with Perkerson Elementary 2nd grade students, and Sr. Investigator Christy Manos with Perkerson Elementary 3rd grade students.

WINNER



CONGRATULATIONS TO **PATRICE STEWART**
FOR WINNING THE 2024 SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST

WAVE TOY DRIVE + SHAQ-A-CLAUS



DA Fani T. Willis and dedicated staff volunteers from the Fulton County District Attorney's Office joined forces with WAVE (We All Value Excellence) for their annual toy drive. Adding an extra layer of excitement, Shaq teamed up with DA Willis to extend the reach and impact of the event, touching even more families this year.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our staff for generously giving out of their own pockets. Special thanks to Dr. Shaquille O'Neal, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., and all the other partners for contributing to yet another incredible year of giving.

Over 2,600 families were served today, guaranteeing a fabulous holiday season for their children.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of those in need during this festive season.

For More Information, Contact:
Kendall Watkins at
kendall.watkins@fultoncountyga.gov



January is Mental Wellness Awareness Month

The New Year often signals new beginnings and opportunities to reset. Individuals often plan New Year’s Resolutions and goals for change, such as eating healthier or exercising more. Unfortunately, some of those plans do not extend beyond the month of January. This year, in honor of National Mental Wellness Month, let’s recognize January as the time to focus more on mental health and wellness throughout the entire year.

Although the holidays can bring joy through celebrations and extra time with family, they can also be overwhelming. The holidays may lead to financial strain due to the pressure of buying gifts or hosting family members. They can be filled with sadness due to the loss of loved ones with whom you would typically enjoy holiday traditions. Additionally, the holidays may exacerbate loneliness for those without close relationships with family and friends. Therefore, January is the perfect time to prioritize mental health and wellness following the holiday season.

With Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January, there are ample opportunities to volunteer, providing both mental fulfillment and a chance to give back to the community. Remember to be kind to others, as you never know what someone else is experiencing in their personal lives. Express gratitude and reflect on how far you have come. Take time to focus on physical health, such as attending wellness visits, trying healthy recipes, or engaging in a new Zumba class. Additionally, consider learning to meditate to release stress and enhance focus. Several apps are available for download on your phone to assist with meditation.

Also, reach out to obtain counseling through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). You do not have to be in crisis to speak to someone. The EAP program offers a valuable opportunity to process different thoughts and feelings with an unbiased person. EAP services can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 800-999-7222 or visiting www.AnthemEAP.com (password: Fulton). All employees of Fulton County are entitled to up to eight free sessions.



Chandrika Derricho
Director of Victim Witness Advocates

LAW CORNER

Authentication of Evidence

Under O.C.G.A. 24-9-901(a), “[t]he requirement of authentication or identification as a condition precedent to admissibility shall be satisfied by evidence sufficient to support a finding that the matter in question is what its proponent claims.” Therefore, if a document, photograph, recording, etc., is intended to be introduced into evidence, the relevant witness through whom we are introducing such items must sufficiently indicate what the item is and how they have knowledge of it.

The Court of Appeals recently addressed authentication in the context of the prosecution admitting a Facebook snapshot taken by the detective involved in the case (see *Johnson v. State* A23A1029, 10/12/23). Although the Defense attempted to object to the introduction of the snapshot, the trial court, and ultimately the Court of Appeals, found it permissible for the detective to authenticate the photo from the Defendant’s Facebook page, later used to identify the Defendant as the perpetrator of the crime.

The Court of Appeals held that “[D]ocuments from electronic sources such as printouts from a website like Facebook are subject to the same rules of authentication as other more traditional documentary evidence and may be authenticated through circumstantial evidence.” In *Johnson*, the detective identified the photo of the defendant on her Facebook page as a snapshot taken on her computer, and confirmed that the Facebook page bore the Defendant’s name. Consequently, she sufficiently authenticated it, and no additional steps were needed beyond what is outlined in the statute.



Gautam Rao
Deputy District Attorney, Training

Graphic



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DIRECTOR OF GRAPHICS



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GRAPHIC DESIGNER



TYCHAUNE DOUGLAS
GRAPHIC DESIGNER



CONSUELA BOYER
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

SVD BRUNCH

The SVD Family had their annual Holiday Celebration on December 13, 2023. The theme this year was a "SVD Sleigh Ride". DC Johnna Griffin transformed the Atrium into a magical sleigh ride for all to enjoy. The SVD family enjoyed a delicious breakfast, played games, shared laughs, and created lasting memories.



MCD LUNCHEON

On Friday, January 5, 2024, the Major Crimes Division celebrated its combined Holiday, Year's End, and New Year's Kickoff Appreciation Luncheon. The event provided an outstanding opportunity for MCD to spend some quality time together as a division. Chief Deputy District Attorney Adam Abbate arranged for a delicious catered luncheon, while Executive District Attorney Mike Carlson distributed coffee mugs inscribed with MCD's motto, "Motivated-Committed-Devoted." A tremendous time was had by one and all. 1-2-3...MCD!!!



TRIAL DIVISION HOLIDAY AWARDS



ALBERT "TREY" SCOTT
SHINING STAR



ANITA NEWSOME
ONE TO WATCH



CANDIS MALLOY
TEAM SPIRIT



LAKISHA FONVILLE
SUPERSTAR AWARD



CHRISTINIA CLARK
SUPERSTAR AWARD



DIANELLY RIVERA-GOW
TEAM SPIRIT AWARD



JANA DIXON
ADA OF THE YEAR



ROBERT JONES
SUPERSTAR AWARD



EDEN BOGOLIN
L.A. OF THE YEAR



BETHANY BRIDGES
ONE-TO-WATCH



NADIA RHODES
SUPERSTAR AWARD



NIKIA SMITH SELLERS
MEMBER OF THE YEAR



AMINAH DICKERSON
ONE-TO-WATCH AWARD

On December 8th, Trial Division Leaders hosted a holiday dinner and award ceremony for staff at Firepit Tavern in Atlanta. Above, you'll find the names of the rockstar employees recognized by the Trial Division for 2023

VICTIM ADVOCATE APPRECIATION DAY & TRIAL VWAP HOLIDAY



On December 6, 2023, the Fulton County District Attorney's Office celebrated Victim Advocate Appreciation Day and the Fani T. Willis School of Integrity Victim Advocate Master Class Graduation for six graduates. The graduation's guest speaker was April Ross, Esq. We are immensely proud of the hard work and dedication demonstrated by our Victim Witness Advocate Team. Their commitment and service to the citizens of Fulton County and the District Attorney's Office are truly appreciated.



On December 15th, the Trial Division Victim Witness Advocates came together for their quarterly team-building activity and Christmas celebration at the 'Time to Escape' escape room.

CHIEF INVESTIGATORS BREAKFAST

Chief Green, EDC Randolph, and DC Griffin hosted a Investigator brunch, bringing together dedicated professionals from various locations to express gratitude for their hard work. Special shoutout to DC Griffin for organizing the food and fabulous holiday café décor



HTICE HOLIDAY GIFT EXCHANGE



On Saturday, December 16, 2023 the Human Trafficking & Internet Child Exploitation Unit gathered for its holiday party at Top Golf Atlanta, 1500 Ellsworth Industrial Blvd, NW, Atlanta, for some food, fun and fellowship. After hitting a few golf balls, the team enjoyed a gift exchange and reflection on the year 2023.

F.C.D.A.O. IN THE COMMUNITY



In December, Executive DA Kenneth Hutcherson and Deputy DA RuShondra Davenport served as faculty members for the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia (PAC) Basic Litigation Boot Camp. DDA Davenport will serve once again when the next boot camp occurs this coming April.



The Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Association (AVLA) Know Your Rights sessions represent the purest form of service through empowerment. Fulton County Clerk Ché Alexander and Deputy District Attorney Ramona Toole directly addressed South Atlanta parents and community, providing valuable information about record restriction opportunities. This knowledge empowers individuals to secure and maintain safe and habitable housing.

GRANTS CORNER

This month, on January 10th and 11th, technical advisors for our grant, 'Family-Based Alternative Sentencing,' flew in to meet the grants team. Our DV Team was represented by Deputy District Attorney Asia Baysah, Deputy Victim/Witness Advocate Dilma Dos Reis, our Diversion Team represented by Deputy District Attorney Ramona Toole and Adult Diversion Director Epiffany Henry, CAC Deputy District Attorney Lauren McAuley, Chief Deputy District Attorney Rewa Collier, representatives from the Probation Office, supervisors from the Fulton County Public Defender's Office, and our partner providing therapy, Families First. The discussion aimed to explore treatment and accountability for parents/caregivers in the criminal justice system.

Our two-day discussion focused on options to allow parents to remain with their dependent children while under supervision. Prioritizing diversion programming is crucial to our boss, Fulton County District Attorney Fani T. Willis. The Adult Diversion Program, created by DA Willis, provides defendants, generally first-time offenders, with alternatives to the traditional criminal justice process of ordinary prosecution.

We are aware that children who are victimized and exposed to violence are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic disorders, fail or have difficulty in school, and become delinquent and engage in criminal behavior. Youth are at higher risk of joining a gang if they engage in delinquent behaviors, are predisposed to aggression or violence, experience multiple caretaker transitions, have multiple problems at school, associate with other gang-involved youth, or reside where neighborhood juvenile crime exists. We aim to minimize influences of neglect or trauma in their childhoods, which may increase the chances of children entering the criminal justice system themselves.

To expand our reach to serve children, the DV Unit along with CAC is considering the process to offer a Conditional Plea for those who do not qualify for diversion and complete therapy and the mandated Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP). The grant funding will cover the costs of therapy, classes to learn co-parenting, and improve parenting skills. The objectives are to reduce the likelihood of future involvement in the criminal justice system, improve parental attachment, and eliminate the family violence a child is exposed to.





DA VISITS girl scouts Decatur. GA

CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS TRAINING

Did You Know?

There are over 1 billion types of malware and virus apps. Protecting our information is everyone's responsibility. Get Informed!

The Cyber Security Awareness Training

This is mandatory for all Fulton County Government Employees.

Who: Everyone

When: February 1 - May 3

Where: KnowBe4 Training Platform

*FAILURE TO COMPLETE YOUR ANNUAL TRAINING BEFORE THE DEADLINE WILL RESULT IN THE LOSS OF YOUR ACCESS INTO THE FULTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT NETWORK.



Why did the computer go to the dentist?

To get his Bluetooth checked.



What an honor it was to converse with the bright minds of Troop 22120 in Decatur as they tackle their Democracy In Action badge! I spent a fantastic time with these 4th and 5th grade Girl Scouts, discussing the immense power and impact they wield in shaping the world. Witnessing these amazing young girls preparing for a bright and purposeful future assured me that the future is undoubtedly in good hands.



CONVICTION ALERTS



State v. Curtis Lilly
 Congratulations to the Domestic Violence trial team! In the case of State v. Curtis Lilly, the jury deliberated for less than 30 minutes before returning a guilty verdict on all counts on the indictment including Murder, Felony Murder, Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon and Possession of a Knife During the Commission of a Felony. Judge Kimberly Adams sentenced the Defendant to life in prison without the possibility of parole plus five years.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Nalda "Kay" Charles
 Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Maria Washington
 Assistant Chief Investigator Paula Duprey
 Investigator Tracy Jemison
 Victim Witness Advocate Sandra Jean Louis
 Legal Assistant Michael Tanks



State v. Bobby Crawford
 Congratulations to the Major Case Unit trial team! In the case of State v. Bobby Crawford, the Defendant was found guilty of all counts including Murder, Felony Murder, and Aggravated Assault. Judge Melynee Leftridge sentenced the Defendant to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Deputy District Attorney Kelcee Jones-Connor
 Assistant District Attorney Danielle Burnette
 Assistant Chief Investigator Bernice Higgins
 Deputy Victim Witness Advocate Ilona Rolack
 Victim Advocate Katrina Gill
 Legal Assistants Andre Moorer and Brenda Sharpe



State v. Claud Lee McIver
 Congratulations to the Major Case trial team! In the case of State v. Claud Lee McIver, the Defendant pled guilty to Involuntary Manslaughter, Reckless Conduct, and Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony. Judge Robert McBurney sentenced the Defendant to fifteen years to serve eight in prison, seven years probated with the first 5 years of the probation to be served under home confinement.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Adam Abbate
 Deputy Chief Johnna Griffin
 Deputy Chief Dashawn Raymond
 Lieutenant Justin French
 Executive Legal Assistant Quinasha Pritchett



State v. Diontre Tigner
 Congratulations to the Cold Case Unit trial team! In the case of State v. Diontre Tigner, the Defendant was found guilty of all counts including Felony Murder, Hit and Run, and Theft by Receiving. Judge Kimberly Adams sentenced the Defendant to life in prison plus six years.

Deputy District Attorney Vincent Faucette
 Assistant District Attorney Jeffrey Hawkins
 Investigators Darnell Kennedy and Chara Dennis
 Victim Witness Advocate Cherrilie Tonge
 Legal Assistant SaQuez King



State v. Jason Hall
 Congratulations to the Major Case Unit trial team! In the case of State v. Jason Hall, the Defendant was convicted of all counts including Murder, Felony Murder, and Aggravated Assault. Judge Robert McBurney sentenced the Defendant life in prison plus five years.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Adam Abbate
 Deputy District Attorney Gautam Rao
 Sr. Assistant District Attorney Rives Hiles
 Assistant Chief Investigator Joe Rickman
 Victim Witness Advocate Cherrilie Tonge
 Legal Assistant Kiera Jackson



State v. Rayshawn Bennett et al.
 Congratulations to the Major Case trial team! In the case of State v. Rayshawn Bennett et al., the ten Co-Defendants plead guilty to charges including Violation of Criminal Street Gang Act, Possession of a Gun During the Commission of a Felony, Aggravated Assault, and RICO. Judge Thomas Cox sentenced each Defendant as per their plea agreement.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Shaniqua Christian
 Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Jamell Hamm
 Assistant District Attorney Amanda Green
 Assistant Chief Bernice Higgins
 Senior Investigator Felipe Brown
 Investigator Nathan Shoate
 Investigator Herald Milanés
 Investigator James Miller
 Victim Witness Advocates Maya Wilburn
 Legal Assistant Andre Moorer

Congrats January Towles!



OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD
WAVE

FCDAO'S COAT DRIVE



The Court Watch program is part of the Repeat Offender Tracking Commission and is made up of citizen volunteers who closely monitor court cases to ensure a fair and efficient judicial process. This program aims to foster accountability, aid in public trust and will focus on repeat offenders in an effort to reduce crime in our community. The Repeat Offender Initiative is a multi-faceted effort to reduce the crime rate of Repeat Offenders who are estimated to be responsible for more than 30 percent of the crime in Atlanta.

The Fulton County District Attorney's Office is grateful to our dedicated Court Watch volunteers for generously donating their time and unwavering commitment to serving as the vigilant eyes of the public. Their dedication to holding judges, law enforcement, and prosecutors accountable reflects their deep commitment to the safety and well-being of our community.

★ SHOUT-OUT ★



"The FCDAO's generosity was on display once again! We collected 160 coats, 30 hat and glove sets, 2 scarves, and 4 pairs of gloves. WSB-TV was very appreciative of our donation!"



**KEVIN
ARMSTRONG**

Good afternoon, Madam District Attorney Willis:

I wanted to make sure that I brought to your attention the amazing job that Kevin Armstrong did yesterday arguing before the Supreme Court of Georgia on an issue for all intensive purposes was one of first impression. He articulated the State's position in my opinion perfectly and with ease. He was charming, funny, and in all candor captivated the Justices with his argument and answers to their rapid fire questions. He did an amazing job and you and our office should be incredibly proud of the work he did on behalf of the citizens of this County.

AA
Adam R. Abbate
Chief Deputy District Attorney
Major Crimes Division - Major Case Unit



NEW HIRES

WELCOME TO THE FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



DENISE RILEY

*SR. ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY
CASE INTAKE DIVISION*



MARIO BROWN II

*SR. ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY
CASE INTAKE DIVISION*



SAMIA GIDDINGS

*SR. ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY
CASE INTAKE DIVISION*



TANYA BOYKIN

*CHIEF SR. ASSISTANT
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION*



CANDYCE MAKINS

*BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COORDINATOR
REACH PROGRAM
SPECIAL VICTIMS DIVISION*



ROBERT WILSON

*CHIEF SENIOR ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COLD & CAPITAL CASE
MAJOR CRIMES DIVISION*

