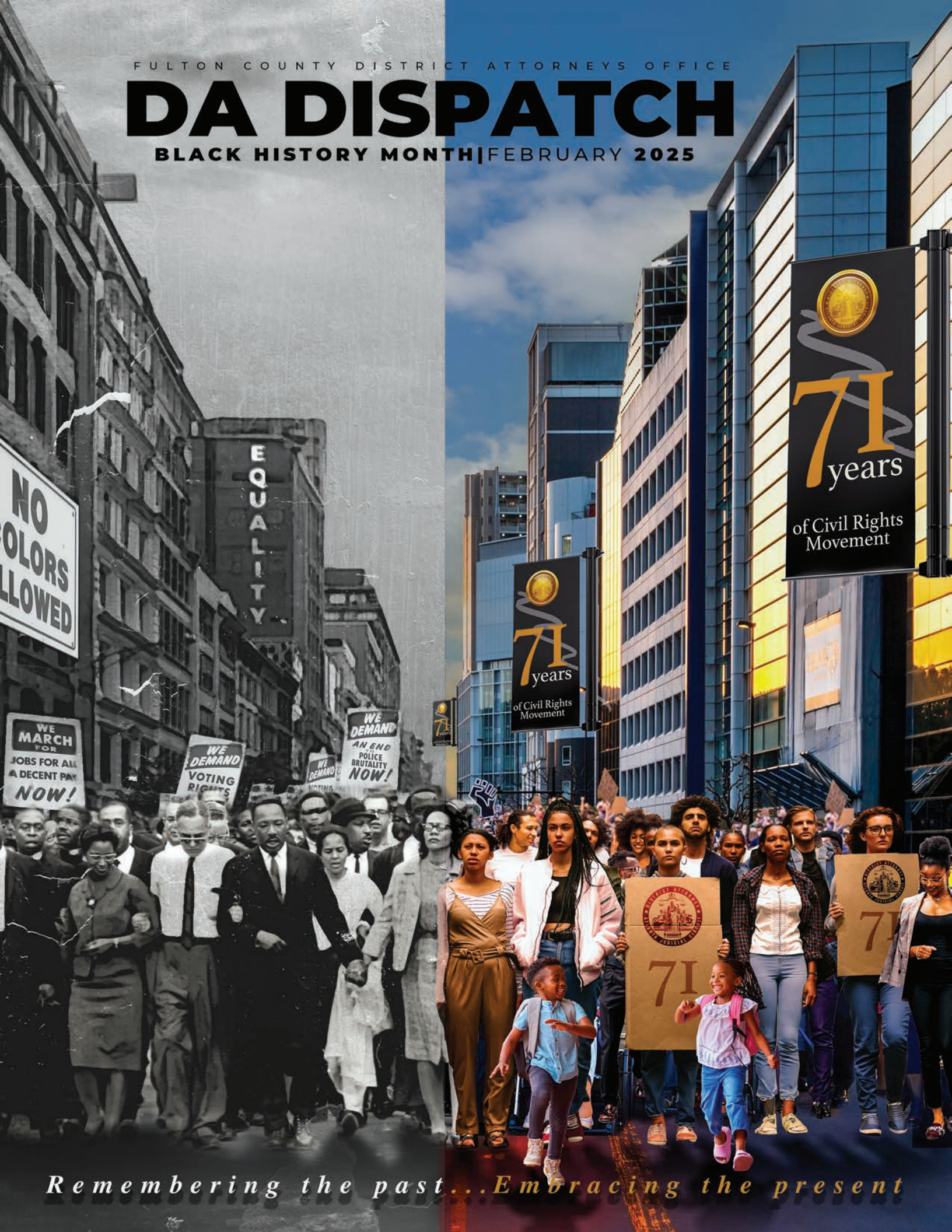


FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEYS OFFICE

DA DISPATCH

BLACK HISTORY MONTH | FEBRUARY 2025



Remembering the past...Embracing the present



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MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	8	7	8
					Pay Day	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
					Pay Day	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



On Thursday, January 30, the Fulton County Divine Nine hosted a special Founders Day Program, celebrating the rich history, legacy, and contributions of D9 organizations. Employees had the opportunity to learn about the impact of these historic organizations and join in the celebration alongside fellow county D9 members and friends. The program concluded with an exclusive luncheon for D9 members, fostering fellowship and unity.

Remembering the past...



**BARACK & MICHELLE
OBAMA**

FIRST BLACK PRESIDENT & FIRST LADY OF THE UNITED STATES

Embracing the present



**CHIEF INVESTIGATOR RICHARD RANDOLPH
& DEPUTY CHIEF INVESTIGATOR SAUL ALTER**

VISITS BARACK & MICHELLE OBAMA ACADEMY

Books and Badges is off to a fantastic start this year! On January 9th, Deputy Chief Investigator Saul Alter visited Perkerson Elementary to read to the first graders. Then, on February 4th, Deputy Chief Investigators Saul Alter and Chief Investigator Richard Randolph read to the 4th graders at Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School. Inspiring young minds, one book at a time!

JUVENILE COURT PARTNERS PROTOCOL *Signing*

To tackle school truancy, the Fulton County Student Attendance & School Climate Committee has officially adopted a new attendance protocol for the 2024-25 school year! This milestone was marked by a signing ceremony on February 3rd.

A special thank you to Co-Chair Sr. DA Lashawnda Woods-Roberts, our REACH Program partners at Fulton & Atlanta Public Schools, the Executive Committee, and all key stakeholders for their unwavering commitment to keeping students in school. Together, we're reducing unexcused absences, fostering brighter futures, and breaking the school-to-prison pipeline!

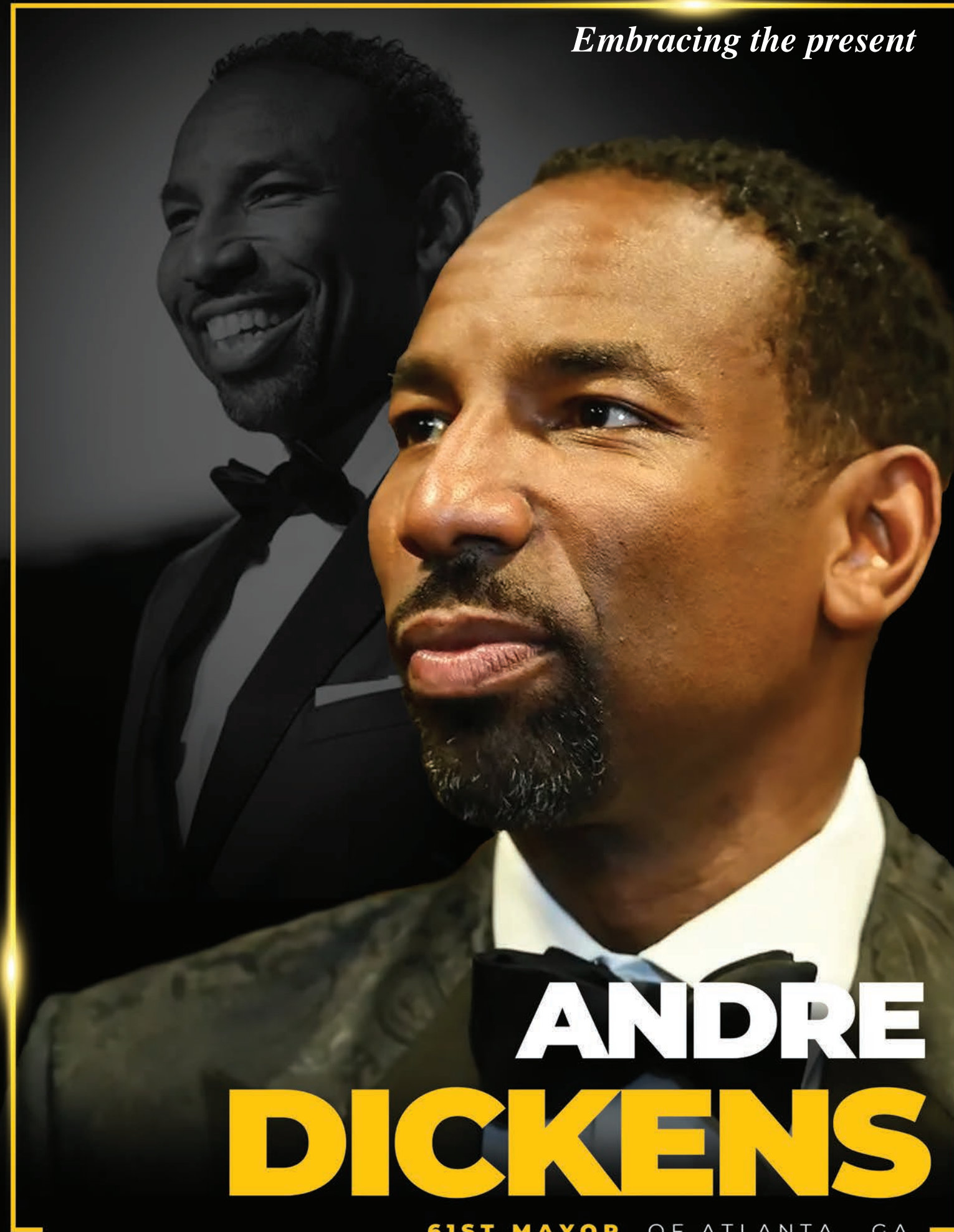


REWA COLLIER

Chief Deputy District Attorney of Accountability Court, Rewa Collier, served as the Keynote Speaker at the 2025 Winter Accountability Court Commencement on Friday, January 31st. In recognition of her dedication and contributions, she was also honored with the Accountability Court Appreciation Award.



Embracing the present



ANDRE DICKENS

61ST MAYOR OF ATLANTA, GA

LAW CORNER

Gautam Rao | Deputy District Attorney , Training Division

The Importance of Filing Your Recidivist Notice

The Recidivist Notice is an essential tool to keep repeat offenders, particularly those committing serious violent felonies, off the streets. It ensures accountability by requiring appropriate sentences for fitting defendants. The governing statute, O.C.G.A. 17-10-7, outlines guidelines for recidivist sentencing, with three key subsections.

Subsection (a): If a defendant has one prior conviction, they must be sentenced to the maximum allowable term, though a judge can probate or suspend the sentence if it's not life. For example, an Aggravated Assault conviction, carrying a 20-year maximum sentence, mandates a sentence of 20 years, which could include probation, suspension, or partial imprisonment. For life offenses like Armed Robbery or Rape, the judge must impose a life sentence, as it's the maximum penalty.

Subsection (b): Anyone convicted of a serious violent felony (e.g., Murder, Armed Robbery, Rape) and later convicted of another serious violent felony will face a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole.

Subsection (c): A defendant with three or more prior felony convictions must be sentenced to the maximum sentence. If the offense isn't punishable by life, the judge may probate or suspend the sentence, but any "in-custody" time served will be without parole. For life-sentence offenses, the sentence is life without parole. The Recidivist Notice is crucial for plea negotiations and sentencing enhancements in trial. However, its effectiveness is diminished if the prosecutor fails to file the notice, which details the defendant's prior convictions and the applicable subsections for recidivist treatment at sentencing.

MENTAL HEALTH CORNER

Ilona Rolack | Deputy Victim Witness Advocate, Major Crimes Division

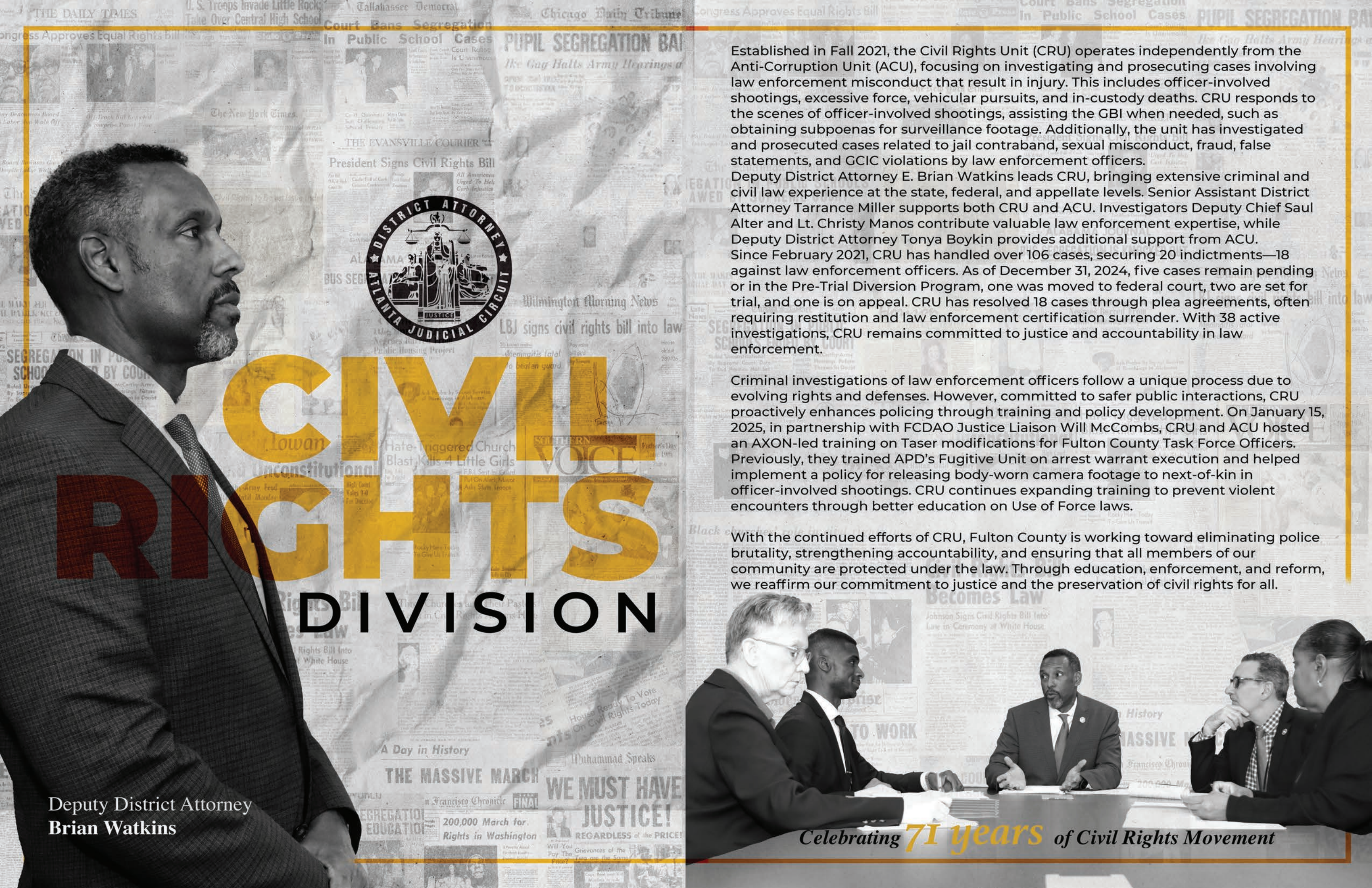
Understanding Feedback: Channeling Your Inner Animal

As evaluation time rolls around, the mere thought of receiving feedback can send a shiver down your spine. However, it doesn't have to be an anxiety-inducing experience. With the right mindset and approach, feedback can be a powerful tool for growth. As FCDAO employees, we find ourselves in the exhilarating world of fighting crime. We pour our hearts and souls into our work, pouring over the law, crafting arguments, refining our writing skills and consoling our victim. But then comes the moment of truth: feedback from our supervisor. So, how do we navigate this feedback landscape, especially when we find ourselves caught between two very different animals: the aloof cat and the anxious bunny?

Let's start with the cat. Picture this: a sleek feline, confidently strutting through life, completely unbothered by what others think. That's me when I embrace my inner cat. I can be quite aloof, believing that I don't owe anyone an explanation for my work. When feedback rolls in, I occasionally find myself thinking, "Negative feedback? La la la, you say?" as I yawn and gracefully sashay away. This detachment can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it allows me to maintain a level of confidence in the work that I do. On the other, it risks shutting out valuable insights that could improve my performance.

Now, let's flip the coin and consider the bunny. This little creature lives in a constant state of alertness, always on the lookout for potential dangers—like a predator lurking nearby. Some may relate to this when it comes to receiving feedback. The thought of criticism feels like a looming threat, and they often feel terrified of being "eaten alive" by harsh critiques. In this bunny mode, individuals become high-strung and jumpy, ready to dart back into their cozy underground den at the first hint of negativity.

Navigating feedback during the evaluation process can feel like a dance between the aloof cat and the jumpy bunny. Finding that balance—where you can embrace your inner cat's confidence while acknowledging the bunny's fears—will help you become better at what you do. Remember, feedback is not the enemy; it's a stepping stone on your path to success. So, the next time you face criticism, take a deep breath, channel your inner cat's poise, and step forward with the bunny's vigilance. With this approach, you'll be well-equipped to tackle the challenges you will face throughout your career.



CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

Deputy District Attorney
Brian Watkins

Established in Fall 2021, the Civil Rights Unit (CRU) operates independently from the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU), focusing on investigating and prosecuting cases involving law enforcement misconduct that result in injury. This includes officer-involved shootings, excessive force, vehicular pursuits, and in-custody deaths. CRU responds to the scenes of officer-involved shootings, assisting the GBI when needed, such as obtaining subpoenas for surveillance footage. Additionally, the unit has investigated and prosecuted cases related to jail contraband, sexual misconduct, fraud, false statements, and GCIC violations by law enforcement officers. Deputy District Attorney E. Brian Watkins leads CRU, bringing extensive criminal and civil law experience at the state, federal, and appellate levels. Senior Assistant District Attorney Tarrance Miller supports both CRU and ACU. Investigators Deputy Chief Saul Alter and Lt. Christy Manos contribute valuable law enforcement expertise, while Deputy District Attorney Tonya Boykin provides additional support from ACU. Since February 2021, CRU has handled over 106 cases, securing 20 indictments—18 against law enforcement officers. As of December 31, 2024, five cases remain pending or in the Pre-Trial Diversion Program, one was moved to federal court, two are set for trial, and one is on appeal. CRU has resolved 18 cases through plea agreements, often requiring restitution and law enforcement certification surrender. With 38 active investigations, CRU remains committed to justice and accountability in law enforcement.

Criminal investigations of law enforcement officers follow a unique process due to evolving rights and defenses. However, committed to safer public interactions, CRU proactively enhances policing through training and policy development. On January 15, 2025, in partnership with FCDAO Justice Liaison Will McCombs, CRU and ACU hosted an AXON-led training on Taser modifications for Fulton County Task Force Officers. Previously, they trained APD's Fugitive Unit on arrest warrant execution and helped implement a policy for releasing body-worn camera footage to next-of-kin in officer-involved shootings. CRU continues expanding training to prevent violent encounters through better education on Use of Force laws.

With the continued efforts of CRU, Fulton County is working toward eliminating police brutality, strengthening accountability, and ensuring that all members of our community are protected under the law. Through education, enforcement, and reform, we reaffirm our commitment to justice and the preservation of civil rights for all.



Celebrating **71 years** of Civil Rights Movement

HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRAINING



On January 15th and 16th, 2025, a cross section of investigators and attorneys from our office attended the Human Trafficking Training for Law Enforcement, Prosecutors and Child Welfare Professionals in Watkinsville, Georgia. This two-day training was sponsored by the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia and the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. The training covered the cross section between human trafficking and gangs, labor trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children and updates in human trafficking-related statutes and case law.

CONGRATULATIONS ! TARRANCE MILLER



On January 31st, 2025, Chief Sr. ADA Tarrance Miller was awarded the Alpharetta Department of Public Safety Chief's Community Partner Award for his work and diligence in assisting the Alpharetta Police Department with their Human Trafficking and Internet Child Exploitation cases. As Alpharetta Police Department began to explore new approaches to handle undercover operations with ICAC cases and apprehending offenders who would seek to exploit children in their jurisdiction, they were able to consistently call upon Chief Sr. ADA Miller in the evenings and weekends with their questions and concerns as they investigated these cases. Miller was honored at the Alpharetta Department of Public Safety's Annual Appreciation Dinner on January, 31st, 2025, at The Hotel at Avalon in Alpharetta.

Remembering the past...



**OSCAR
HARRIS**

ARCHITECT OF FULTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER



NBPA

The National Black Prosecutors Association

CONGRATULATIONS MARSHAL HODGE

on being selected as a Mentor in the Zero Abuse - National Black Prosecutors Association Fellowship Program



Dear Ilona Rolack,

I am writing to express my deepest appreciation for the incredible support and dedication you have shown as my victim's advocate over the past year. Your unwavering commitment to keeping me informed about the tragic circumstances surrounding the murder of my son, Daniel Aaron, has been a true blessing during such a difficult time.

Ilona your empathy, professionalism, and consistent communication have provided me with the strength and clarity I needed to navigate this heartbreaking journey. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed, and I believe you deserve recognition for your outstanding work.

Therefore, I would like to recommend you for a promotion to the next higher-level position with a corresponding pay increase. Your exceptional skills and compassionate nature make you an invaluable asset, and I am confident you will continue to make a profound difference in the lives of those you assist. I will never forget how you helped me navigate this difficult journey, which was the loss of my son, "Daniel Frederick John Aaron."

Thank you and God Bless You.

Respectfully,
Dr. Frederick Aaron



ELDER ABUSE EVENTS



On February 11, 2025, ACE visited Camp Truitt Senior Center to educate seniors on current scams, risks, and emerging threats. Attendees had the opportunity to engage in discussions, ask questions, and share their concerns. Community Resource Specialist Kendall Watkins added a thoughtful touch by bringing candy and Valentine's cards signed by FCDAO staff, fostering a warm and supportive atmosphere.

On February 13, 2025, ACE visited Heritage Station Senior Apartments to address residents' concerns about safety and living conditions, which they had previously raised with other agencies. The unit has proactively engaged with state and local authorities and will follow up to ensure these issues are effectively resolved.

On February 19th, ACE was honored to take part in the inaugural Senior Safety event, hosted by Councilman Sebastian, Pearls at Work, and the City of South Fulton. Seniors enjoyed a complimentary lunch while hearing vital insights from the DA's Office, law enforcement, and the city councilman about scams targeting the elderly. This event marks the beginning of a series dedicated to protecting and empowering our senior community.



Hersey Count
WINNER

**Allonya
Ragland**

Count: 386
Guess: 365





SPIRIT DAY



♥ Sensible ♥

W ise

E nergized

E volving

T ime = 26

Years of Service with the Fulton County DA's Office

CONTEST WINNERS

Joya Rutland | Rewa Collier

Remembering the past...

BENJAMIN MAYS

PRESIDENT OF MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

Embracing the present



SISTER & BROTHERHOOD SUMMIT BENJAMIN E. MAYS HIGH SCHOOL

Following a tragic after-school shooting at Benjamin E. Mays High School in February 2024, the Southwest Atlanta community has come together each year to show students that violence does not define their future. On February 12th, members of our team attended the Sisterhood Summit, an inspiring event where young women heard from accomplished women in their own neighborhoods. City Council Member Eshe' Collins delivered the keynote address, with former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin and City Council Member Andrea Boone as guest speakers. Kendall Watkins led a session on healthy communication, engaging students in discussions about cellphone usage and role-playing different ways to communicate based on authority. Angela Johnson spoke about defining femininity and the meaning of being a lady, while January Towles participated in the goal-setting panel, helping students articulate their aspirations and create vision boards.

The following day, the young men of Benjamin E. Mays High School had their own summit, featuring Rev. Louis Negrón, Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer of the 100 Black Men of Atlanta, as the keynote speaker. Assistant Chief Investigator Brian Salter and Chief Investigator Richard Randolph participated in the Street Smarts 101 panel, guiding students through discussions on relationships and interactions with law enforcement.

This annual event continues to empower and inspire students, reinforcing the message that their futures are full of potential beyond violence.



GRANTS CORNER

Michele Henry | Grants Specialist

The upcoming Fani T. Willis Self-Care Fair has received funding from the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) through a grant from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), within the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, to promote community awareness of crime victims' rights and services during the 2025 National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

The awarded funding will be used to support events and activities of healing while connecting with the community and others who are on their path to resilience. The Project is part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, an annual observance that takes place April 6-12, 2025. The theme for 2025 National Crime Victims' Rights Week is "Connecting < KINSHIP > Healing". The grant was a collaborative effort between Chief Deputy District Attorney Rewa Collier, Deputy Victim Witness Advocate Ilona Rolack and Deputy Victim Witness Advocate Misty Botu.

"The support from NAVAA and OVC for our 2025 National Crime Victims' Rights Week activities will help us help crime victims," said District Attorney Fani T. Willis. "Members of our community are encouraged to help promote justice through service to crime victims by joining our 2025 National Crime Victims' Rights Week activities and supporting victim assistance programs on a daily basis."

For additional information about 2025 National Crime Victims' Rights Week activities or about victims' rights and services in Fulton County, please contact Misty Botu at misty.botu@fultoncountyga.gov. For information about national efforts to promote 2025 National Crime Victims' Rights Week, please visit the Office for Victims of Crime website at www.ovc.gov.

The National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators is a non-profit organization that represents the 56 state agencies that distribute money from the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Crime Victims Fund to more than 4,000 direct victim assistance service providers. The money in the Crime Victims Fund comes from fines collected from offenders convicted of federal crimes and not from U.S. taxpayers.

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS RIGHTS WEEK

A P R I L 6 - 1 2 2 0 2 5

KINSHIP CONNECTING & HEALING

FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

PRESENTS


4/7/25

KINSHIP CIRCLE

Join our homicide support group to honor your loved ones through personalized caricature portraits, created by talented artists. These custom family portraits, featuring your beloved one, will be shared in our virtual memorial throughout the week. This meaningful tribute offers a space for healing, remembrance, and community support

Hosted by Deputy Victim Witness Advocate **Ilona Rolack**
ilona.rolack@fultoncountyga.gov to **rsvp for kinship circle**

4/12/25



FANI T. WILLIS

SELF CARE FAIR

Join us for an afternoon of self-care services while connecting with organizations that support victims of crime. This event is designed to promote healing and offer resources to those in need. Come together for a day of restorative activities, empowerment, and community support.

Hosted by Deputy Victim Witness Advocate **Misty Botu**
misty.botu@fultoncountyga.gov to **become a vendor**

Save the date! And Locations will be announced in coming weeks

FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

INVESTIGATION LEADERSHIP SWEARING-IN Ceremony

The word pillar—defined as a tall vertical structure used for support or as a monument—perfectly encapsulates the role of investigation leaders, as described by Executive Chief Johnna Griffin. Nine symbolic white pillars adorned the Board of Commissioners (BOC) room because, just like these steadfast structures, investigators serve as the backbone of the Fulton County District Attorney's Office.

On Friday, February 20, 2025, the FCDAO proudly hosted the Swearing-In Ceremony for all Investigation Leadership. The program commenced with a warm welcome from Madam District Attorney, who praised the team's dedication and excellence, declaring them the best group of investigation leaders in the nation.

Following the administration of the oath, each Deputy Chief shared insights into their division's background, highlighted key accomplishments, and reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to service.

The ceremony concluded with an inspiring sermon by Pastor Dr. Warren Henry of Kingdom of God International Ministries. He spoke on the fundamental principles of leadership:

A leader is one who serves.

A leader must not be swayed by the noise of doubt.

A leader thrives through teamwork.

"If God called you, He will equip you," Dr. Henry proclaimed, offering words of encouragement to the newly sworn-in leaders.

Congratulations to all members of the Investigation Leadership team. We are confident in your dedication to protecting and serving the citizens of Fulton County with integrity and excellence.



Congratulations "PILLARS of SERVICE"



Remembering the past...



**ANDREW
YOUNG**

55TH MAYOR OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA

CONGRATULATIONS & HAPPY RETIREMENT
TRACEY STOKES



25 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH THE FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

CONVICTION ALERTS



State vs. Darius Mills

Congratulations to the Major Case Unit Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Darius Mills, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Felony Murder, Murder, and Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. Judge Rachel Krause sentenced the Defendant to Life without the Possibility of Parole +20 Years.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Tom Griner
Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Alicia Taylor
Deputy Chief Investigator Antonio Long
Senior Investigator Lawrence Vasquez
Legal Assistant Quentin Wright
Victim Witness Advocate Katrina Gill



State vs. Jadon Young

Congratulations to the Anti-Corruption Unit! In the case of State vs. Jadon Young, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including PWISD Schedule I CS, Possession Schedule I CS, and Crossing Guard Lines of Jail with Prohibited Items. Judge Scott McAfee sentenced the Defendant to 40 Years to Serve 15 Years, Balance on Probation to Begin after 40-day Sentence for Contempt.

Deputy District Attorney Tonya Boykin
Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Tarrance Miller
Deputy Chief Investigator Saul Alter
Senior Investigator Shae Corso
Legal Assistant Brenda Mitchell
Legal Assistant Keehlan Haygood



State vs. Javon Christian

Congratulations to the Sexual Assault Unit! In the case of State vs. Javon Christian, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Aggravated Sodomy, Armed Robbery, and Aggravated Assault. Judge David Emerson sentenced the Defendant to Life in Prison +5 Years Probation.

Deputy District Attorney Siri Patel
Deputy District Attorney Kelcee Jones-Connor
Senior Investigator Khristina Sanders
Legal Assistant Tiffany Horton
Victim Witness Advocate Carla Martinez



State vs. Stefhon Hamilton

Congratulations to the Major Case Unit Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Stefhon Hamilton, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Felony Murder, Murder, and Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. Judge Rachelle Carnesale sentenced the Defendant to Life without the Possibility of Parole +10 Years.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Adam Abbate
Deputy District Attorney Gautam Rao
Deputy Chief Investigator Antonio Long
Senior Investigator Chara Dennis
Deputy Victim Witness Advocate Ilona Rolack



State vs. Keshawn Patterson

Congratulations to the Domestic Violence Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Keshawn Patterson, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Aggravated Assault, Terroristic Threats and Acts Degree, and Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. Judge Rachel Krause sentenced the Defendant to Life without the Possibility of Parole +20 Years.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Kassie Hall
Senior Assistant District Attorney Travis Thomas
Lieutenant Investigator Partrena Baker
Legal Assistant Cassie Lundy
Victim Witness Advocate Sandra Jean-Louis



SHIRLEY
FRANKLIN

58TH MAYOR OF ATLANTA, GA

FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
NEWS CORNER

Accountant by day, rapist by night: Inside the case that led to a 'monster' being convicted



Jailer to serve at least 15 years for bringing backpack of drugs to work at Fulton Jail



Atlanta mother found guilty of killing her 2 young sons by putting them inside an oven





Fani T. Willis

FANI T. WILLIS

Fulton County District Attorney