On Wednesday, January 8, 2020, the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office and District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr. officially announced the commencement of its Conviction Integrity Unit, the first in Georgia in a DA’s Office. This sold-out event was held at the Tyler Perry Studios, where Former Atlanta Mayor and U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young delivered the keynote address, and the first individual exonerated by the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office CIU was introduced to the community and offered a job by Tyler Perry Studios.

“We believe prosecutors can and should be leading the charge to ensure the public has confidence in criminal convictions. The many proven cases of wrongful conviction and their known causes demonstrate that more needs to be done to guard against such errors. Conviction Integrity Units must investigate and remedy wrongful convictions, and they must also establish policies and procedures to learn from the errors identified, so the criminal justice system is strengthened. As such, the Fulton County Conviction Integrity Unit will investigate claims of actual innocence to determine whether new evidence or facts give rise to a substantial probability that the convicted defendant was not the person who committed the offense for which they were convicted. The Conviction Integrity Unit endeavors to review past convictions for credible claims of actual innocence, wrongful conviction, and, where feasible, sentencing inequities. This process is afforded to applicants regardless of whether they are pro se or represented by an attorney. The CIU is committed to ensuring all submissions receive a thorough and equitable review. The FCDA CIU will review five types of cases which include claims of actual innocence, claims of constitutional violations, in the interest of justice, sentence modification, and cases of historical significance.

The Conviction Integrity Unit consists of a Director, Aimee Maxwell, and Investigator Trina Swanson-Lucas. Professor Melissa Redmon, the Prosecutorial Justice Program Director for the University Of Georgia School Of Law, will serve as the unit’s Lead Consultant. Cases will be evaluated by a Review Board made up of five individuals including, Michael Lash, a citizen advocate, Richard Rose, the President of the Atlanta Chapter of the NAACP, Nazeera Dawood, a Fulton County leader and activist, Bettieanne Hart, a former Fulton County District Attorney’s Office Deputy District Attorney, and Kate Boccia, the Chief Executive Officer of the National Incarceration Association.

Anyone who wishes to submit an application for review to the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office Conviction Integrity Unit should do so by contacting its Director Aimee Maxwell at 1-833- 432-7285 or convictionintegrity@fultoncountyga.gov.
PROJECT LEVEL UP (PLU), is a substantial juvenile intervention program that focuses upon juvenile repeat offenders who have accumulated (3) or more arrests. The intervention program will provide those youth identified with a robust aftercare program, mentoring opportunities and family intervention. In order to implement and run this program we have hired 4 new staff full-time staff members. These staff members are excited to engage with the youth of our county and assist in the reduction of juvenile repeat offenders.

Ms. Ericka Green will serve as the Project Manager for Project Level Up. Ms. Green received her Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from Clark Atlanta University and her Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology from Argosy University in Atlanta. Ms. Green has significant experience providing family and juvenile intervention. She previously worked as a Social Services Case Manager for the Georgia Department of Children and Family Services, and as a Project Manager for Families First, the largest family and children’s services organization in Metro Atlanta.

Ms. Cari Wainio will serve as the Case Manager for Project Level Up. Ms. Wainio received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Georgia College and State University and her Master of Science in Community Counseling from Argosy University in Atlanta. Ms. Wainio has nearly 10 years of experience working directly with juveniles in need of substantial intervention as well as individuals who are seeking to alter the trajectory of their life following a period of incarceration. Throughout the last nine years, Ms. Wainio served as Program Manager, Therapist, Hi Fidelity Wraparound Supervisor, and Care Coordinator with the organization Chris 180 which is focused upon providing children, adults, and families with high-quality, trauma-informed behavioral health services and support systems.

Ms. Darian McDowell will serve as the After Care Manager for Project Level Up. Ms. McDowell received her Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation Services from Winston-Salem State University and her Masters in Rehabilitation Services from the University of South Carolina. For more than two years, Ms. McDowell was a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with the Tommy Nobis Center in Marietta which provides job training, employment, and vocational support to youth and adults with disabilities and other barriers to employment. Prior to her tenure at TNC, Ms. McDowell served as a Case Manager with Goodwill of North Georgia.

Marlon Oden will serve as the Family Intervention Specialist for Project Level Up. Mr. Oden received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Criminal Justice from Notre Dame College in Cleveland, Ohio and his Master of Social Work from Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. From 2017-2019, Mr. Oden served as a Residential Program Supervisor with The Village Network in Wooster, Ohio which is an experienced, multi-discipline behavioral health organization that assists youth and families, specifically boys and girls in group homes and residential treatment centers across Ohio. In addition to his experience with The Village Network, Mr. Oden also worked as a Behavioral Specialist with the LEAP Program in Kent, Ohio as well as a Student Probation Intern in the Summit County Juvenile Detention Center in Akron, Ohio. This year, Mr. Oden was also participating in a MSW Clinical Internship at The Village Network.
In 2019, the Gangs and Guns Unit of the Fulton County District Attorney's Office worked diligently to achieve a conviction rate of 100%. One of the most violent and horrific gang homicides in Fulton County history was among those recent convictions:

On October 17, 2016, 30-year-old Christopher Lockett invited 33-year-old Christopher Dean to the Atlanta home of 23-year-old Xavier Gibson and his brother, 30-year-old Orlando Gibson. Dean was under the assumption that his visit to the Gibson home was to complete a drug transaction, as they had on previous occasions. However, this time was different; Lockett learned that Dean was a police witness in California against other gang members. Lockett and the members of his criminal street gang devised a plan to torture and murder Dean in an effort to show other gang members that working as a police witness would not be tolerated.

Upon getting to the home, Dean was met by Lockett's fellow gang members, Xavier Gibson, Orlando Gibson, 21-year-old Quatez Clark, and 27-year-old Joshua Rooks. For over an hour, Dean was brutally beaten with a two-by-four and a crowbar. The defendants also sodomized the victim with a handle-like object, and seminal fluid was found inside Dean's rectal cavity. Following the savage beating and torture, the defendants shot the victim twice in the back of the head.

Rooks then drove from the scene to pick up 27-year-old Jasper Green and 25-year-old Lamar Almon. The three returned to the murder scene where Lockett paid Almon and Green to clean up brain matter and blood from the murder and to burn the victim's body and his car. The plan was to place Dean's body in the trunk of Lockett's car and drive the vehicle to a location and set fire to it. However, after witnessing the gruesome condition of the victim's body, Green and Almon decided to leave Lockett's car, with Dean's body in the trunk, in the parking lot of the H.E. Holmes MARTA station in Atlanta. Atlanta Police recovered the body, and all seven defendants were later connected to the crime and arrested.

On April 1, 2019, a Fulton County Superior Court Jury found LOCKETT, XAVIER GIBSON, CLARK, ROOKS, AND GREEN guilty of Murder, Felony Murder, Participation in a Criminal Street Gang Activity, and other related felonies. On April 19, 2019 Xavier Gibson, Clark, Rooks, and Green were sentenced to life imprisonment. Lockett was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Almon and Orlando Gibson will be tried at a later time.

“My greatest fear is rather than our community focusing like a laser on the problem that is clearly at hand that we would make excuses, blame others and search blindly through the weeds for anecdotal, De Minimis, less compelling reasons for this violence, when the killers are obviously standing before us, in ritualistic coordinated colors, unmasked, unrepentant and looking to increase their territories and bounty through thefts and murderous violence.

“My greatest fear is that we would choose to do nothing and the violence would happen again and again.”

– District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr.
FULTON COUNTY GRAND JURY INDICTS CLARK ATLANTA STUDENT & HER BOYFRIEND FOR MURDERING ROOMMATE

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr., announces the INDICTMENT, by a Fulton County Grand Jury, of 22-year-old JORDYN JONES and 21-year-old BARRON BRANTLEY.

On Friday, January 31, 2020, a Fulton County Grand Jury true billed the indictment against Jordyn Jones and Barron Brantley. According to the indictment, Jones and Brantley, who were in a relationship at the time of the incident, are responsible for the murder of 21-year-old Alexis Crawford on October 31, 2019. Crawford and Jones were roommates at Clark Atlanta University. Jones and Brantley were indicted for causing Crawford’s death by asphyxiation through the use of a garbage bag. Jones and Brantley are accused of placing Crawford’s body into a trash bin and dumping it in Exchange Park in DeKalb County. Brantley was also indicted for one count of Aggravated Sodomy for unlawfully and forcefully anally sodomizing Crawford on October 26, 2019, five days before the murder.

Brantley faces (7) counts as part of this indictment, including:
• Murder
• Felony Murder (2)
• Aggravated Assault
• False Imprisonment
• Concealing The Death Of Another
• Aggravated Sodomy

Jones faces (6) counts as part of this indictment, including:
• Murder
• Felony Murder (2)
• Aggravated Assault
• False Imprisonment
• Concealing the Death of Another

TEENAGE DEFENDANTS ENTER GUILTY PLEA TO MURDER OF ATLANTA CHARITY WORKER

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr., announces the MURDER, by a non-negotiated guilty plea, of 18-year-old ADARIUS JONES and 19-year-old KHALID BAYS.

On August 12, 2018, 49-year-old Beverly Jenkins was sitting in her car at the intersection of Westview Drive SW and Hopkins Street SW in Atlanta. Jenkins was headed home after her shift at the City of Refuge, a nonprofit organization that assists homeless mothers and families. While she waited at the intersection, Jones and Bays attempted to carjack Jenkins. When Jenkins attempted to drive away, Bays fired his 9mm handgun. The bullet struck Jenkins in the head and her vehicle veered off the roadway. The victim died in the front seat of her van. Bays and Jones fled the scene.

A month later, on September 17, 2018, Bays and Jones carjacked a different victim at a gas station along Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard in Atlanta. The defendants also shot the victim in this carjacking. She was struck twice in the stomach and was severely injured, but she survived the shooting. The shell casing found following the September carjacking matched the shell casing located at the scene of Jenkins’ murder.

Eventually, Bays and Jones were arrested and both admitted to their involvement in the carjackings and Jenkins’ murder. On February 6, 2020, Jones and Bays entered non-negotiated guilty pleas to the indictment and were each sentenced to Life in Prison. Jones received an additional (5) five years to serve, and Bays received an additional 15 years to serve. Beverly Jenkins was a beloved charity worker in the Atlanta area, and she was a mother of five and a grandmother of four.

BAYS and JONES entered a non-negotiated guilty plea and were convicted of murder, felony murder, criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, hijacking a motor vehicle in the 1st degree, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, armed robbery, and aggravated battery.

JONES was sentenced to life in prison plus 5 years
BAYS was sentenced to life in prison plus 15 years
STAR ATLANTA COLLEGE BASKETBALL WHO WERE ALSO GANG MEMBERS PLAYERS PLEAD GUILTY

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr., announces the attempted murder and participation in criminal street gang activity CONVICTION, by a non-negotiated guilty plea, of 21-year-old DEVIN DURHAM, 20-year-old NAYA HUNTER, and 20-year-old JALEN HUNT.

A week prior to March 28, 2018, 25-year-old Amontae Barnes met Naya Hunter at a gas station in Austell. At that time, Barnes and Hunter exchanged phone numbers. After their initial meeting, Barnes sent Hunter a text message that contained a picture which showed a large sum of cash. It was an attempt by Barnes to impress Hunter so she might show interest in a future meetup. On March 28, 2018, Hunter contacted Barnes and asked if he would like to get together. Hunter provided Barnes with her address, and he arrived at her apartment complex, along Rambling Drive SW in Atlanta, a short time later.

After Barnes arrived, Hunter told Barnes she needed to call someone in an attempt to obtain marijuana. As they were sitting on the steps of the breezeway, Devin Durham approached and greeted Hunter and Barnes. Moments later, Jalen Hunt appeared. Hunt brandished a firearm and demanded Barnes, “Give it up!”

When Barnes refused Hunt’s demand, Hunt shot Barnes in the hand. Barnes attempted to escape down the steps of the building breezeway but Hunt followed behind and shot Barnes seven more times. Hunt, Durham, and Hunter fled the scene. Barnes suffered gunshot wounds to his torso, arm, and back. Doctors had to remove a portion of the victim’s intestine, and Barnes does not have full function of his left leg.

Phone records later connected Hunter, Hunt, and Durham to the crime. Investigators also discovered the three individuals are members of a subset of a prominent Atlanta criminal street gang. Durham and Hunter were also members of the men’s and women’s basketball teams at Atlanta Metropolitan College when they committed the crime.

During sentencing, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Craig Schwall expressed his frustration with violent crime and gang activity in his comments to the defendants on behalf of the community.

“I really don’t have any sympathy for any of you. I give out mercy every day, but we’ve got to send a message; gangs, guns, gone. You’re in a gang, you have guns, you are going to prison. That’s the message I want to send loudly and clear.”

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr. agreed with Judge Schwall’s position.

“Atlanta criminal street gangs continue to grow and prosper within our community. It’s hard to understand why young people who are enrolled in college, are members of a college basketball team, with a life full of promise and opportunity ahead of them, are somehow attracted to illegal street gang activity. But, until we answer that fundamental question, gang activity will continue to plague our community.”

HUNT, DURHAM, AND HUNTER entered a non-negotiated guilty plea and were convicted of criminal attempt to commit murder, participation in illegal street gang activity, criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, aggravated battery, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony.

HUNT was sentenced to 25 years to serve 20, balance probated
DURHAM was sentenced to 15 years to serve 10, balance probated
HUNTER was sentenced to 15 years to serve 10, balance probated
DEFENDANT WHO TERRORIZED MIDDLE GEORGIA AND FULTON COUNTY CONVICTED OF MURDER

DISTRICT ATTORNEY IN MIDDLE GEORGIA CALLED FULTON DA TO EXPRESS HIS SINCERE APPRECIATION

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr., announces the MURDER conviction, by a Fulton County Superior Court Jury, of 24-year-old DENZEL ATKINS.

On Tuesday, December 22, 2015, Denzel Atkins contacted his friend Harold Foster. Atkins and Foster lived in Vidalia, Georgia, but that day, Atkins asked Foster if he desired to travel with him to Atlanta to "make some money." Foster agreed, and Atkins drove the two of them to Atlanta in Foster's girlfriend's gray car.

When they arrived in Atlanta, Atkins contacted 22-year-old Elijah Wallace. Atkins previously met Wallace in Statesboro, Georgia while Wallace was a student at Georgia Southern University. Atkins asked Wallace to meet him under the guise of a marijuana deal. Atkins was aware that Wallace sold marijuana and would likely be carrying a significant amount of cash.

Atkins and Foster arrived at a location along Astor Avenue in Atlanta to meet Wallace. Wallace entered the rear passenger seat of the vehicle Atkins was driving. Wallace immediately handed Atkins a book bag that contained marijuana and $20,000.00 in cash. Wallace noticed that a 9mm handgun was lying in Atkins' lap. The victim complimented the defendant's handgun and then showed Atkins the gun he was carrying. Atkins opened the backpack to confirm it contained marijuana and cash, and then the defendant subsequently pointed his handgun at Wallace and fired 13 times. Wallace died from gunshot wounds to his head, torso, and extremities.

Atkins proceeded to drive the vehicle to a nearby intersection along Campbellton Road where he dumped Wallace's body. Atkins and Foster then immediately drove back to Vidalia. Atkins and Foster attempted to dispose of the victim's shoe, phone, and gun when they tossed the items out of the car window. The defendants also threw Atkins' gun and their shirts along Interstate 20. When they returned to Vidalia, Atkins informed Foster's girlfriend of what had occurred and said they intended to burn her car. Foster's girlfriend later called police and reported that her car was stolen. On December 23, 2015, the gray car was discovered in Montgomery, Alabama, and it appeared that someone attempted to burn the vehicle. Foster was arrested in Decatur, Georgia on January 20, 2016. On March 2, 2016, Atkins was arrested in Savannah, Georgia. The defendant was hiding in a friend's attic.

In 2014, a year prior to the incident in Fulton County, Atkins was tried before a jury in the Middle Judicial Circuit of Georgia for a murder that occurred in Candler County. However, the jury deadlocked, and Atkins was not convicted. District Attorney Hayward Altman, from the Middle Judicial Circuit of Georgia, called the Fulton County District Attorney's Office on Tuesday to personally express his gratitude for obtaining a conviction in this case.

“I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office for their hard work in obtaining a murder conviction in the case against Denzel Atkins. We believe Atkins has been involved in the robberies and murders of four to five victims in our area. This defendant has terrorized our community for far too long, and we truly applaud the work of the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office and all of the GBI and Atlanta Police investigators who worked diligently to bring this defendant to justice.”

-Hayward Altman
District Attorney of the Middle Judicial Circuit of Georgia

The case against Harold Foster is still active and pending in Fulton County Superior Court and will be disposed of at a later time.

ATKINS was convicted of murder, felony murder, armed robbery, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, criminal attempt to purchase marijuana, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony.

ATKINS was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole plus an additional life sentence plus 15 years.
FEARFUL HIS SECRET BOYFRIEND WAS ENDING RELATIONSHIP, DEFENDANT SHOOTS LOVER IN THE HEAD AND HIDES THE BODY

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr., announces the MURDER conviction, by a Fulton County Superior Court Jury, of 37-year-old WILLIAM MORGAN.

In 2016, William Morgan and 43-year-old Brian Campbell were intimately involved in a secret relationship. The two men met a year earlier at a club in Atlanta, and they eventually moved in together. Morgan and Campbell were both married to women, but Morgan and his wife were separated. Campbell’s family lived in Delaware, but his job required him to live in Atlanta. In October 2016, Morgan was addicted to methamphetamines and was financially reliant on Campbell. Morgan stole Campbell's Land Rover vehicle, guns, and watches during the Labor Day holiday a month earlier.

Morgan’s drug addiction, his reliance on Campbell, and the overall complications caused by the fact that both men were married and engaged in a secret romance, led Campbell to consider ending the relationship with Morgan. Morgan understood Campbell's intentions, and on October 1, 2016, after Morgan and Campbell had attended a sports car race in Braselton with two friends, Morgan shot Campbell in the head twice inside their shared apartment on Peachtree Street NE in Atlanta.

Morgan stole two of Campbell’s high-end watches, an iPhone, a handgun, an iPad, and his wallet which contained various credit cards. Morgan lowered the temperature in the apartment to 45 degrees, wrapped Campbell’s body in trash bags, and hid it in the closet. Before Morgan left the apartment, he lit a scented candle and placed it near the closet where the body was stowed.

When Campbell stopped responding to his wife’s communications she called the Atlanta Police Department and filed a missing person’s report. Campbell’s vehicle was found abandoned in Jacksonville, Alabama on October 5, 2016, four days after the murder. On October 18, 2016, a fugitive unit located Morgan inside a residence in Jacksonville, Alabama. Morgan engaged in a standoff with law enforcement, but he eventually surrendered. Morgan admitted to living with Campbell and stealing his property but denied committing the murder. Morgan attempted to sell Campbell's watches to a pawn shop in Alabama, but after they denied his attempts he sold the items to private citizens.

Morgan was previously convicted in Alabama in 2002, 2003, and 2012, for Aggravated Assault, Possession of a Forged Instrument, Resisting an Officer, Escape, Passing Counterfeit Obligations and Securities, Burglary, and Domestic Violence Assault.

MORGAN was convicted of murder, felony murder, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, theft by taking, financial transaction card theft, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

MORGAN was sentenced to life in prison without parole.
GANG MEMBER SENTENCED TO 100 YEARS IN PRISON AFTER NON-NEGOTIATED GUILTY PLEA

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr., announces the MURDER and ARMED ROBBERY conviction, by a non-negotiated guilty plea, of 23-year-old SHAKUR WRIGHT.

On April 16, 2016, 23-year-old Brentton Parks was walking to a food mart along Donnelly Avenue SW when he was confronted by two individuals he attended high school with including Shakur Wright. Wright and 23-year-old Derek Boston struck the victim in the face until he fell to the ground, and then they removed his cell phone from his pants pocket. Wright proceeded to brandish a handgun and fired several shots at Parks. A bullet grazed Parks’ head, but he survived the shooting. Wright and Boston fled the scene. (Boston's case is still pending disposition)

On October 17, 2016, Shakur Wright was involved in one of the most horrific murders in recent Fulton County history. 33-year-old Christopher Dean was brutally sodomized and tortured by multiple gang members, including Wright, when they discovered that he was once a police witness in California. Dean died from a gunshot wound to the head, and then his body was stuffed in the trunk of a vehicle and dumped at the H.E. Holmes MARTA Station in Atlanta. Wright was responsible for the physical torture of Dean. Five of Wright’s co-defendant’s, in this case, were convicted of Murder and sentenced to Life in Prison.

At the time of the previous convictions, Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr. said, “In my opinion, this murder – with its torture which included a brutal beating, sodomy with a wooden or metal object, penile sodomy by one or ALL of the defendants, shooting of the victim to the back of the head and the partial decomposition of the body – represents the most horrific death in our County in recent history”

“My greatest fear is rather than our community focusing like a laser on the problem that is clearly at hand that we would make excuses, blame others and search blindly through the weeds for anecdotal, De Minimis, less compelling reasons for this violence, when the killers are obviously standing before us, in ritualistic coordinated colors, unmasked, unrepentant and looking to increase their territories and bounty through thefts and murderous violence. My greatest fear is that we would choose to do nothing and the violence would happen again and again.”

On October 28, 2016, 28-year-old Benjamin Thompson and his friend visited a home along Markone Street in Atlanta. During the visit, Thompson’s friend engaged in a fight with an associate of Shakur Wright. During the altercation, Wright brandished a handgun and shot Thompson in the chest. Thompson died at the scene. Wright was arrested that same evening in possession of a .40 caliber and .45 caliber handgun.

On February 6, 2020, Wright entered a non-negotiated guilty plea to all of the charges associated with the three crimes described above. Wright was sentenced to Two Life Sentences Plus 40 Years which amounts to 100 years to serve in prison.

WRIGHT entered a non-negotiated guilty plea and was convicted of murder, felony murder, participation in illegal criminal street gang activity, armed robbery, aggravated assault, concealing the death of another, tampering with evidence, and criminal attempt to purchase marijuana.

WRIGHT was sentenced to (2) life sentences plus 40 years
FORMER ALABAMA CORRECTIONS OFFICER, WHO POSED AS POLICE OFFICER, PLEADS GUILTY TO VIOLENT RAPES OF TWO WOMEN; AFTER 3 DAYS OF TRIAL

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr., announces the RAPE conviction by non-negotiated guilty plea of 50-year-old MATTHEW MOORE. Moore decided to plead guilty on Thursday in the middle of his trial in Fulton County Superior Court.

In June of 2010, Alabama Corrections Officer Matthew Moore met an Atlanta woman online for the purpose of erotic massage. The two agreed to meet in person on June 17, 2010, at the Homestead Suites along Hammond Drive in Sandy Springs. When she arrived, Moore identified himself as a police officer, and he flashed a badge, a firearm, and pepper spray. Moore proceeded to force the victim to perform oral sex upon him, and then the defendant raped her while his gun sat upon the bed. Moore then wiped himself with a napkin, got dressed, and left the hotel room. The victim called 911, and she was transported to a local hospital where she underwent a sexual assault examination. The napkin was collected as evidence.

Matthew Moore decided to enter a non-negotiated guilty plea to the indictment and was convicted of rape, aggravated sodomy, false imprisonment, impersonating an officer, aggravated sexual battery, and aggravated assault.

Moore was sentenced to life in prison serve 30 years and life on probation.
OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

LET THE REHAB BEGIN! GANG PREVENTION CENTER UPDATE

The private sectors are not the only ones renovating and remodeling! In September, members of our Gang Prevention Unit and Community Prosecution Unit spent the afternoon cleaning the newly acquired Gang Prevention Center. The former West Fulton Community Mental Health Center located on 475 Fairburn Road, sits on 2.5 acres of land and is nearly 13,000 square feet. The team surveyed the area, cleaned up trash along the perimeter, and tidied up the inside of the three-year uninhabited building. Construction is set to begin in 2020, with plans on opening the building for partial use by 2021.

This state of the art facility will operate under the Comprehensive Gang Model which was endorsed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Through a partnership with Emory University’s Sociology Department, the effort will focus on determining the reasons why young people join illegal criminal street gangs. The goal of the center is to provide best practices in gang prevention and intervention to local schools, businesses, religious institutions, and community members.

It is the mission of the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office to offer community leaders researched best practices in training, education, advocacy, and mediation for our youth and young adults. Through sustained partnerships, FCDA will gather proper data for analysis upon criminal street gangs, which will aid in creating a comprehensive criminal street gang library for citizens and future researchers. The Fulton County District Attorney’s Office is in need of $3 million to completely renovate the “Center of Youth Empowerment and Gang Prevention.” The center will house the Gang Prevention Unit, the collaborative research efforts with Emory University’s Dr. Timothy J. Dowd, as well as a Human Trafficking Monitoring Center.

INDIAN/ASIAN BURGLARY TASK FORCE FORMED TO COMBAT TARGETED CRIME ISSUES IN NORTH FULTON COUNTY

The Fulton County District Attorney’s Office has formed a task force designed to fight the spread of racially targeted burglaries of members of the Asian and Indian community in North Fulton County. Over the past two years, these citizens have been targeted by an ongoing crime spree which has greatly impacted their quality of life. FCDA Assistant District Attorney and North Fulton Community Prosecutor Lindsey McClure-So and Assistant District Attorney Siri Patel along with the Sandy Springs Police Department, the Johns Creek Police Department, the Indian Consulate, and activist and community leader Nazeera Dawood are teaming up to find solutions to combat this crime problem.
FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JOINs WITH LOCAL CHURCH TO EDUCATE CHILDREN

Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr. celebrated the largest Junior District Attorney class in the history of the 22-year program. It is more than double the previous record which was set in 2018. On Sunday, August 4, 2019, for the first time ever, 135 Fulton County Junior District Attorneys graduated from the program in front of members of the Fulton County community at New Life Presbyterian Church along Old National Highway in Atlanta.

In 2019, New Life Presbyterian contributed 26 students to the program as part of a new partnership between the church and the Fulton County DA’s Office. The four-week program is made up of middle school students from all over Fulton County and Metro Atlanta who receive the opportunity to visit and experience different aspects of the criminal justice system. The Junior DA program is a crime prevention and educational opportunity which allows these students to observe the actual operation of the criminal justice system. The motto of the program is “It is difficult to be what you cannot see.”

The Fulton County District Attorney’s Office was pleased to be joined by City of South Fulton Mayor Bill Edwards, recently appointed City of South Fulton Municipal Judge Fani Willis, and Rev. Hodari Williams from New Life Presbyterian Church to honor the students who were graduating from the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office Junior DA Program.

“It is difficult to be what you cannot see.”

New Life Presbyterian Church along Old National Highway in Atlanta.

“The Junior DA program has exposed our youth to complexities of the judicial system. This exposure has not only been a source of education but a meaningful tool of inspiration for young aspiring lawyers.”

- Rev. Hodari Williams,
New Life Presbyterian Church
OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

INCREASED OUTREACH TO OUR AGING POPULATION

Senior citizens are an asset to our community as they have paved the way for our current and future successes. In that vein, the District Attorney, Paul L. Howard, Jr., has directed the members of his Community Prosecution Unit to proactively engage with the county’s aging population as this population faces a unique set of public safety and quality of life concerns. One main concern this population is facing is the potential victimization by fraudsters. The world we live in has become increasingly digital; fraud, scams, and abuse have become pervasive. It is the goal of this outreach to engage this population with the court system in order to ensure the swift and robust prosecution of the people involved in such schemes.

In each area of the county, the Community Prosecutors are organizing these meetings and commencing these conversations. In February, the Zone 5 Community Prosecutor, Megan McCulloch, attended a Midtown Quality of Life Coalition monthly meeting, and will have that conversation about protecting our community before the end of March. The Zone 1 Community Prosecutor, Brandon Pierre-Thomas has been working with the Atlanta Police Department and a senior residential community regarding scams and other property crimes that are plaguing their residents. The work and the outreach is important, but will have a lasting impact on such an important facet of our community.

GET INVOLVED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

The Citizens’ CourtWatch program provides citizens with an understanding of the Fulton County Criminal Justice System. CourtWatch encourages the community to actively participate in the judicial process by attending and (possibly) providing a community impact statement during criminal court proceedings. The mission is accomplished by: Providing the community with information about criminal offenses that happen in their communities specifically targeting repeat offenders; Escorting citizens to the courtroom and answering questions about the court proceedings and process; Citizens addressing court through a written or oral Community Impact Statement to the Judge based on neighborhood concerns; Educating citizens about the court system through community education; and working in conjunction with the Community Prosecutors to provide case updates during citizen neighborhood meetings.

A HEART FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Fulton County District Attorney’s Office hosted a Pancake Brunch Fundraiser on Thursday, October 17, 2019, at the Zone 4 Community Prosecution Office located at 2472 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive in Atlanta to raise the remaining $3,500.00 for Mr. Terry Collier’s heart transplant. Mr. Terry Collier is the President of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Merchant’s Association, a community advocate, marathoner, father, grandfather, and friend. In February of 2018, Mr. Collier suffered a heart attack and in November of 2018, he was enrolled in the Georgia Transplant Foundation (GTF) as a candidate for a heart transplant. The GTF matches dollar for dollar up to $10,000 to cover the cost of this $32,900.00 operation. The generous donations, support, and presence of the community raised over $8,000 to help Mr. Collier! Everyone gave from their heart in order to save his!
On November 19, 2019, the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office held its 3rd Annual Thanksgiving event. District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr. partnered with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Merchants’ Association, the Atlanta Community Food Bank, Investment Academy, the Launch Pad Foundation, Terri’s Café, Burger King, Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs) H, I, P, Q, R, S, and T, neighboring businesses, local churches, Halpern Enterprises, Inc., the Atlanta Police Department, the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department, Atlanta City Council, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, and other government agencies to make this event a success. The event took place at the Fulton County District Attorney’s Zone 4 Community Prosecution Office. Due to the efforts of Zone 4 Community Prosecutor Shari Jones and numerous sponsors, more than 250 men, women, and children walked away with groceries, coats, toiletries, a prepared Thanksgiving Meal: turkey breast, gravy, dressing, cornbread, and sweet potato pie sponsored by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Merchants’ Association; two bags of groceries per person (1 bag of canned goods and 1 bag of fruits/vegetables).

On December 11, 2019, the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office hosted the 3rd Annual Zone 4 “Tis the Season Community Toy Giveaway.” District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr. partnered with neighboring businesses, local churches, and other government agencies to make this event a success. The event took place at Mount Olive Baptist Church and consisted of children being welcomed by the “Reindeer of the North Pole,” (also known as the horses of the Atlanta Police Department Mounted Patrol), pictures with both Santa and Mrs. Claus. The event also provided food and coats. Zone 4 Community Prosecutor Shari Jones, with the help of Community Partners, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Merchants’ Association, Halpern Enterprises Inc., the Launch Pad, Investment Academy, the Atlanta Police Department, Atlanta City Council, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, along with Community leaders and neighbors, were able to provide more than 300 Children with wrapped presents to put underneath their Christmas Trees.
Assistant District Attorney Terrell L. Thomas is the new Zone 3 Community Prosecutor. Terrell is from College Park, Georgia where he graduated from North Clayton High School. He went on to attend Georgia Southern University, graduating in 2011, with a degree in Sports Management and a minor in Business.

Terrell attended Georgia State University College of Law, where he served on the boards for both the Black Law Students Association and the Asian-American Law Students Association. As a member of his law school’s mock trial team Terrell secured two regional championships and advancements to Nationals. Also during law school, Terrell served as an intern in the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office.

Assistant District Attorney Lindsey McClure-So is the new North Fulton Community Prosecutor. Lindsey is originally from western North Carolina and has lived in Georgia since 2014. Lindsey attended Appalachian State University, where she majored in Political Science and graduated with a Bachelor of Science. Lindsey went on to attend Mercer University School of Law, where she received her Juris Doctor and a certificate in legal writing and research in 2017.

Lindsey began her career serving as the Staff Attorney to the Chief Superior Court Judge in the Mountain Judicial Circuit. Lindsey then went on to serve as an Assistant District Attorney in the Mountain Judicial Circuit. Lindsey hopes to spend her career in public service and is excited and honored to work closely with the North Fulton community.

On Saturday, August 3, 2019, the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office partnered with the Darius Bottoms’ Foundation for the “Back to School Giveback” in Atlanta’s West Manor Park, an annual event held in loving memory of Darius Bottoms. Darius Bottoms was the nephew of Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms. In 2014, Darius was murdered by gang members who mistakenly believed he was part of a rival gang; however, Darius was not affiliated with gang activity in any way. The event included music, games, and giving out free food, backpacks, and school supplies to the community. In collaboration with the Darius Bottoms’ Foundation, the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office distributed more than 500 backpacks and school supplies. Students represented schools and clusters from all over the Southwest District.