

FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

DA DISPATCH

OCTOBER 2025



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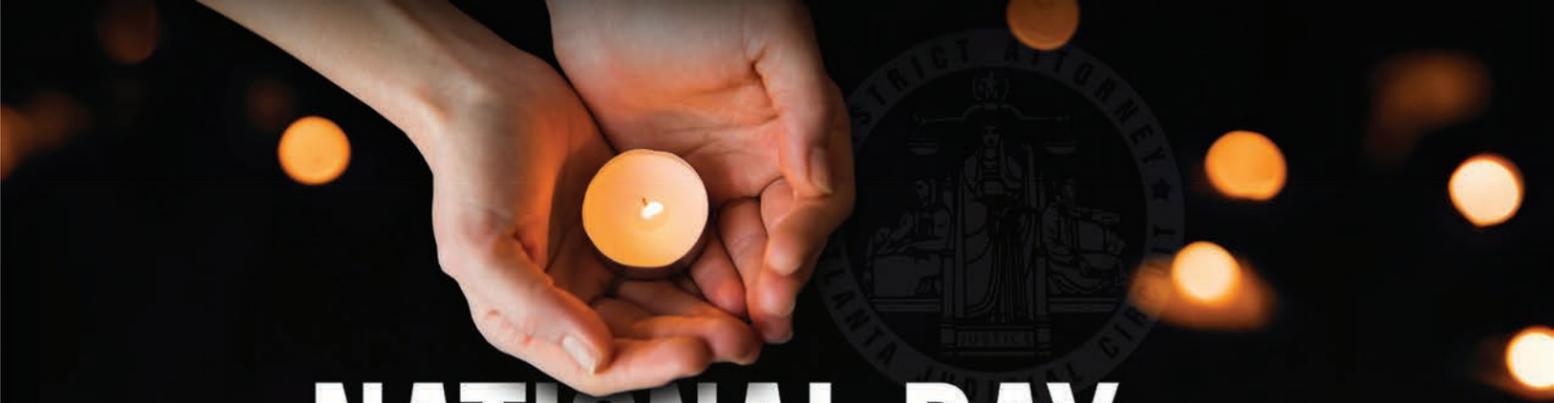
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NOVEMBER

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NATIONAL DAY *of* REMEMBRANCE FOR HOMICIDE VICTIMS



On October 2nd, the Major Crimes Division (MCD) and the Victim-Witness Advocate Program (VWAP) hosted a Candlelight Vigil in honor of the National Day of Remembrance for Homicide Victims. Families from across Fulton County gathered at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park to remember and celebrate the lives of their loved ones lost to senseless acts of violence.



The Fulton County District Attorney's Office proudly wore purple for Go Purple Day to raise awareness and show support for victims and survivors of domestic violence. Together, we stand against abuse and for a future free of violence.

MENTAL HEALTH CORNER



A Heartfelt Vigil: Commemorating the National Day of Remembrance for Homicide Victims

By Ilona Rolack, M. Sc.

October 2, 2025 marked the Second Annual Vigil dedicated to the families and loved ones of homicide victims, a poignant event that brought together a community united in grief and remembrance. The atmosphere was full of emotion as co-victims were gifted personalized candles, each one inscribed with the name, date of birth, and date of death of their murdered loved ones. These candles served not just as memorials, but as symbols of hope and solidarity.

Among those present was Chief Executive District Attorney Daysha Young, who represented the DA, accompanied by leaders from the Major Crimes Division, Executive District Attorney Abbate, Chief Deputy District Attorney Adrian Love, and Deputy District Attorney Kelcee Jones-Connor, Deputy District Attorney Kevin Armstrong. Their presence was a powerful testament to the commitment of the justice system to seek accountability for these tragic losses. Each spoke with heartfelt empathy, acknowledging the arduous journey faced by the families in attendance.

During the vigil, family members expressed deep appreciation for the recognition and support offered by the District Attorney's Office. One particularly inspiring moment came from a grieving mother who has transformed her pain into purpose. In honor of her son, Joshua Ingram, she founded a nonprofit aimed at supporting other families affected by violence. During the ceremony, she presented an award to the MCD Victim Witness Assistance Program, recognizing their unwavering support over the past five years.

This event is never just a somber gathering; it is a celebration of resilience and community. Families share stories, break bread together, and find solace in shared experiences. The Major Crimes Division Victim Witness Assistance Program extends their gratitude to all the attorneys who selflessly contributed their time and resources, as well as the investigators, legal assistants and victim advocates, who engaged with the families, offering both compassion and understanding.

This vigil serves as a powerful reminder of the strength found in human connection. As we honor the memories of those lost, we also recognize the ongoing support and dedication of those working tirelessly for justice. Together, we continue to uphold the values of empathy, compassion, and humanity in the face of unimaginable loss.



ATLANTA PRIDE



On October 12th, several members of the Fulton County District Attorney's Office proudly participated in the Atlanta Gay Pride Parade. Our team joined the celebration with an FCDAO SUV filled with swag and informational materials on hate crime awareness and prevention. Volunteers distributed resources on how to seek help and support for victims of hate crimes.

Parade attendees were enthusiastic to see the DA's Office represented and shared their appreciation for District Attorney Fani T. Willis' ongoing commitment to justice and inclusion. Our team enjoyed connecting with the community, local agencies, and organizations in attendance. It was an inspiring day filled with pride, unity, and love for the LGBTQ+ community.





LAW CORNER

Gang Evidence in Cases Without a Gang Charge By Christopher Sperry

To charge a Defendant under 16-15-4(a), Violation of the Criminal Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act, the State must prove more than just membership or association of the Defendant to a criminal street gang. Rather, the State must show that the act alleged somehow furthered the interest of the gang, commonly referred to as establishing a “nexus”. See *Rodriguez v. State* 284 Ga. 803 (2009). Appellate Courts have provided a litany of ways to establish this nexus. This can include but is not limited to showing the crime was committed in a highly visible manner so as to allow witnesses and victims to know the gang responsible, that the crime established or enhanced the gang’s reputation, that the crime was retaliation for the gang to a perceived insult, or that members of the gang referenced the crime on social media to establish the gang committed the crime. See *In the Interest of W. B.*, 342 Ga. App. 277 (2017).

But what about gang evidence in cases where there is no gang charge? Is that not just impermissible character evidence? Often times it is not and is still admissible. In *Anglin v. State* 302 Ga. 333 (2017), evidence of the Defendant’s affiliation and desire to become a member of the Bloods was admissible to establish why he reacted violently to being threatened by a drug dealer in the presence of another Blood member as it was relevant to establish the Defendant’s motive. As gang evidence is often intrinsic to the case, it is not subject to 404(b) analysis in cases where the Gang Act is not charged. See *Middlebrooks v. State* 310 Ga. 748 (2021). Even when the Gang Act is not charged, establishing the motive of the crime as having a gang nexus also expands the co-conspirator hearsay exception such that statements made in furtherance of the gang itself by any member or associate of the gang satisfy the hearsay rule, which can include certain situations where another member of the gang tells a different member of the gang that the defendant committed the crime, well after the crime is beyond the concealment phase. See *Kemp v. State* 303 Ga. 385 (2018). Given the expanded evidence that is admissible in gang cases, prosecutors in all units should examine their cases to see if there is a gang nexus so that the admissible evidence can be admitted.

FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

We’re proud to wear pink in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month!
Together, we stand with survivors and continue the fight for a cure.

O C T O B E R I S
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
A W A R E N E S S M O N T H

During the month of October, the Fulton County District Attorney's Office proudly raised awareness and showed support for victims of domestic violence. From our 2nd Annual Stop Domestic Violence 5K Race to our Community Panel Discussion, our office made it a mission to engage, educate, and stand united against domestic violence each week throughout Domestic Violence Awareness Month.



AEquitas Training



Fulton County District Attorney's Office Hosts Domestic Violence Awareness Month Training with AEquitas

On Thursday, October 23, 2025, the Fulton County District Attorney's Office partnered with AEquitas to host a specialized Domestic Violence Awareness Month training for prosecutors, advocates, and justice system professionals.

The training focused on improving the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence cases through sessions on Investigating and Analyzing the Case, Trauma-Informed Interviewing, and Predominant Aggressor & Assessing Risk and Lethality. Participants learned to evaluate risk factors, build rapport with victims, and strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration.



Attendees also worked to develop a Fulton County Domestic Violence Action Plan, aimed at enhancing case assessment, meeting victim needs, and improving accountability and outcomes.



This training reflects the District Attorney's continued commitment to supporting survivors and strengthening Fulton County's coordinated response to domestic violence.

Community PANEL DISCUSSION

Reimagining Safety, Healing & Justice:
A Community's Response to Domestic Violence



On Monday, October 6, 2025, the Brenda Baham Domestic Violence Unit hosted a community panel titled "Reimagining Safety, Healing & Justice: A Community's Response to Domestic Violence." The panel took place at the Atlanta Public Schools Student and Family Hub.

We partnered with several organizations for this important event, including the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. – Atlanta Suburban Alumnae Chapter, International Women's House, Women on the Rise, the Greater Atlanta Black Prosecutors Association, and the Fulton County Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.

The evening featured a thought-provoking conversation on the topic, led by the following distinguished panelists:

1. Phyllis Leverett – Fulton County Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
2. Rodney Jefferson – Detective, Atlanta Police Department
3. Jill Schirling-Allison – Interim Vice President of Outreach, Partnership Against Domestic Violence
4. Robyn Hasan-Simpson – Executive Director, Women on the Rise
5. Spencer Murray – Executive Director, No Harm (National Organization for Healing and Redefining Manhood)





DV AWARENESS *Day*

On Thursday, October 30, 2025, the Fulton County District Attorney's Office held its annual Domestic Violence Awareness Day at the Government Center Atrium. The event honored victims and survivors of domestic violence while reinforcing the office's commitment to justice and prevention.

Highlights included musical performances by Canika Boyer and Assistant District Attorney Quintin Lewis, a moment of silence led by Assistant Chief Investigator Paula Duprey, and a powerful survivor story shared by Ella Edwards. Dr. Priscilla Hubbard served as keynote speaker, delivering an inspiring message on advocacy and resilience.

Through reflection, storytelling, and community collaboration, the Fulton County District Attorney's Office reaffirmed its ongoing commitment to ending domestic violence and ensuring justice for all victims.





MOVIE

& Discussion

On October 1st, employees of the Fulton County District Attorney's Office watched *A Vigilante*, a powerful film about a woman who, after escaping her abusive husband, dedicates her life to helping other victims of domestic violence find freedom and safety. Following the screening, employees engaged in a meaningful discussion about the film's portrayal of domestic violence and its real-world impact.



Family JUSTICE CENTER

STAKEHOLDERS MEETING



On Tuesday, October 14th at 9 AM, FCDAO invited Stakeholders to a meeting about our plans to start a Family Justice Center in Fulton County. During the meeting, we shared plans for our Family Justice Center and discussed opportunities to work together in supporting victims, survivors and to strengthen the community. In addition, we answered questions that meeting participants had in relation to the creation of a Family Justice Center.



The Cycle Ends With US



On October 11, 2025, the Fulton County District Attorney's Office, in partnership with the Fulton County Clerk of Superior and Magistrate Courts and the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction, proudly hosted its second annual STOP Domestic Violence Abuse 5K Run at Shirley Clarke Franklin Park.

The event brought together more than 300 participants—runners, joggers, and walkers of all ages—for a healthy, inspiring, and impactful day dedicated to raising awareness about domestic violence and showing solidarity with survivors. Community members, advocates, and local organizations joined forces to promote healing, unity, and hope through the power of movement and shared purpose.

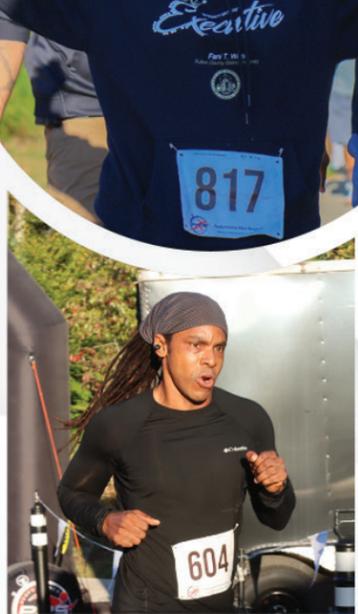
All proceeds from the event will benefit Partnership Against Domestic Violence (PADV) and the Alma Domestic Violence Foundation, two organizations that provide critical resources, advocacy, and support to individuals and families affected by domestic abuse. Their continued efforts help survivors find safety, strength, and the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to our generous sponsors—1244 Ministries and the Albert Claiborne Foundation—for their unwavering commitment and ongoing support in helping us make a meaningful difference in our community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 Kendall Watkins: kendall.watkins@fultoncountyga.gov
 Angela Johnson: angela.johnson@fultoncountyga.gov

THANK YOU to our SPONSORS





Reach



On October 13, 2025, REACH coordinators and mentors accompanied a group of select students from schools across Fulton County on an educational visit to the University of South Carolina (UofSC).

The day began at UofSC's Center for Civil Rights History and Research, where students learned about the integration of Black students and professors before and after the Reconstruction era. From there, they visited the McKissick Museum for a special admissions presentation and gained insight into college life and opportunities available at UofSC.

Next, students traveled to a nearby park in Cayce, South Carolina, for a legal lunch-and-learn, where they discussed the recent U.S. Supreme Court case *Barnes v. Felix*. After an afternoon of learning, lunch, and fun in the sun, the group returned to campus to visit the Joseph F. Rice School of Law. There, students engaged with members of the Black Law Students Association in small groups, attended a law panel featuring recent graduates, and participated in debates led by a fellow from the UofSC Constitutional Law Center.

Throughout the trip, students completed a campus scavenger hunt and registered to receive information about undergraduate admissions.

A special thank you to Assistant Chief Brian Salters, Deputy Chief Fred Glenn, and Senior Investigator Lawrence Vazquez for providing additional support and ensuring the safety and success of the trip.



2nd Serving

YOUTH COMMUNITY OUTREACH DINNER

On October 15, 2025, youth and community partners participated in an exclusive culinary experience designed to inspire, educate, and connect. Hosted in partnership with Prime on Peachtree and 2nd Chance at Lyfe, under the leadership of Founder Chef Tushun Robinson and Executive Director Reese Jackson, the event offered participants an opportunity to engage with some of Metro Atlanta's top culinary experts, expand their professional networks, and enjoy a multi-course fine dining experience.

Through this collaboration, ADA Woods-Roberts brought together REACH participants, court-involved youth, community providers, and justice partners in an upscale, empowering environment. Thanks to the generosity of Prime on Peachtree and 2nd Chance at Lyfe, attendees celebrated the art of cuisine while exploring career pathways in hospitality and learning about culinary training and certification programs available for youth through 2nd Chance at Lyfe.

Speakers included REACH College and Career Readiness Coordinator Yolanda Shorthouse, Chief Deputy Brett Pinion, Fred Parham of the Pangaea Institute of Education and Black Man's Lab, Takesia "TK" Shields of Mothers Against Gang Violence, Chef Tushun Robinson, Executive Director Reese Jackson, and recent graduates of the 2nd Chance at Lyfe program.

AC Brian Salters and Sgt. Chelsea Bynum of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office provided additional support and security throughout the event.



CONVICTION ALERTS



State vs. Christopher Lavelle Houston

Congratulations to the CAC Unit! In the case of State vs. Christopher Lavelle Houston, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Aggravated Child Molestation, Rape, and Incest. Judge Eric Dunaway sentenced the Defendant to 3 Consecutive Life Sentences +20 Years to Serve 19.

Deputy District Attorney Caitlin McGillicuddy
Assistant District Attorney Michelle Williams
Senior Investigator Cornelia Acosta
Victim Witness Advocate Jasmyn Drummond



State vs. Cirino Rigo Vasquez

Congratulations to the CAC Unit! In the case of State vs. Cirino Rigo Vasquez, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Aggravated Child Molestation and Child Molestation. Judge David Emerson sentenced the Defendant to 25 Years of Mandatory Confinement followed by Life on Probation.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Dion Peebles
Assistant District Attorney Celeste Patten
Senior Investigator Bryony Harris
Victim Witness Advocate Jasmyn Drummond
Legal Assistant Cassie Lundy
Chief Legal Assistant Priscilla Allmond



State vs. Anthony McCoy

Congratulations to the Gang Unit! In the case of State vs. Anthony McCoy, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Felony Murder, Murder, and Gang. Judge Scott McAfee sentenced the Defendant to Life without the Possibility of Parole +65 years.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Amanda Green
Senior Assistant District Attorney Demetrius Smith
Senior Assistant District Attorney Rives Hiles
Senior Assistant District Attorney Abigail Potter
Investigator Carmelita Preston
Victim Witness Advocate Cherrilie Tonge



State vs. Darrius Berry

Congratulations to the Domestic Violence Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Darrius Berry, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Aggravated Battery and Battery FV. The Judge will sentence the Defendant at a later date.

Deputy District Attorney Asia Baysah
Assistant District Attorney Jazmin Dilligard
Assistant District Attorney Jasmine Knight
Lieutenant Investigator Ronald Coloma
Victim Witness Advocate Beverly Muhammad
Legal Assistant Tiffany Horton



State vs. Quindairious Smith

Congratulations to the Trial Division! In the case of State vs. Quindairious Smith, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Aggravated Assault and Possession of Firearm or Knife During the Commission of Certain Felonies. Judge Paige Whitaker sentenced the Defendant to 25 Years to Serve 15 years in Custody followed by 10 Years of Probation.

Assistant District Attorney Marquez Jones
Assistant District Attorney Tangelita Bush
Senior Investigator Eugene Foster
Victim Witness Advocate Dorsey Jones
Legal Assistant Anita Newsome



State vs. Quillian Nelson

Congratulations to the Major Case Division! In the case of State vs. Quillian Nelson, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Murder, Felony Murder, and Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. Judge Thomas Cox sentenced the Defendant to Life without the Possibility of Parole +15 Years in Prison.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Kassie Hall
Assistant District Attorney Megan Nix
Lieutenant Investigator Kevin Lewis
Lieutenant Investigator Stephanie Samples
Director Victim Witness Advocate Ilona Rolack
Deputy Victim Witness Advocate Misty Botu
Legal Assistant Rishia Lee
Legal Assistant Quentin Wright



State vs. Rodney Clems

Congratulations to the CAC Unit! In the case of State vs. Rodney Clems, the Defendant was found guilty of Child Molestation. Judge Thomas Cox sentenced the Defendant to 20 Years to Serve 10.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Dion Peebles
Assistant District Attorney Michelle Williams
Senior Investigator Bryony Harris
Victim Witness Advocate Jasmyn Drummond
Legal Assistant Cassie Lundy



PASSED

2025 Georgia Bar Examination

JASMINE
Knight

TRINITY
Brown

IVEY
Foster

ALEEIA
Smith

Congratulations to 4 of our very own (Jasmine Knight, Trinity Brown, Ivey Foster, Alecia Smith) whom recently passed the bar and sworn in by Judge Shermela Williams.