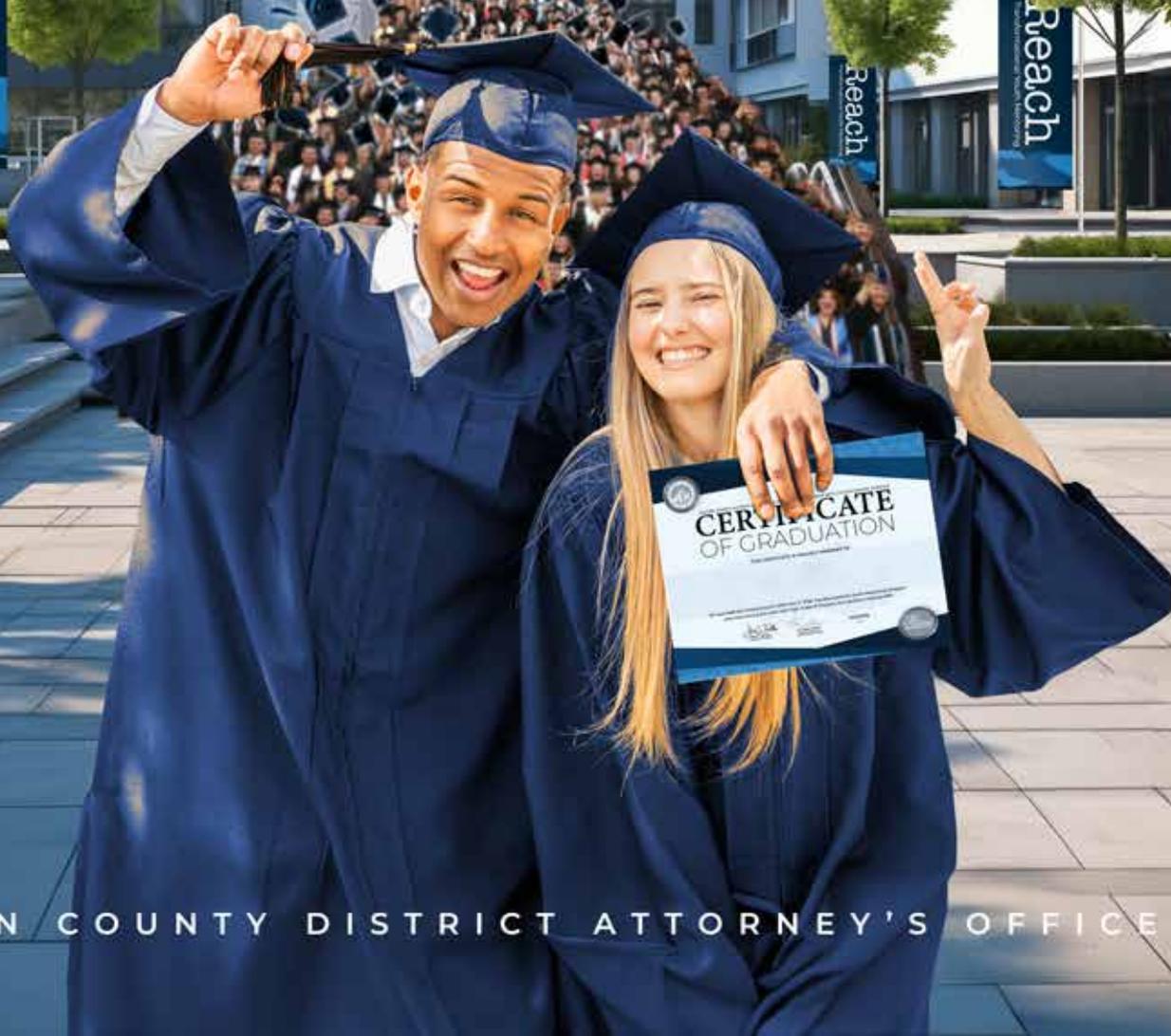


DA DISPATCH

MAY 2025

Reach
Transformational Youth Mentoring

Reach
Transformational Youth Mentoring





Reach

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THE MALCOLM X & DR BETTY SHABAZZ MEMORIAL & EDUCATION CENTER

On May 19, 2025, our very own District Attorney, Fani T. Willis, had the honor of receiving the Vanguard Award from the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center during the centennial celebration of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X).

"To accept this award in the very ballroom where he was assassinated on February 21, 1965—at just 39 years old, in front of his wife, young children, and a crowd of supporters—made the moment all the more profound. I thank Attorney Ben Crump for the nomination and Dr. Ilyasah Shabazz, along with the Board of Directors of the Shabazz Center, for deeming me worthy of this recognition. To be honored alongside such a prestigious class of nine others is humbling.

The strength of the Shabazz family to transform the site of unimaginable pain into a center of empowerment is both moving and inspiring. It has renewed my commitment to the pursuit of justice and to ensuring that all people are treated fairly and equitably under the law. This is one of the greatest honors of my life," said DA Willis.

This powerful recognition serves as a reminder that the fight for justice, equity, and human dignity is ongoing—and that bold leadership, rooted in compassion and courage, can truly honor the legacy of those who came before us.

pixel & palette

THE GRAPHICS DESIGN



**MICHAEL
MAKINS**



**NADIA
KENDALL**



**MAHKAYLA
GROGAN**



**TYCHAUNE
DOUGLAS**



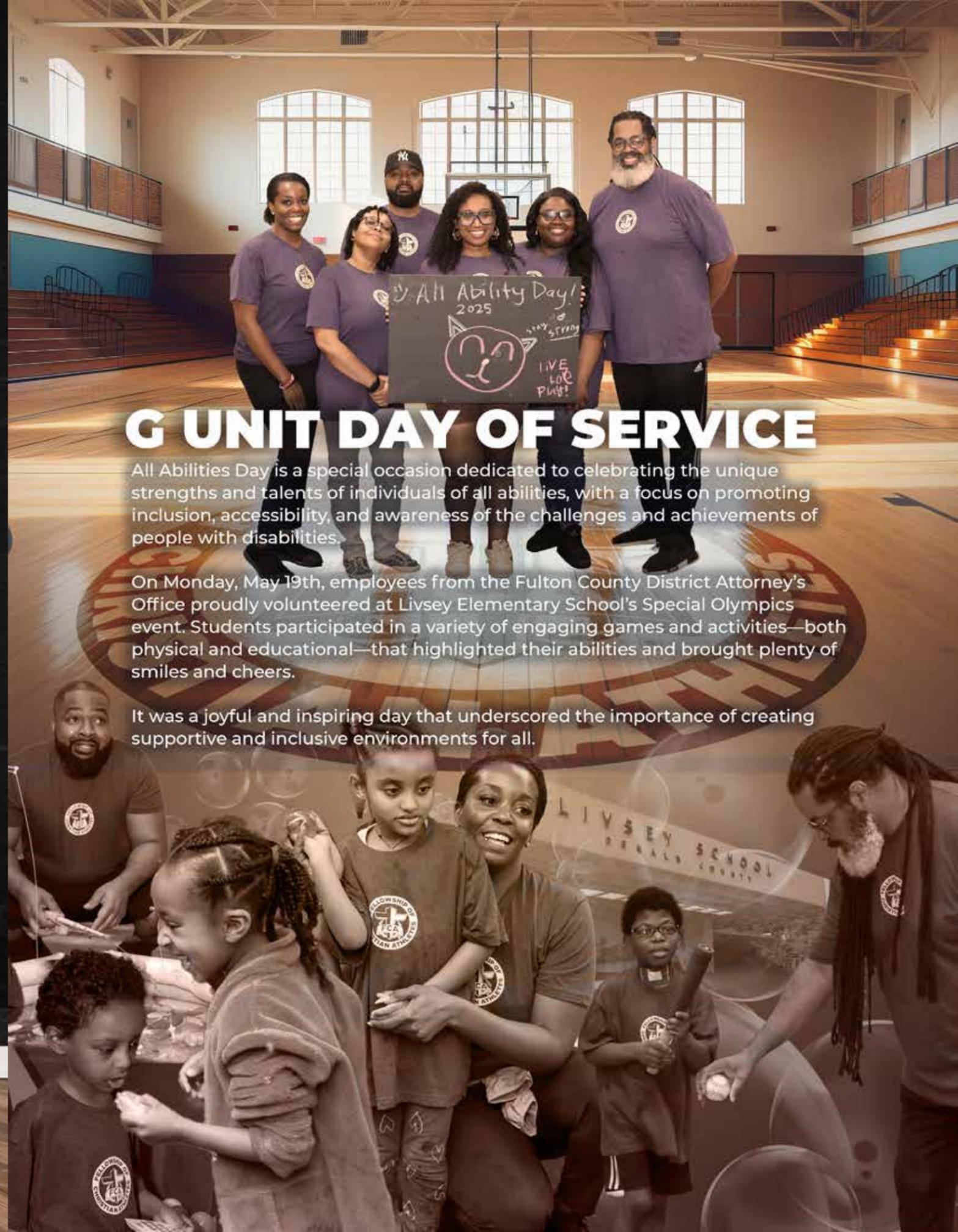
**CONSUELA
BOYER**



World Design Day, celebrated annually on April 27th, honors the founding of the International Council of Design. It's a global opportunity for designers, organizations, and communities to reflect on the transformative power of design to enhance lives and build a better future. The day inspires creativity, encourages innovation, and challenges designers to consider the broader impact of their work on individual and community well-being.

In celebration of World Design Day, our very own "G-Unit" hosted an inspiring art show, showcasing the incredible creative talents they pursue outside the office. Each team member had the opportunity to share their artistic journey and provide insight into their work, which ranged from photography and drawings to paintings and custom clothing designs.

The event also featured heartfelt remarks from fellow employees, who praised the G-Unit not only for their artistic talents but also for their outstanding contributions to our office. The celebration concluded with a delicious selection of food, bringing everyone together to honor creativity, community, and the power of design.



G UNIT DAY OF SERVICE

All Abilities Day is a special occasion dedicated to celebrating the unique strengths and talents of individuals of all abilities, with a focus on promoting inclusion, accessibility, and awareness of the challenges and achievements of people with disabilities.

On Monday, May 19th, employees from the Fulton County District Attorney's Office proudly volunteered at Livsey Elementary School's Special Olympics event. Students participated in a variety of engaging games and activities—both physical and educational—that highlighted their abilities and brought plenty of smiles and cheers.

It was a joyful and inspiring day that underscored the importance of creating supportive and inclusive environments for all.

MENTAL HEALTH CORNER

Ilona Rolack | Director of Victim Witness Assistance Program

Understanding Avoidance Behavior: The Temporary Relief Trap

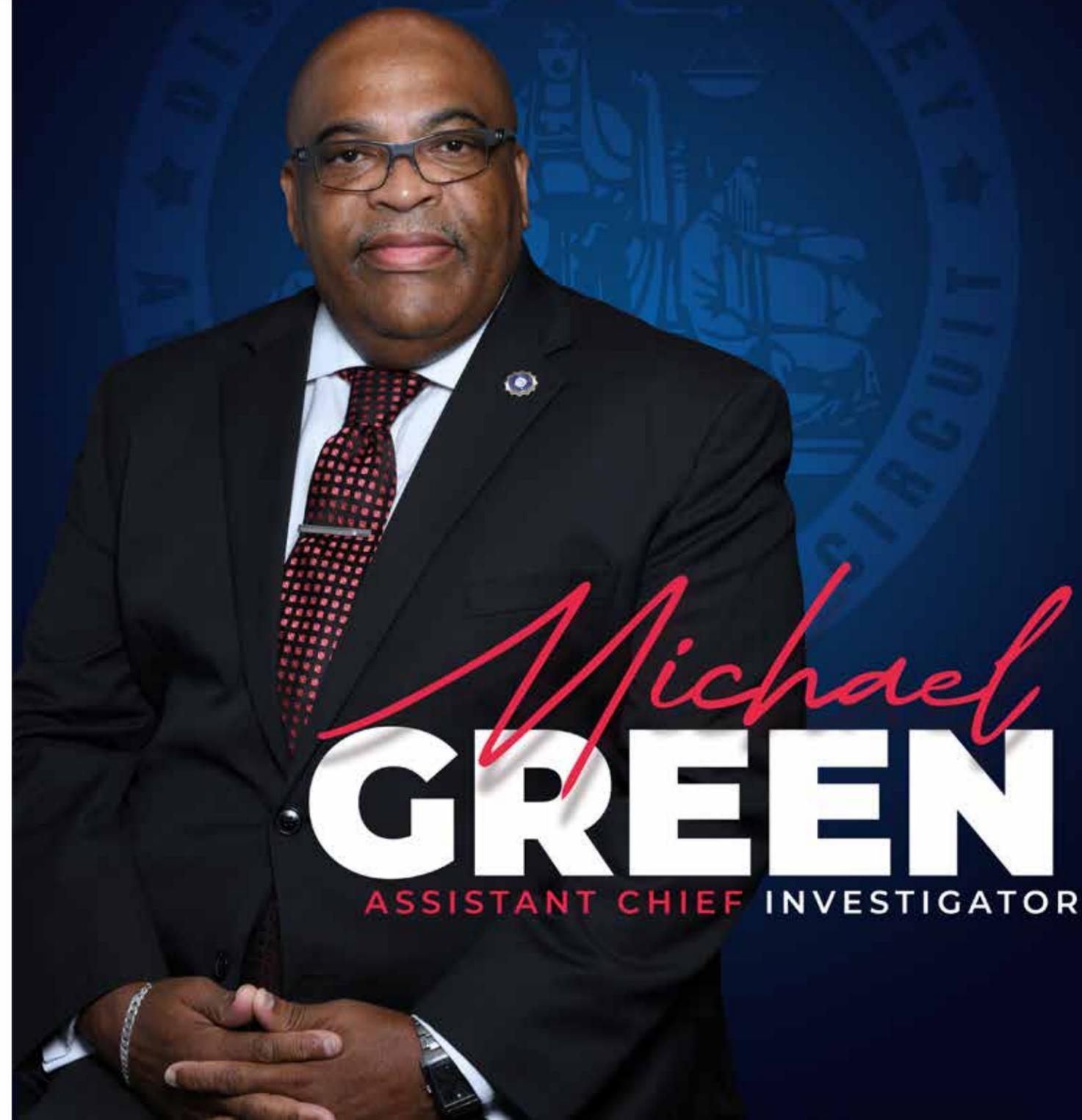
Avoidance behavior is something many of us experience, often without realizing it. It's when we steer clear of certain people, places, or activities because they trigger feelings of anxiety or discomfort. While this might provide temporary relief, it can lead to long-term problems and keep us from fully engaging in life.

Take Sarah, for example. She's a young leader who dreads networking events. The thought of mingling with strangers and making small talk sends her heart racing. To cope, she simply avoids these gatherings altogether. At first, this seems like a smart move—no anxiety means no distress. But over time, her avoidance only strengthens her fear. Each missed event (and we have many) leaves her feeling more isolated and reinforces her belief that social situations are dangerous. Instead of overcoming her anxiety, she finds herself trapped in a cycle that makes it even harder to connect with others.

Now, let's look at Natasha, who is also a professional in the District Attorney's Office. She has a team member whose voice and mannerisms are somewhat abrasive. Every time she hears him speak, she feels a surge of discomfort. This is not just a matter of personal preference; his voice reminds her of her abusive ex-husband, triggering painful memories and emotions. To protect herself, Natasha avoids conversations with him as much as possible. She thinks she's keeping herself safe, but in reality, she's isolating herself further. By not addressing her feelings, Natasha misses out on building a rapport with her colleagues. This avoidance can lead to misunderstandings and can even affect her career advancement. While she may feel temporary relief by steering clear of that coworker, the underlying issues remain unaddressed. The more she avoids him, the more her anxiety grows, making it harder to engage with others in her workplace. Both Sarah and Natasha exemplify how avoidance behavior can seem beneficial at first. However, it ultimately leads to a more significant struggle, reinforcing the very fears they're trying to escape. Breaking the cycle of avoidance is crucial for personal growth. It's important to recognize these patterns and seek healthier coping strategies. For Natasha, that might mean gradually engaging in conversations with her coworker in less stressful settings, perhaps starting with casual greetings before moving on to more substantial discussions. It could be beneficial for Sarah to seek out smaller networking opportunities where she feels more comfortable, allowing her to build confidence over time.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is one effective approach that encourages individuals to challenge their negative thoughts and gradually face their fears in a supportive environment. This is a reminder that Fulton County offers therapy sessions for employees under the Employee Assistance Program. You can reach them by calling 1-800-999-7222. By taking small steps and seeking support, individuals like Sarah and Natasha can break free from the confines of avoidance and find a path toward resilience and empowerment.

Happy Retirement



Reach



This month, our Reach program proudly celebrated two graduation ceremonies, honoring all participating students from Fulton County Schools and Atlanta Public Schools.

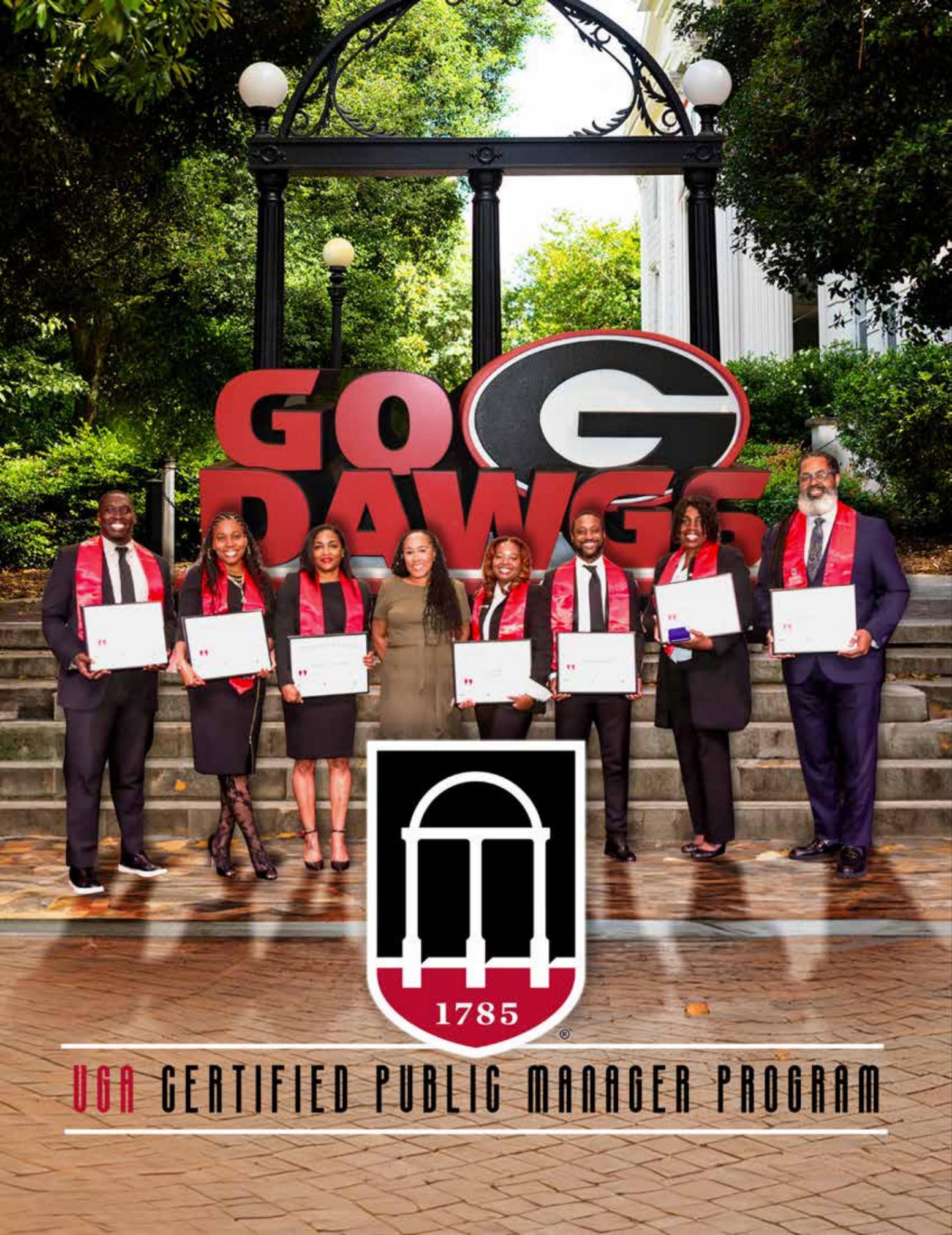
Reach—an impactful youth mentoring and coaching initiative—operates under the Fulton County District Attorney's Office, led by District Attorney Fani T. Willis. This student-centered program is designed to empower, inspire, and transform young lives.

Throughout the year, students engaged in meaningful projects such as "Bridge Building" and creating Vision Boards, all while participating in enriching field trips—including an Atlanta Hawks game and a visit to the National Museum of African American Music. They also had the incredible opportunity to explore higher education options with visits to Tennessee State University and Florida A&M University.

Many students shared heartfelt testimonies about how REACH has transformed their lives and how much they looked forward to the weekly sessions. "My favorite thing about REACH is that they cater to students at every level. They give you tasks based on your individual skill set," said Roger Bradley, a student at Jean Childs Young Middle School. David Colbert, the school counselor at Young Middle School, shared his perspective: "My favorite part about REACH is seeing the students' growth over time."

A special thank you goes to our dedicated Reach mentors, whose unwavering commitment and countless volunteer hours are helping shape a brighter future for students across Fulton County.



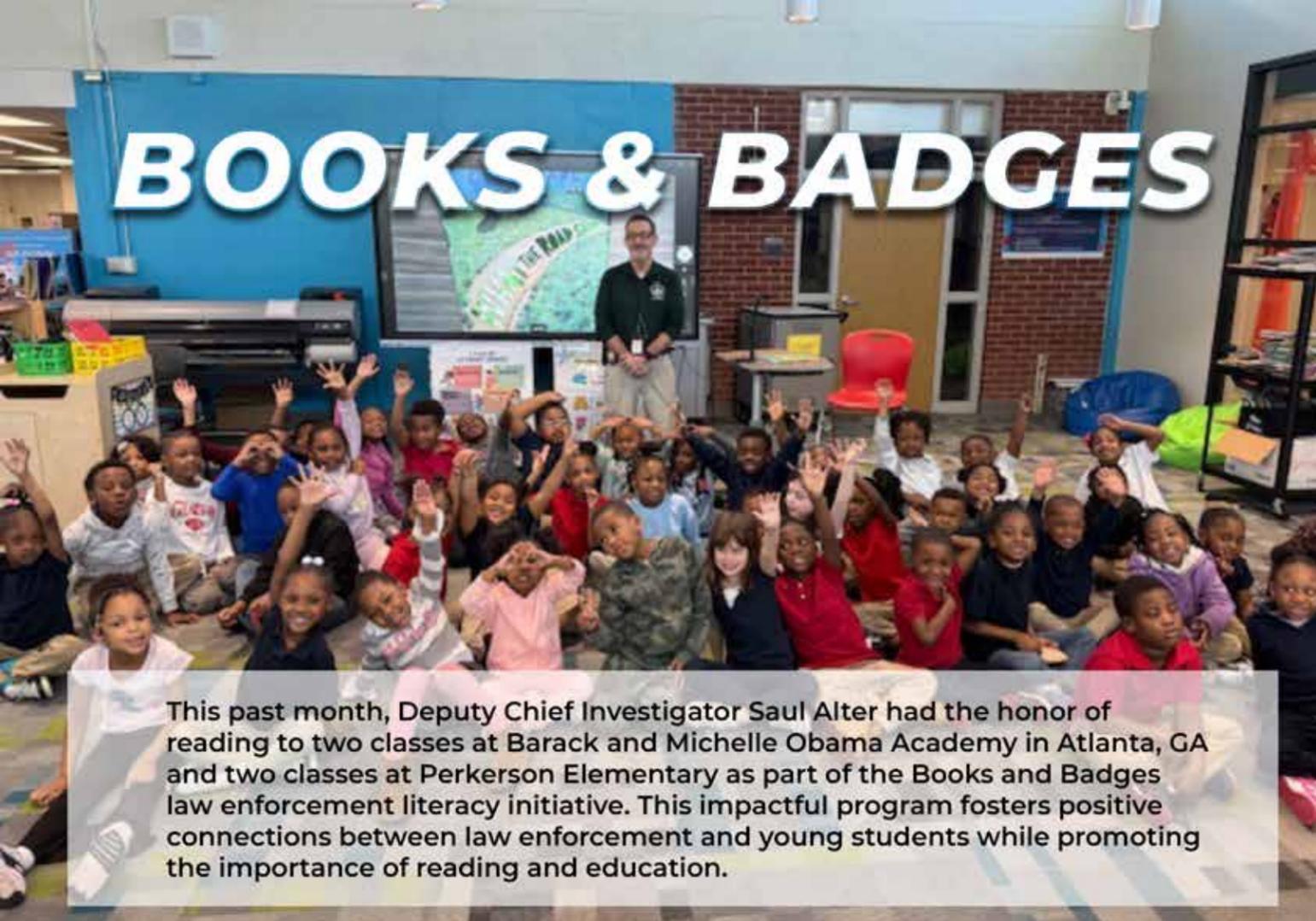


UGA CERTIFIED PUBLIC MANAGER PROGRAM

Congratulations



BOOKS & BADGES



This past month, Deputy Chief Investigator Saul Alter had the honor of reading to two classes at Barack and Michelle Obama Academy in Atlanta, GA and two classes at Perkerson Elementary as part of the Books and Badges law enforcement literacy initiative. This impactful program fosters positive connections between law enforcement and young students while promoting the importance of reading and education.

Career Day at



The Clark Atlanta University Department of Public Safety, in partnership with the Collegiate Chapter of NOBLE, hosted an Interactive Law Enforcement Career Fair—a dynamic event designed to connect students with professionals across a wide range of law enforcement specialties.

Lieutenant Raeisha Oliphant and Lieutenant Julisha Lansiquot from the High Profile Unit had the opportunity to engage, inspire, and actively recruit the next generation of law enforcement leaders. Their presence helped spark meaningful conversations and opened doors for students exploring careers in public safety and justice.

FIFTH SERVICE AWARDS



On June 5, 2025, Fulton County proudly honored the outstanding dedication and service of employees across all departments—celebrating milestone achievements ranging from 5 to over 35 years of service. Presented by the Department of Human Resources Management, this annual tradition serves as a powerful reminder that it's our people who drive our progress. Congratulations to the honorees from our office—your unwavering commitment and contributions continue to shape the standard of excellence we pursue every day.

Honorees: Tia Green, Adam Abbate, Trina Swanson-Lucas, Tammy Jackson-McClendon, Pat Dutcher, Dericka Mitchell, Jill Hollander, Richard Randolph, and Tom Wight.



Career Day at West Manor

On Tuesday, May 13, 2025, West Manor Elementary hosted its annual "Future Leaders Day (College/Career Day)", giving students an exciting opportunity to explore a wide range of careers through the school's interactive "Occupations on Wheels" experience.

Employees from the Fulton County District Attorney's Office volunteered their time to share insights about their roles, discussing what a typical day looks like in their profession, the educational paths they followed, relevant school subjects, and the personal inspirations that led them to their careers. Students showed great enthusiasm and curiosity, engaging in a lively Q&A session where they asked thoughtful questions and gained a better understanding of various career possibilities.



Crimes Against Children Unit

P.A.C. BASIC

For several years, Executive District Attorney Kenneth Hutcherson and I have been faculty members at Prosecuting Attorney's Council of Georgia Basic Training. We take great pleasure in giving back to the legal profession by training and coaching young attorneys.

Yours in Service,
RuShondra G. Davenport
Chief Deputy District Attorney



Child Abuse Protocol Symposium

This year the CAC Unit hosted their 1st Child Abuse Protocol Symposium. The Fulton County Child Abuse Protocol is mandated by O.C.G.A. § 19-15-2 to establish the investigation and prosecution practices for child abuse cases for all entities engaged in protecting the welfare of children within Fulton County.

We were overwhelmed by the attendance! 24 of the 29 law enforcement agencies attended, in addition to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Georgia Child Care Association, and Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk.



Shoutouts from CourtWatch Program Manager Lisa Holland



Dear Deputy District Attorney Faye Rosenbaum, Just wanted to let you know that one of my CourtWatch volunteers was overjoyed when you contacted her in the chat room during the Zoom hearing on Wednesday to thank her for her attendance. You really made her day by acknowledging her. Thanks for taking the time to do that!

Senior Investigator Lori Lobel is an instrumental part of the volunteer onboarding process. She receives and reviews applications to make sure that the potential volunteer meets the criteria. The GCIC/NCIC check is then completed and returned within the same day and the training link is sent out. Once completed, we have a new volunteer!





On Saturday, June 7, 2025, Assistant District Attorney Jazmin Dilligard and Deputy District Attorney Asia Baysah participated in the Girls of Excellence Leadership Camp 2025 at Atlanta Metropolitan State College.

They led an engaging and educational workshop on teen dating violence for a group of approximately 25 high school students. The session focused on helping participants understand the cycle of abuse and the power and control wheel, providing them with the knowledge to recognize unhealthy relationship patterns.



To reinforce the material, ADA Dilligard created two original skits that were acted out by the students. Following each skit, the group engaged in thoughtful discussion and answered guided questions, promoting reflection and peer learning. The interactive workshop empowered the young women with tools to identify warning signs and foster healthy relationships.

CONVICTION ALERTS



State vs. Brandon Williams & Demetrice Ross

Congratulations to the Major Case Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Brandon Williams & Demetrice Ross, the Defendants were found guilty on all counts including Felony Murder, Murder, and Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. Judge Craig Schwall sentenced both Defendants to Life without Parole + 30 Years.

Deputy District Attorney Kelcee Jones-Connor
Deputy Chief Investigator Antonio Long
Legal Assistant Rishia Lee
Legal Assistant Quentin Wright
Victim Witness Advocate Cherrilie Tonge



State vs. Demetrious Stroud

Congratulations to the Major Case Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Demetrious Stroud, the Defendant plead guilty on all counts including Felony Murder, Aggravated Assault, and Kidnapping. Judge David Emerson sentenced the Defendant to Life.

Deputy District Attorney Christina Robinson
Senior Assistant District Attorney Christian Adkins
Senior Investigator Chara Dennis
Legal Assistant Rishia Lee
Victim Witness Advocate Tameka Kelly



State vs. Jamal Baker

Congratulations to the Gang Unit! In the case of State vs. Jamal Baker, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Malice Murder, Aggravated Assault, and Criminal Street Gang. The Defendant was sentenced to Life without Parole +65 Years.

Assistant District Attorney Amanda Green
Assistant District Attorney Michael Wilson
Investigator Malik Dean
Legal Assistant Grant Trowell



State vs. Kenneth Whack

Congratulations to the Trial Division! In the case of State vs. Kenneth Whack, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Burglary in the 1st Degree. Judge Paige Whitaker sentenced the Defendant to 15 Years to serve 8.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Chinekwu Okam
Assistant District Attorney Marquez Jones
Senior Investigator Aminah Dickerson
Legal Assistant Anita Newsome
Victim Witness Advocate Dorsey Jones



State vs. Derrico Harris

Congratulations to the Major Case Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Derrico Harris, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Felony Murder, Murder, and Armed Robbery. Judge Thomas Cox sentenced the Defendant to Life without the Possibility of Parole.

Assistant District Attorney Jeff Hawkins
Senior Assistant District Attorney Stacey Burke
Senior Investigator Troy Grisby
Legal Assistant Rishia Lee
Victim Witness Advocate Director Ilona Rolack



State vs. Philip Lenox

Congratulations to the Domestic Violence Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Philip Lenox, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Voluntary Manslaughter, Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon, and Abuse of an Elder Person. Judge Belinda Edwards will sentence the Defendant in the next 30 days.

Deputy District Attorney Asia Baysah
Senior Assistant District Attorney Travis Thomas
Investigator Ronald Coloma
Legal Assistant Patrice Stewart
Legal Assistant Priscilla Almond
Victim Witness Advocate Carla Martinez

Dear Madam District Attorney, Chief Meadows, and Sheriff Labat,

I want to take a moment to recognize the outstanding collaboration among several dedicated employees, which led to the swift indictment of Tyler Kent Gulbis on Monday for Terroristic Threats and Aggravated Stalking—and his arrest on Tuesday evening—less than 48 hours after a victim first reached out to me in fear for her safety.

This case involves grotesque and deeply hateful threats of rape, torture, and murder, as well as targeted harassment based on the victims' race, gender, and perceived sexual orientation. The defendant, who self-identifies as an anti-feminist white supremacist, targeted two young female employees of a local gym and two criminal defense attorneys (including his former counsel) who frequently practice in our jurisdiction. The threats he made are among the most disturbing and hate-filled I have encountered in my entire career. In addition to the threats, the defendant sent his victims horrifying images of brutally murdered children. These victims were, understandably, terrified. The defendant's language and conduct can only be described as pure hate, and our office has filed formal notice of our intent to seek enhanced sentencing under Georgia's hate crimes statute, O.C.G.A. § 17-10-17.

The speed and professionalism with which this case was handled reflect the dedication of both our FCDA team and our law enforcement partners. I want to highlight the contributions of the following individuals so that you are each aware of their incredible work:

- Lt. Investigator Stephanie Samples, who, when I reached out over the weekend (on Mother's Day, no less), agreed to serve as a grand jury witness and mastered the facts of the case by the next morning. She presented the case to the grand jury less than 24 hours after the defendant's most recent offense.
- Deandre Royals and his team, who facilitated our ability to present the case to the grand jury on extremely short notice—and on the new grand jury's very first day of service. They also ensured that a case number was assigned quickly to allow for the issuance of the grand jury warrant on the day of the indictment.
- Assistant Chief Investigator Mike Hill and Senior Investigator Billy Ansel, who immediately began gathering intelligence on the defendant and his associates, quickly identifying likely addresses and confirming vehicle information.
- Charly Hardnett and Keehan Haygood, who opened the case file and ensured that the grand jury warrant was prepared, signed by Judge Carnesale, and entered into GCIC within minutes of the case number being assigned.
- Ilona Rolack, Misty Botu, Lucia Williams, and Carla Martinez, who worked quickly to contact the victims, offering guidance, reassurance, access to resources, and—most importantly—kindness and compassion.
- Lt. Nikkita Moss with the South Fulton Police Department, who pulled Flock camera data that proved essential in tracking the defendant's movements.
- And last, but certainly not least, Major Ophee Hinton, Sergeant Sean Sampson, and their team with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, who responded to my request for assistance within minutes. They quickly tracked the defendant to a residence in DeKalb County, took him into custody within hours, and recovered critical evidence from the residence—including 3D-printed firearm parts, live ammunition, electronic devices, and drugs.

I wanted each of you to know about the extraordinary work your team members did in this case. No one asked for recognition or thanks; instead, each of them humbly and immediately jumped into action because they care deeply about the work we do—and, above all, about protecting victims of crime. It was a powerful thing to witness, and I am grateful to stand alongside such dedicated individuals who are committed to our mission.

Thank you for your continued leadership and partnership in this important work.

Sincerely,

Deputy District Attorney Will Wooten

News Corner

Case of mistaken identity ends with young mother killed in alleged Atlanta gang shooting – WSB-TV Channel 2 - Atlanta



https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/atlanta/they-were-once-best-friends-then-one-killed-other-we-take-you-inside-this-bizarre-murder-case/33ROONPIJF4NIQAGWSVOQMB5M/?taid=6848b-929175337000172636c&utm_campaign=trueanthem&utm_medium=trueanthem&utm_source=twitter



<https://www.11alive.com/article/news/crime/trials/2022-beltline-murder-trial-jury-reaches-verdict/85-d6c37d1b-f763-44ca-922d-30e774578d01>

