

FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEYS OFFICE

# DA DISPATCH

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



*She*  
**BID IT 1<sup>ST</sup>**

MARCH 2026

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# APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 APRIL FOOLS' DAY PASSOVER BEGINS	2 WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY	3 PAY DAY GOOD FRIDAY	4
5 EASTER	6	7 WORLD HEALTH DAY	8	9 PASSOVER ENDS	10	11
12	13	14	15 TAX DAY	16	17 PAY DAY	18
19 NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK (NCVRW) BEGINS	20 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION DAY	21	22 EARTH DAY	23	24	25 NCVRW COMMUNITY EVENT
26	27 INTERNATIONAL DESIGN DAY	28	29	30		



The Atlanta Police Foundation hosted its first CourtWatch Lunch & Learn at the Atlanta Police Department Training Center on Friday, March 6. The session featured presentations by Lisa Holland, CourtWatch Program Manager, Aimee Maxwell, Deputy District Attorney with the Special Victims Division and Conviction Integrity Unit; and Misty Botu, Deputy Victim Witness Advocate with Case Intake and Trial Division. During this inaugural class, citizen volunteers learned about the structure of the District Attorney's Office and gained a clearer understanding of the role and responsibilities of each division. Presenters also provided insight into the critical work of Victim Witness Advocates and the many ways they support victims throughout the judicial process. The training helped volunteers better understand their own responsibilities within the CourtWatch program and provided a deeper look at how cases move through the court system. The event concluded with a guided tour of the training facility.



# LAW CORNER

## **Severance Law Refresher**

*By Christopher Sperry*

When two or more defendants are jointly indicted in a non-death penalty case, whether the defendants are to be tried together is a matter committed to the sound discretion of the trial court. Ga. Code Ann. § 17-8-4. A defendant may seek severance from their co-defendant for any reason.

The factors that a trial court should consider in ruling on a severance motion are: (1) the likelihood of confusion of the evidence and law; (2) the possibility that evidence against one defendant may be considered against the other defendant; and (3) the presence or absence of antagonistic defenses. *Nwakanma v. State*, 296 Ga. 493 (2015).

The burden is on the defendant requesting severance to do more than raise the possibility that a separate trial would give him or her a better chance of acquittal. He or she must make a clear showing that a joint trial would lead to prejudice and a consequent denial of due process. *Thomas v. State*, 293 Ga. 829 (2013).

The inability to compel a co-defendant to testify in a joint trial is insufficient to establish prejudice, absent a showing that the co-defendant would testify and that such testimony would be exculpatory. *Marquez v. State*, 298 Ga. 448 (2016).

Additionally, the fact that the evidence is much stronger against a co-defendant than against the defendant seeking severance does not require severance. *Saylor v. State*, 316 Ga. 225 (2023).

Finally, the presence of antagonistic defenses is not sufficient to require severance; rather, there must be prejudice and a denial of due process. See *Pike v. State*, 302 Ga. 795 (2018) (affirming conviction where one co-defendant argued sufficiency of the evidence and the other argued alibi).



# GRANTS CORNER

## Grant Site Visits By Michelle Henry

The Fulton County District Attorney's Office has hosted more than a dozen site visits over the six years of District Attorney Fani Willis' tenure, reviewing multiple grants.

Site visits are part of OJP's (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs) federally mandated requirements (see Uniform Guidance 2 C.F.R. § 200) to conduct award monitoring and oversight of the financial, administrative, and programmatic activities of grantees.

The focus of a monitoring visit is to assess and ensure compliance with the regulations, terms, and conditions for each award under review; examine the programmatic progress of each award; validate reported information; and provide technical assistance for grant management requirements.

Activities during a monitoring visit include observation of grant program activities and discussion of programmatic progress, as well as a review of award files, grantee policies and procedures, expenditure documents, performance measurement data collection and validation, and other relevant documentation. Key personnel are available to answer questions during the site visit.

The Grant Administration Division (GAD) of Fulton County provides fiscal management after a grant is awarded. This type of review focuses on payments or payment periods and includes a review of related transactions and processes to verify that grant funds were expended in compliance with regulations and the terms and conditions of the grant.

OJP requires that grantees provide selected documentation to determine the organization's compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant(s). The Fulton County District Attorney's Office maintains 100% compliance.

# St. Patrick's Day

The Fulton County District Attorney's Office celebrated St. Patrick's Day with a festive gathering in the Ruby Bridges lobby. Employees enjoyed a variety of refreshments, including chips and dip, cookies, cupcakes, and juice, while connecting with colleagues in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Many also took advantage of the St. Patrick's Day photo opportunity, capturing moments of celebration and team spirit. Congratulations to our Starbucks gift card winners, Javan Brown and Briana Ross, who were the first participants at the gathering.



**GIFT CARD WINNERS**

# FANI T. WILLIS

*Presents*

# *Celebrating* **HER**

On March 9, 2026, District Attorney Fani Willis hosted a special Women's Day Celebration in honor of Women's History Month in the BOC. During the event, she recognized 11 outstanding women with the *Women of Distinction Award*, celebrating their exceptional contributions and dedication.

Congratulations to Legal Assistant Raenelle Edgehill, Legal Assistant Cassie Lundy, Reach Coordinator Yolanda Shorthouse, Victim Witness Advocate Katrina Gill, Deputy Chief of Staff Eva Retana, Senior Investigator Cinthya Alvarez, Lieutenant Investigator Michelle Lam, Lieutenant Julisha Lansiquot, Senior Assistant District Attorney Caitlin Adcock, Senior Assistant District Attorney Lashawnda Woods-Roberts, for continuously raising the bar within the office. A special congratulations to Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Talitha Fleming, recipient of the highest Women's Day honor, in recognition of her exceptional leadership and outstanding achievements.

The ceremony was followed by a reception outside the BOC, where attendees enjoyed desserts and refreshments while celebrating these remarkable women.





Talitha  
**FLEMMING**



# Human Trafficking Training

Join the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Violence Reduction for an interactive Trafficking Awareness Training. As Atlanta prepares for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the city stands at a critical intersection of celebrating global unity while confronting the heightened risk of human trafficking.

## Be a Part of the Solution!

The two-hour training sessions will be led by industry experts from Wellspring Living and Tapestri, equipping our communities with the knowledge and tools to recognize and address human trafficking in all its forms.

### Here's what you will learn:

- Protect your community: Understand how traffickers operate—and how to disrupt their tactics.
- Act with confidence: Learn practical steps to identify indicators and respond safely.
- Connect to help: Get local resources and pathways for survivor support.
- Learn how to report
- Discuss ways that the community can be involved in the fight against human trafficking

"Human trafficking thrives in silence. Awareness turns communities into protection"



Wellspring Living



Tapestri  
Diversity. Advocacy. Empowerment.

This event is powered by Showcase Atlanta and sponsored by UPS

**Report a Tip**

Georgia Statewide Hotline 1-866-363-4842

For additional information contact us at [MOVRATL@Atlantaga.gov](mailto:MOVRATL@Atlantaga.gov)

## Training Dates

### NE Atlanta Training Dates

- February 23, 2026, 6:30pm-8:30pm
- March 5, 2026, 10:00am-12:00pm

### SW Atlanta Training Dates

- March 7, 2026, 10:00am-12:00pm
- April 9, 2026, 6:30pm-8:30pm
- May 23, 2026, 6:30pm-8:30pm

### SE Atlanta Training Dates

- June 4, 2026, 6:30pm-8:30 pm
- June 6, 2026, 10:00am-12:00pm

### NW Atlanta Training Dates

- March 14, 2026, 1:00pm-3:00pm
- April 25, 2026, 10:00 am-12:00pm
- May 11, 2026, 6:30pm-8:30pm

[Register](#)



Human Trafficking Training





HONORABLE MIRIAM PARIS & HONORABLE ERICA THOMAS  
"WOMEN'S DAY AT THE CAPITOL" COORDINATORS

# Women's Day AT THE CAPITOL

Following the Fulton County District Attorney's Office Women's History Month Ceremony, District Attorney Fani Willis delivered the keynote address at the historic Women's Day at the Capitol, encouraging women to lead boldly and continue advocating for progress in their communities and professions. To reinforce her message, she invited attendees to hold signs featuring empowering phrases such as "Unbought, Unbossed, Unstoppable," "Justice Wears Heels," and "Nevertheless She Led."

Alongside Coordinators Erica Thomas and Miriam Paris, more than 100 remarkable women were recognized as part of the 2026 Georgia 100 Women of Excellence class. These honorees represent a diverse group of changemakers whose leadership spans business, government, education, community service, and entrepreneurship.

Their achievements serve as a powerful reminder of the impact women continue to make across Georgia and beyond. As we celebrate Women's History Month, may we continue uplifting one another, breaking barriers, and creating pathways for the women who will follow.



# BROTHERHOOD & SISTERHOOD summit

AT 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 continued to come together each year with a shared purpose: to remind students that one moment of violence does not define their future. Through unity, mentorship, and open dialogue, the community is actively pouring into its young people and creating spaces for healing, growth, and empowerment.

On February 26th, members of our team, including District Attorney Fani Willis, attended the Sisterhood Summit, an inspiring event where young women had the opportunity to hear directly from accomplished women within their own communities.

DA Willis, Kendall Watkins, and Angela Johnson led a powerful, fan-favorite session on “Red Flags Don’t Turn Green,” focusing on domestic violence awareness and teen dating. The discussion highlighted how early warning signs such as controlling behavior, isolation from friends and family, excessive jealousy, and lack of respect for boundaries should never be ignored or excused. They emphasized the importance of trusting your instincts and recognizing that love should never come with fear or manipulation. Attendees were reminded that their voices matter and that they deserve relationships rooted in respect, safety, and genuine care.

On March 5th, the young men of Benjamin E. Mays High School gathered for their own Brotherhood Summit, which focused on leadership, accountability, and redefining what it means to be a man in today’s world. Lieutenant Investigator Sekou Kamau, Adult Diversion Director Deonte Pollard, and Chief Senior District Attorney Travis Thomas participated in the speed networking portion, connecting with small groups of students to foster meaningful, honest conversations. Discussions included topics such as teen dating violence, the difference between chasing titles versus building real skills, and the challenges young men face when navigating expectations around masculinity. Students were encouraged to lead with integrity, support one another, and understand that strength includes knowing when to ask for help.

This annual event continues to uplift, empower, and inspire students, reinforcing the message that their futures are filled with promise, purpose, and possibilities far beyond violence.



# EAP SERVICES

**FREE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) SERVICES CAN BE ACCESSED 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK BY CALLING 800-999-7222 OR VISITING WWW.ANTHEMEAP.COM (PASSWORD: FULTON).**

## TYPES OF COUNSELING INCLUDE:

- Peer support services
- Psychiatric assessment and treatment
- Group counseling
- Co-occurring addiction problems
- Individual and family therapy
- Crisis management
- Parenting training
- Consultation
- School clinical services
- Education and prevention services
- Coordination of services
- Referral to appropriate care providers and agencies
- Continuing care for clients discharged from hospitals and jails

# MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

*social justice debate*

On March 13th–14th, the Morehouse Debate Team hosted the 10th Annual Social Justice Debate Championship, bringing together top collegiate teams from Loyola Marymount University, Pepperdine University, University of Rochester, University of Miami, University of Vermont, and Virginia State University for an exciting and competitive showdown. After two days of thought-provoking debates and powerful arguments, only a few teams rose to the top.

Our very own DA Fani Willis had the opportunity to serve as a judge on day two, witnessing firsthand the brilliance and passion of these talented students. Congratulations to all participants for an outstanding job and for contributing to meaningful conversations around social justice!



# MENTAL HEALTH CORNER

## **Cultivating a Stress Relief Culture**

*By Ilona Rolack, M. Sc.*

It's Monday and I'm walking into the office and seeing Rita, looking more exhausted each day. She barely sleeps at night, her mind races with thoughts of court calendars of scheduled motions. As a result, she struggles with completing her duties, feeling overwhelmed by her workload. Then there's Paul, who has developed a different coping mechanism. He's constantly snacking throughout the day, munching on chips and candy instead of taking the time to enjoy a proper lunch. While it may seem harmless, his constant grazing leaves him sluggish and unfocused, which ultimately affects his productivity.

These situations are all too common in our office, where stress often manifests in various ways. The habits that Rita and Paul have developed are affecting their mental and physical well-being, impacting not just their performance but also the team's overall morale. When stress becomes a constant companion, it often drives us to unhealthy habits. Lack of sleep can impair our memory, attention, and decision-making. Poor eating habits can sap our energy and concentration, creating a cycle of decreased productivity and increased irritability, leading to many health problems including, heart failure, hypertension, and diabetes to name a few.

To shift this culture toward well-being, we can start by encouraging healthy breaks. Simple things like scheduled downtime can make a huge difference. How about we implement regular breaks where we can step away from our desks and take short walks or stretch? Even five-minute moments of mindfulness during the day could help clear our minds and reduce stress.

We also need to think about our eating habits. Instead of reaching for the usual vending machine snacks, why not bring healthier options to share? Imagine a communal space filled with fruits, nuts, and granola bars instead of just sweets. We could even organize a healthy snack swap, where we each contribute nutritious items. It's not just about what we eat but also about sharing meal prep ideas that can help us stay balanced throughout the workday.

Open communication is key, too. Regular check-ins can give us a chance to discuss workloads and stress levels, allowing everyone to express their concerns. Creating a culture where feedback is welcomed will let us share thoughts on how to improve our work environment together. Speaking of self-awareness, I've been inspired recently by my sister to dive into a book about schemas—what they are and how they shape our perceptions and behaviors. I've been listening to it on my way to work through Audible, and it has been incredibly engaging. Self-help books like this one, especially those focused on mindfulness and self-awareness, can be powerful tools for relaxation and preparation for the day ahead. They encourage us to reflect on our thoughts and behaviors, making it easier to navigate stress and build healthier routines.

One powerful tool we have is the option to work from home. Madam DA has provided us with this flexibility, which can be a game-changer for our mental health. These days allow us to escape the office environment, reduce commuting stress, and create a workspace that suits our personal needs. Working from home can lead to increased productivity since we can focus without the usual distractions. It also gives us a chance to recharge mentally, helping restore balance and enhance our overall job satisfaction.

By cultivating a stress relief culture, we can transform our office into a supportive environment where we can all thrive. Let's prioritize our health and support each other on the journey toward a more balanced work life!

# CONVICTION ALERTS



## State vs. Qwontavious Daniels

Congratulations to the Major Case Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Qwontavious Daniels, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Murder, Aggravated Assault, and Possession of a Firearm during the Commission of a Felony.

Deputy District Attorney Kelcee Jones-Connor  
Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Tom Griner  
Lieutenant Investigator Stephanie Samples  
Deputy Victim Witness Advocate Misty Botu  
Victim Witness Advocate Briana Ross  
Legal Assistant Rishia Lee  
Legal Assistant Quentin Wright



## State vs. Zaibrian Minter

Congratulations to the Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Jamir Walker, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Murder, Felony Murder, and Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. Judge David Emerson sentenced the Defendant to Life with the Possibility of Parole +5 Years Consecutive on Probation.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Nalda K. Charles  
Assistant District Attorney Scott Reed  
Senior Investigator Andre Cureton  
Director Victim Witness Advocate Ilona Rolack  
Victim Witness Advocate Tameka Kelley  
Victim Witness Advocate Nadia Rhodes  
Legal Assistant Rishia Lee



## State vs. Derrius Johnson

Congratulations to the Sexual Assault Unit! In the case of State vs. Derrius Johnson, the Defendant was found guilty on 2 counts of Aggravated Sodomy. Judge Thomas Cox sentenced the Defendant to Life.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Stacey Burke  
Assistant District Attorney Dion Peeples  
Investigator Khristina Sanders  
Victim Witness Advocate Christen Clarke  
Legal Assistant Michael Tanks



## State vs. John Mack

Congratulations to the Major Case Unit Trial Team! In the case of State vs. John Mack, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Murder and Felony Murder. Judge Kevin Farmer sentenced the Defendant to Life without Parole +25 years.

Deputy District Attorney Vincent Faucette  
Senior Assistant District Attorney Robert Wilson  
Deputy Victim Witness Advocate Misty Botu  
Victim Witness Advocate Raven Coston  
Legal Assistant Saquez King



## State vs. Antoine Carmichael

Congratulations to the Major Case Unit Trial Team! In the case of State vs. Antoine Carmichael, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Murder, Aggravated Assault, and Felony Murder. Judge Scott McAfee sentenced the Defendant to Life without the Possibility of Parole +15 years to Serve.

Chief Senior Assistant District Attorney Nalda K. Charles  
Lieutenant Investigator Shae Corso  
Senior Investigator Brodrich Jackson  
Deputy Victim Witness Advocate Lucia Williams  
Legal Assistant Quentin Wright



**State vs. Zavaldraga Rich**

Congratulations to the Sexual Assault Unit! In the case of State vs. Zavaldraga Rich, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Aggravated Assault, Strangulation, and False Imprisonment. Judge Emily Richardson sentenced the Defendant to 50 Years to Serve and another 12 Months on Probation.

Deputy District Attorney Siri Patel  
 Assistant District Attorney Averiel Jackson  
 Assistant District Attorney Ivory Goudy  
 Investigator Khristina Sanders  
 Victim Witness Advocate Carla Martinez  
 Legal Assistant Daniel Panilla



**State vs. Michael Moore**

Congratulations to the Domestic Violence Team! In the case of State vs. Michael Moore, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Aggravated Assault, Aggravated Stalking, and Battery. Judge Melynee Leftridge sentenced the Defendant to 13 Years in Custody.

Chief Senior District Attorney Travis Thomas  
 Assistant District Attorney JaCelynn Porter  
 Investigator Donald Scully  
 Senior Victim Witness Advocate Beverly Muhammad  
 Senior Victim Witness Advocate Dorsey Jones  
 Legal Assistant Tiffany Horton



**State vs. Neil Russell**

Congratulations to the Domestic Violence Team! In the case of State vs. Neil Russell, the Defendant was found guilty on all counts including Murder, Felony Murder, and Aggravated Assault. Judge Reese Whitaker sentenced the Defendant to 2 Consecutive Life Sentences with the Possibility of Parole followed by 25 Years in Custody.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Travis Thomas  
 Assistant District Attorney Yohana Mihreteab  
 Assistant District Attorney Lauren Polk  
 Investigator Harry Stephens  
 Senior Victim Witness Advocate Dorsey Jones  
 Chief Legal Assistant Priscilla Allmond

# Congratulations

## EXECUTIVE DEPUTY CHIEF JOHNNA GRIFFIN

Our very own Executive Deputy Chief Johnna Griffin recently graduated from the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) Chief's School, a prestigious leadership program designed to equip law enforcement executives with advanced training in management, public safety, and organizational leadership. What an incredible accomplishment—and achieving it during Women's History Month makes it even more meaningful.



### Celebrating Women in Fulton County



Recognizing the women whose leadership, innovation, and dedication move us forward.



During the week of March 25th, the County honored a selection of women who lead across Fulton County Government.

We are especially proud that our very own were recognized: Deputy Chief Investigator Paula Duprey, Executive Deputy Chief Investigator Johnna Griffin, and Chief Deputy District Attorney Jill Hollander

# News Corner

Fani Willis defends prosecution of Trump  
after judge's ruling on legal fees  
- CBS Atlanta



Guilty on all counts: Family of murdered  
DeKalb County man says 'justice served



Man shot, killed someone for stealing from  
him, but no one took anything,  
prosecutors say

