

FULTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

# MID-YEAR REPORT

OCTOBER 2021



**FANI T. WILLIS,**  
District Attorney

Providing  
The Highest  
Quality of  
Justice

# Madam DA

Our accomplishments in the first nine months of service to the people of Fulton County



My team and I have been working around the clock to make the Fulton County District Attorney's Office work the way the people of our county deserve. The hard work we have been putting in – day and night, Sunday to Saturday – has our county heading in the right direction.

When we took office in January, we found an office in disarray. It had been almost completely shut down since March 2020, with no work being done on almost all cases. Only a handful of cases had been indicted in all of 2020. We found a backlog of unindicted cases topping 11,000, with just about that many indicted cases on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic's shutdown of our judicial system. We also discovered over 50,000 cases – some dating back decades – that had never been properly closed, leaving the victims, the accused and the justice system in limbo for years.

We brought in a new, highly qualified team of prosecutors, investigators and legal assistants, and they went right to work. We convened two grand juries to run simultaneously for the first time in Fulton County history, and we have made major progress on the backlog of unindicted cases. We are fixing the problem created by the failure to close cases properly. Most importantly, we have worked with the Fulton County Commission and with grant partners at the federal, state and local levels to secure additional resources for an office that had not be adequately staffed for years, to make sure Fulton County is never in this position again.

Even while cleaning up the mess we inherited, we have been able to make important advances in how Fulton County's justice system works. For the first time in history, we have a program that allows us to send appropriate defendants to alternative programs like drug court, veterans court and mental health court before they are marked with the scarlet letter of a felony indictment. We have started a groundbreaking adult diversion program that operates free of charge to participants and helps victims by providing restitution and keeping them informed of the participant's progress. We have a new unit that specializes in handling juveniles charged with the most serious crimes so we can keep the community safe and save young people, if possible, before they are caught up in the criminal justice system permanently. We also created a unit that helps people restrict records on arrest or conviction in accordance with Georgia law, a move that enables people to get jobs, rent an apartment or move on with their lives outside the shadow of a criminal record.

As I promised the people of Fulton County last year, I would run an office with integrity that employs highly qualified, dedicated staff. We would make our county safer and fix what is broken rather than just seeking felony convictions. We have made great progress, but we have much more to do.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months to do our part to make Fulton County a safe, prosperous and just county for all of its people.

Sincerely,

# Featured Employees



**William "Chris" Clark**

Organized and consolidated 14 evidence rooms in the Fulton County District Attorney's Office.



**Demetrius Smith**

Demetrius Smith and Gang Unit will bolster efforts by the FCDA to provide greater awareness and education about gang activities and human trafficking.



**RuShondra Davenport**

Received the Outstanding Public Service Award by the National Bar Association, recognizing her outstanding public service and dedication through volunteering.



**Michele Henry**

Applied for and received a \$1 million Department of Justice (DOJ) grant for improving outcomes for domestic-violence (DV) victims.



**Simone Hylton**

Trained prosecutors statewide at the summer Prosecuting Attorneys' Council (PAC) of Georgia conference on how to prosecute domestic-violence homicides.



**Will McCombs**

Successfully spearheaded the first "Full Force Fullton" partnership meeting, forming a partnership with Fulton County 's Law Enforcement Leadership.



**Earnelle Winfrey**

Provided education and awareness about human trafficking to the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metropolitan Atlanta Chapter.



**Will Wooten**

Organized the first Fulton County District Attorney's office LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee under Madam DA Fani T. Willis.

# Major Crimes Division

## Appeals

1. Won 127 Direct Appeals
2. Won 25 Motions for New Trials
3. Handled 189 Cases

## Civil Forfeiture Unit

4. Established a relationship with Atlanta Airport Drug Interdiction Unit (ADIU)
5. Received for forfeiture **\$2,009,114.78** of seized property
6. Forfeited **\$1,197,357.53** to arresting agencies
7. **\$143,919.47** forfeited to the District Attorney's Office
8. 179 notices of seizure filed
9. 55 complaints for forfeiture filed
10. Presented educational session to the FC Sheriff's Office's crime-suppression unit AKA the Scorpion Unit
11. Civil Forfeiture Unit completed 27 hours of training

## Cold Case/Capital Case Unit

12. Resolved 1 death penalty case

## Major Case

13. Successfully brought to final resolution 22 homicide cases
14. Successfully tried 2 homicide trials to verdict



# Major Crimes Division

## Gang Unit

15. Indicted 2 Rico cases
16. Successfully resolved 31 Gang cases
17. First guilty verdict in a homicide trial during COVID-19
18. Gang Unit completed over 95 hours of training
19. All lawyers and investigators received GGIA basic certification
20. Signed 215 orders for the US Marshalls/APD fugitive units
21. Presented a gang case study on the use of digital evidence
22. Worked with law enforcement partners to establish gang task force MACE
23. Certified an additional 50 lawyers and investigators with GGIA training
24. Coordinated RICO training with the White Collar Crime Unit
25. Met with APD, FCSO to facilitate discussion on combating Gang crimes
26. Featured presenters at the 1st Annual County-Wide Police Chiefs meeting
27. Gang and Human-Trafficking teams established a unit specifically to address human-trafficking by gangs
28. Indictment of first Gang-Human Trafficking case in Georgia

## White Collar Crime Unit

29. Disposed of 87 Cases
30. Recovered **\$1,096,000.00** in restitution orders and settlement agreements
31. Developed partnerships with GA Cyber Fraud and GA Unemployment Task Force
32. Trained law enforcement on courtroom demeanor, RICO PAC and Elder Abuse
33. Indicted 1st RICO case
34. Attended training on COVID fraud and financial crimes against seniors
35. Completed training on fraud targeting seniors

# Special Victims Division



## Crimes Against Children Unit

- 36.** Completed GA Institute for Child Abuse Prosecutors Training
- 37.** Participated in Stewards of Children training at the Georgia Center for Child Advocacy
- 38.** Completed mandated reporter training with GA DFACS
- 39.** Hosted abusive head trauma training with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
- 40.** Reduced unindicted caseload by 50%

## Conviction Integrity Unit

- 41.** Developed, established and swore in the CIU Review Committee
- 42.** Exonerated 2 defendants
- 43.** Modified 10 sentences

## Brenda Baham Domestic Violence Unit

- 44.** Resolved a total of 170 domestic violence cases

## Elder Abuse and Animal Cruelty Unit

- 45.** Drafted policy to establish the first Elder Abuse Multi Disciplinary Team in Fulton County
- 46.** Worked with Canine Cellmates to establish a diversion program
- 47.** Trained law enforcement and animal professionals on cruelty investigations



# Special Victims Division

## Human Trafficking Unit

- 48.** Successfully recoverd 17 children through multi-agency partnership
- 49.** Final resolution on 10 HT cases bringing closure to 12 victims
- 50.** Partnered with FBI MATCH Task Force for the 1st time in FCDA history
- 51.** Became members of the GA Coalition to Combat Human Trafficking
- 52.** Unit became members of the GA Coalition to Combat Human Trafficking
- 53.** Charged 21 defendants with Human Trafficking crimes

## Juvenile Court

- 54.** Successfully sent 19 at-risk children to an intense summer-diversion program
- 55.** Prosecuted 7 juvenile gang cases, leading to gang convictions
- 56.** Implemented a juvenile case-tracking system
- 57.** Charged 340 juvenile cases since April 11, 2021
- 58.** Coordinated with a juvenile court task force to begin a serious offender court

## Sexual Assault Unit

- 59.** Indicted 100-plus cases

## SB440 Unit

- 60.** Established a roundtable for DA, defense counsel and community partners to set up a system for examining juvenile defendants charged as adults
- 61.** Developed a partnership with federal criminal justice administrators





# Trial Division

## Accountability Court

- 62.** Developed a partnership with federal criminal justice administrators
- 63.** Set up pre-indictment partnership with court administration
- 64.** Implemented a shadowing program for ADA's to teach them how AC works
- 65.** Trained 49 FCDA staff members on how to evaluate defendants successfully
- 66.** Implemented trainings with public defenders

## Case Intake Unit

- 67.** More than 2,000 cases indicted
- 68.** 193 homicides indicted
- 69.** Ran 2 grand juries simultaneously for the 1st time in Fulton County history
- 70.** Evaluate Fulton County Sheriff's Office for first time in two decades
- 71.** Trained law-enforcement agencies on case-intake procedures

## Records Unit

- 72.** Closed 45,075 cases

## Complex Unit

- 73.** Successfully closed 14,705 files
- 74.** Attended PAC training
- 75.** Reviewed 165 unindicted drug cases

## Non-Complex Unit

- 76.** Evaluated 3,000 to determine if appropriate for diversion
- 77.** Resolved/closed 2,500 cases



# Investigations Division

## Evidence Unit

- 78.** Organized and consolidated FCDA evidence rooms

## Major Crime Unit

- 79.** TAC operators completed advance training
- 80.** Major Crimes investigators completed more than 324 hours of training

## Special Victims Unit

- 81.** SVD investigators completed more than 250 hours of training
- 82.** Successfully worked with FCSO to return 2 violent defendants to custody

## Justice Liaison Unit

- 83.** Met and collaborated with Atlanta Citizen Review Board
- 84.** Facilitated Use of Force, Conflict Resolution and De-escalation Tactic with APD
- 85.** Partnered with US Marshals Service
- 86.** Hosted law-enforcement leaders meeting with 100 participants from 40 agencies



## Anti-Corruption Division

- 87.** Made charging decisions in 37 backlogged cases from 2016 -2019
- 88.** Resolved 6 previously indicted cases
- 89.** Responded to 16 officer-involved shooting call-outs



## Programs Division

- 90.** Launched Junior DA Summer Youth program with 50 students
- 91.** Implamented the College of Law Internship program with 23 students
- 92.** Created case-intake training video for law-enforcement agencies
- 93.** Participated in WAVE bookbag give-away

### Victim Witness Advocate Unit

- 94.** Hosted 2 domestic violence sessions with Grady Hospital and Giving Kitchen
- 95.** Provided 2,520 services to 990 crime victims



# Operations Division

## Grants Unit

- 96.** Submitted 16 applications for grants
- 97.** Won **\$10,377,137** in grant funding
- 98.** Researched and completed grant applications for 30 additional staff
- 99.** Maintained and completed 11 grants
- 100.** Developed infrastructure for reporting requiring 23 grant-funded staff
- 101.** Won a three-year domestic-violence grant
- 102.** Supplemented DA's personnel budget with \$4.9 million in grand funds
- 103.** Completed and partnered with local education institutions
- 104.** Developed MOUs for grand-funded employees with law-enforcement agencies
- 105.** Developed collaborative partnerships with non-profit organizations
- 106.** Completed four-day training on gang prevention with Department of Justice





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