

KENDRA MONTGOMERY-BLINN
Assistant District Attorney / SVU Team Lead
Durham County District Attorney's Office

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EXPERIENCE

Durham County District Attorney's Office, Durham, NC

Assistant District Attorney, Leadership Team, 2019 – present

Team Lead for the Special Victims Unit. Manage a team of attorneys and legal assistants, including the Cold Case Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI). Prosecute homicide, sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, human trafficking, hate crimes, and animal abuse cases. Serve as the Office Liaison for the Restorative Justice Program. Have conducted over a dozen successful restorative justice cases, including the first formal restorative justice process in a homicide case in North Carolina. Have tried more than 30 felony and ten homicide trials.

Assistant District Attorney, August 2015-2019

Prosecuted violent crimes and homicides from charging through trial. Handled postconviction Motion for Appropriate Relief cases. Served as office liaison to the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham.

North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission, Raleigh, NC

Executive Director, April 2007-August 2015

Oversaw investigation of over 1,700 postconviction cases and eight exonerations. Hired at Commission's creation and drafted operating procedures, hired and supervised staff of eight, and created and managed budget. Worked on cases at all levels of review and investigation. Conducted hearings before eight-member Commission and represented Commission in other court proceedings. Made legislative proposals to General Assembly. Provided annual legislative and judicial reports and frequent public presentations. Applied for and received federal grant funding.

Durham County District Attorney's Office, Durham, NC

Assistant District Attorney, March 2004-April 2007

Prosecuted felony domestic violence crimes and internet crimes against children. Served as the juvenile court prosecutor. Argued and won a habeas corpus hearing based on a pending appeal.

Internships

Wake County District Attorney's Office, Raleigh, NC

Intern, February 2003-April 2003

Durham County District Attorney's Office, Durham, NC

Intern, September 2002-December 2002

Orange County District Attorney's Office, Hillsborough, NC

Intern, May 2002-August 2002

Center for Death Penalty Litigation's Office, Durham, NC

Intern, May 2001-August 2001

EDUCATION

DUKE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW, Durham, NC

J.D., *Cum Laude*, May 2003

Honors: Exceptional Leadership in Public Interest, 2002
IOLTA Grant recipient, 2001 and 2002

Activities: Initiated effort to review and rewrite existing Public Interest Loan Repayment Program
Duke Law Innocence Project, Student Director
Public Interest Law Foundation, Executive Board Member

PURDUE UNIVERSITY, West Lafayette, IN

B.A., with Distinction, May 2000, Political Science and Psychology
Spanish Minor with Summer study abroad in Toledo, Spain

Honors: Phi Beta Kappa
SCHOLAR Honorary Society, President
Purdue Annual Literary Awards Contest, 1st Place in Politics Category

Activities: Maclure Cooperative Living House, Scholarship Chair and Judicial Board
Guardian ad Litem, Volunteer

AWARDS

Second Place in Cut Basil Category, North Carolina State Fair, October 2021

The Durham Herald Sun Grit Award, Awarded for championing successful effort to draft and pass an “Epipens in Schools” law, August 2014

Durham Police Department Victim/Witnesses Service Unit Award for Tribute to Silent Victims, Awarded for “Outstanding Prosecutorial Work in Domestic Violence and Child Abuse,” April 2007

North Carolina Bar Association Pro Bono Service Award, 2003

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

North Carolina State Bar, admitted in August 2003

16th Judicial District Bar Association

Durham County Bar Association

North Carolina Bar Association

North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

North Carolina Bar Association, Criminal Justice Section Council, 2021 – present

Criminal Justice Section Council Member, 2021 – present. Currently serve as the Membership Chair. Attend bi-monthly meetings to plan CLE events and activities.

Durham People's Alliance, 2008-present

Board Member, 2014-2016. Monthly Board meetings and planning of major events. Board members guide the 501(c)(4) work of the People's Alliance.

Education Team, 2008-2020, Co-Chair (2014-2016). Led a successful effort to modify Durham Public Schools mandated testing. Created regular roundtable series to share information about public education with the community. Interviewed candidates for public office and gave endorsement recommendations.

Supplies Drive for Children Living in Foster Care, January 2022 and January 2023

Organized a community drive to collect suitcases, backpacks, and other items needed for children living in foster care.

Organizer of Holiday Sponsorship for Bull City United, December 2021

Organized an effort to sponsor a large family through the Durham County District Attorney's Office and other community members. Collected needed personal items, holiday gifts, and money.

Parents of African American Children (PAAC/EPIC), 2016-2022

Part of the founding PAAC Group at Club Boulevard Elementary school in 2016. Planned multiple field trips and excursions to museums and historic sites. Continuing member of PAAC at C.E. Jordan Highschool.

Just Durham Community Working Group

Founding Member, 2019 – 2021. Helped start a multi-agency taskforce to evaluate restorative justice practices across Durham, including the public schools, the community, and the court system. Worked to expand programs and awareness of restorative justice in Durham.

Epipens In Schools Law, 2013-2014

Successfully led a grassroots effort to draft and pass a law mandating that all public schools in North Carolina maintain lifesaving epipens to treat allergy-induced anaphylaxis. Effort included working with bill drafters and bill sponsors and presented to the General Assembly. The law was passed in 2014 and has been implemented successfully in public schools across North Carolina.

Public Schools Parent Organizer, 2011-present

Coordinate box tops campaign. Volunteer time with school fundraising, tutoring, and engagements.

Durham County Bar Association Scholarship Committee, 2010-2014

Reviewed and ranked law student applicants for the Adam Lischer Memorial Scholarship.

EQUITY TRAININGS

Together Towards Racial Justice Two-Day Workshop, Taught by the Vera Institute, September, 2020

Implicit Bias: Prosecuting Ethically, Taught by Rachel D. Godsil and Song Richardson of the Perception Institute, Hosted by the North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys, January 2017

Race Equity Two-Day Workshop, Hosted by Racial Equity Institute, LLC, September 2016

Dismantling Racism Weekend Workshop, Hosted by DRworks, July 2015

RECENT PRESENTATIONS AND GUEST LECTURES

Guest Speaker, “Restorative Justice from a Prosecutor’s Perspective,” Vermont School of Law, Race, Law, and Restorative Justice Course, June 2022 and February 2023

Presenter, “Restorative Justice Practices,” Governor Cooper’s Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice (TREC), Prosecutor Advisory Group, October 2022

Guest Speaker, “Progressive Prosecution,” Duke Sanford School of Public Policy, September 2022

Presenter, “Restorative Justice,” North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys, September 2022

Guest Speaker, “What is a Prosecutor,” Durham Riverside Highschool, September 2022

Presenter, “Restorative Justice,” Durham County Bar Association Annual Continuing Legal Education Program, February 2022

Organizer, “Transforming Justice,” Durham County District Attorney’s Office Retreat, May 2022

Consultation on Durham’s Restorative Justice Model, National American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), March 2022

Guest Lecturer, “Progressive Prosecution,” Duke Law School Race Equity Class, February 2021

Podcast Guest, “The Charles Ray Finch Case,” Abuse of Power, October 2021

Presenter, “Restorative Justice and Special Victims,” Durham County Local Government Officials, December 2021

Trainer, “Tips from the DA’s Office,” Durham County Police Department Criminal Investigations Division, September 2021

Panelist, “PBS NC Indie Lens Screening of Philly DA and Virtual Discussion,” PBS NC, April 2021

Presenter, “Issues in Domestic Violence Resources,” Durham Mayor’s Hispanic/Latino Committee, February 2021

Mock Judge, Wake Forest University Mock Trial Competition, February 2021

Panelist, “The Pursuit of Equal Justice,” NC Bar Association, Annual Criminal Justice CLE, February 2021

Presenter, “Restorative Justice in Practice,” Orange County Criminal Justice Stakeholders, August 2020

Interviewee, “Prosecutor of the Craig Hicks Case,” Documentary about the murder of three Muslim Americans in Durham County, June 2020

Mock Negotiation, “Criminal Plea Negotiations,” Duke University School of Law, February 2020

Presenter, “Lessons from a Human Trafficking Trial,” NC Human Trafficking Commission, December 2019

Panelist, “Public Interest Careers,” Duke Law School Public Interest Retreat, September 2019

Presenter, “The Homicide Prosecution Process,” Religious Coalition for a Non-Violent Durham, March 2019