



MELINDA KATZ DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR THE DA'S WEEKLY EBLAST,
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Event photos courtesy of Ramy Mahmoud for QNS

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A Message from District Attorney

MELINDA KATZ

ALLEGED DEED FRAUD SCAMMERS CAUGHT

We recently charged four people and three companies with grand larceny and other crimes for allegedly stealing three homes in Queens.

The individuals are accused of acting in concert to forge documents, file false instruments and ultimately steal homes in Jamaica Estates, Kew Gardens Hills and Queens Village.

The signatures on the documents were faked in order to swipe the homes from the legitimate property owners without them even know it was happening. The victims in this case are a mother and daughter homeowner pair, a 76-year-old woman and an 82-year-old woman.

Far too often, fraudsters target the elderly. But we are committed to thwarting criminals who use bogus paperwork to steal real property.

Homeowners can protect themselves by signing up for fraud alerts. You can register with ACRIS to be notified when documents are filed with the city against your property.

You can register with ACRIS on the NYC Department of Finance website. And if you suspect fraud, call my office at 718-286-6673.

In Friendship,

Melinda Katz

QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE CELEBRATES WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

District Attorney Melinda Katz – the first woman to be the top prosecutor in Queens – marked Women's History Month with a celebration honoring several deserving women from the borough and the DA's office.

"This event is so important, for women to come together and to honor those who came before us. We all stand on the shoulders of the women who came before us, but many of us stand on the shoulders of the women who are in this room right now," said DA Katz, during her remarks at the annual event hosted this year at Queens College.

The DA said she is committed to uplifting the future generations of young women to take up the mantle of power in this borough and beyond.

Women are changing the world, the DA said. She reflected on the honorees of the night as being on the frontlines, spearheading changes toward a better, safer and more prosperous future for all of us.

The DA honored Queens leaders Debra Markell Kleinert, the district manager of the Queens Community Board 2; Liza Marquez, the manager for external and governmental relations at Queens College; and Malini Shah, vice president of the Center for Women of New York Board

of Directors.

And from within the Queens DA's office, DA Katz paid tribute to two outstanding staff members. Michelle McKinnon is a system administrator working with the information technology team within the office. Pamela Byer, a senior deputy bureau chief of Legal Hiring, brings new talent to the office by recruiting and recommending incoming assistant district attorneys and interns.

The event's emcee was Dr. Stacie N.C. Grant, the international president of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and a Queens resident. She was joined by numerous other sorority members for the celebration of women.

The DA added, we navigate an era of constitutional uncertainty, women and girls disproportionately face systemic barriers to full and equal protection.



ARRESTS IN TAYLOR SWIFT CONCERT, SPORTING TICKET EVENT SCAM



Taylor Swift's Eras tour didn't just attract thousands of screaming fans. Swift's concerts and other popular entertainment events enticed a team of alleged scammers to siphon tickets from legit buyers and put the electronic tickets into their hands to resell for more than \$600,000.

Three people – a Queens resident, a resident of Massachusetts and an individual who lives in Kingston, Jamaica – were arrested and charged with grand larceny in the second degree, computer tampering in the first and fourth degrees and conspiracy in the fourth degree.

This highly orchestrated and complex scheme manipulated a tech loophole. Two workers at a third-party contractor for StubHub in Kingston collected ticket orders but instead of sending emails with the URLs to the legitimate buyers they sent the online tickets to their alleged partners in crime. These 350 ticket orders equaling about 993 single tickets were then resold by them.

In addition to the Eras tour, tickets were resold for the US Open, Adele and Ed Sheeran concerts, as well as NBA games. The scheme in one year's time netted the culprits roughly \$635,000.

"According to the charges, these defendants tried to use the popularity of Taylor Swift's concert tour and other high-profile events to profit at the expense of others," DA Katz said.

The District Attorney's office's Cybercrime and Cryptocurrency Unit investigated this case as a result of a tip from StubHub. And DA Katz is encouraging anyone who may believe they were victimized by a cybercrime to contact the Unit at 718-286-6673.

CASES OF INTEREST

The high-profile case of an actor charged with murder, ended recently with defendant Isaiah Stokes, 45, sentenced to 25 years to life years in prison.

A jury convicted the Rego Park resident in March of murder in the second degree and criminal possession of a weapon. Stokes gunned down Tyrone Jones, 37, as he sat inside a Jeep in St. Albans in February 2021. The killing is believed to have been payback for an altercation between the two men outside a party in October 2020.

Another case that ended with a guilty verdict was the broad daylight shooting of a 22-year-old killed at Rufus King Park in October 2020. Defendant Chance Goode was found guilty of murder in the second degree and other crimes for the death of the victim in a marijuana-for-cash deal that went awry.

The victim and his friends arrived at the park after a deal was struck on Facebook to sell

marijuana to Goode, the reputed head of a street gang. Instead, Goode sent two of his reputed gang members to the park with a gun to rob the victim and his friends. One of them shot the Bronx man. Goode, 22, was sentenced to 28 years to life in prison.



CELEBRATING ST. PATRICK'S DAY

District Attorney Katz celebrated the rich heritage and tradition of the Irish to mark St. Patrick's Day. She walked in the annual parade

in the Rockaways and also participated in the St. Pat's for All gathering in Sunnyside.



QDA HOSTS MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION

The District Attorney's office hosted its 10th annual mock trial competition with student teams from 18 different law schools. Second-year law students participated from as far away as Kansas, Chicago and Georgia as well as New York and New Jersey scholars.

The competition is an opportunity to help train the next generation of prosecutors. Participating in this simulated trial setting were members of the DA's office, defense lawyers and judges from both Queens and Brooklyn.

The winning team hailed from Chicago-Kent

College of Law with Aidan Boyle, who also won Best Oral Advocate, Kathryn Connors, John Travlos and Allyson Weubbe coming in first place. The team from Pace University, Elisabeth Haub School of Law, took second place.

"The future of our legal system is bright as these students demonstrated a high level of dedication, preparation and competence," said DA Katz. "We are grateful for the support of the judiciary and defense bar every year to provide this immersive learning experience."

