

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Legal Team Files Substitution of Counsel to Pursue Appeal For Karmelo Anthony

June 22, 2026 — Frisco, Texas — A team of leading appellate, civil rights, and criminal defense attorneys announced today that it has taken on the case of Karmelo Anthony, who was recently sentenced to 35 years following his murder conviction in the death of Austin Metcalf. The team, serving pro bono, will review the trial record and pursue all available avenues of appeal.

Leading the effort are: Russell Wilson, Law Office of Russell Wilson II; Gary Bledsoe, the Bledsoe Law Firm PLLC and President of the Texas NAACP; Michael L. Ware, Law Office of Michael Ware; Brooke Cluse, Ben Crump Law; Sean Daredia, Daredia Law Firm, and Justin A. Moore, Stafford Moore PLLC.

Our appellate team has been retained following the conviction to conduct a fresh, independent review of the trial record. We recognize the profound loss suffered by one young man's family and the uncertainty facing another, and we extend our respect to everyone whose lives have been forever changed by these events.

Our responsibility is to determine whether a legal error occurred and to ensure that every issue supported by the record is fully and vigorously presented on appeal.

The appellate process exists for precisely this purpose.

About the team:

Russell Wilson II is a Dallas trial and appellate attorney who has been Board Certified in Criminal Law since 2003 and licensed in Texas since 1995. In 2011, he was selected to direct the Dallas County District Attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit, described at its founding as the first of its kind in the nation, and has argued state and federal cases at both the trial and appellate levels over a career spanning three decades. He leads the Law Office of Russell Wilson II.

Gary L. Bledsoe has served as President of the Texas NAACP since 1991 and as a member of the NAACP National Board of Directors since 2003. An Austin-based attorney, he is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, served as Acting Dean of the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University, and earned his J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law, where he is a permanent class officer. His earlier litigation and advocacy helped dismantle barriers that had kept minorities and women out of the Texas Rangers and to provide video and body cameras for the Austin Police. His awards include the Johnnie Cochran Trailblazer Award of the Minority Caucus of the Civil Rights Section of the AAJ and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Bar Association.

Michael L. ("Mike") Ware is Board-certified in criminal law since 1990, with four decades of trial and appellate experience in state and federal courts. He founded the first conviction integrity unit in the United States while serving in the Dallas County District Attorney's Office (2007–2011). He is a two-time Percy Foreman Criminal Defense Lawyer of the Year (2014, 2020). He is a Champion of Justice Award recipient from the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (2022). He was inducted into the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers' Hall of Fame in 2025.

Brooke Cluse serves as a litigation attorney and the Chief of Staff to Ben Crump, Esq. A skilled civil rights attorney and former public defender in Houston, TX, she advocates for the disenfranchised and fights to safeguard her clients' equal protection under the law. Ms. Cluse also provides legal commentary on employment discrimination and workplace equity and has won successful verdicts on several high-profile civil rights cases.

Sean Daredia is a nationally recognized criminal defense trial attorney with over 100 jury trials under his belt. His practice focuses primarily on murder and capital murder. He secured a full acquittal for his client, charged in the capital murder of former University of Oklahoma and NFL player Du'vonta Lampkin. He further made history as lead defense counsel in the first Tren de Aragua capital murder prosecution ever tried before a jury in the United States, a nationally covered case that ended in a hung jury. Daredia also serves as a legal analyst for NBC, providing commentary on high-profile criminal cases.

Justin Moore is a trial lawyer focused on criminal defense, post-conviction advocacy, and complex litigation. His work includes state and federal clemency matters, advocacy related to the

pardon of Marcus Garvey and Larry Hoover's clemency, and involvement in the effort to overturn Crystal Mason's voter fraud conviction. He has represented clients in high-profile criminal and civil rights matters, including securing the acquittal of a teenager charged with and falsely accused of capital murder.

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