



OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY
415 NORTH ORANGE AVENUE
ORLANDO, FL 32801
(407) 836-2400

September 9, 2021

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: KEISHA MULFORT

STATE ATTORNEY MONIQUE WORRELL'S STATEMENT
ON THE DEATH OF JEAN SAMUEL CELESTIN

ORLANDO, FL – At the request of the Celestin family, State Attorney Monique H. Worrell and her Executive Team met with the family and their attorneys on August 31, 2021, concerning the traumatic death of Jean Samuel Celestin. During the meeting, the State Attorney discussed with the family the details of the incident, including how the previous administration arrived at the decision not to charge the officers involved in the [critical incident](#). The State Attorney's office outlined the legal burden the State is required to adhere to in charging decisions, and how the conduct of the officers, though disturbing, did not meet the legal burden imposed upon the State Attorney's office. In addition to discussing the specifics of the case, our office provided the family's attorneys an opportunity to present additional information that might change the previous assessment of the case.

The State Attorney understands that the Celestin family is grieving and empathizes with their pain. She accepts their anger because the office represents the system that failed to give them justice for the death of Mr. Celestin. When a family calls law enforcement for assistance with someone in mental health crisis, they do not expect that call to end in the death of their loved one, and they should not have to worry that it will. Since this incident, law enforcement agencies have enhanced existing Crisis Intervention Training, and partnered with [Aspire Health](#) to send Community Response Teams to mental health crises. Unfortunately, these efforts were too little, too late for Mr. Celestin. The law does not adequately protect our citizens in mental health crisis, and this situation highlights the gaps that still largely exist today.

We understand that this is difficult for the community to process. What happened here was wrong, the treatment of Mr. Celestin was unacceptable, and Mr. Celestin's death was unjust. Unfortunately, based on the assessment of the prior administration, there is no legal basis to move forward with the filing of criminal charges. For centuries, communities impacted by these incidents have been denied justice, and have been given no remedy under the law. This case is no exception. The State Attorney took an oath to enforce the laws that are in place, and operate within the confines of those laws when seeking justice. We cannot achieve justice through injustice. The State Attorney does not have the authority to create the law, or to enforce laws that do not currently exist. However, she has and will continue to advocate for the changes to the law to create a more just and equitable society for everyone.

###

The Office of the State Attorney for the Ninth Judicial Circuit is represented by The Honorable Monique H. Worrell and serves Orange and Osceola counties in Central Florida. A culturally diverse community, the area is home to nearly 1.4 million residents and is a vacation destination for millions each year. Our office is committed to making Orlando and the surrounding area a vibrant and safe place to live, work and play.

For general media inquiries, please contact: PIO@sao9.org.

For media records request, please contact: mediarecordsrequest@sao9.org.

For specific media inquiries pertaining to State Attorney Monique Worrell, please contact Keisha Mulfort at kmulfort@sao9.org.