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**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER CONCERNING THE
FORMATTING OF OPINIONS AND THE
ADOPTION OF A UNIVERSAL CITATION FORM**

Effective 1 January 2021, an opinion number and paragraph numbers will appear in every opinion filed by the Supreme Court of North Carolina and the North Carolina Court of Appeals. Like a docket number or a party's name, these opinion and paragraph numbers will be native to the text of the opinion and may therefore appear across mediums of publication. Accordingly, opinions filed on or after 1 January 2021 will have an immediate, permanent, and medium-neutral ("universal") citation the moment they are issued.

Because a universal citation is medium-neutral, it does not point to an official publication of the opinion. The *North Carolina Reports* and the *North Carolina Court of Appeals Reports* remain the official reports of the opinions of the Supreme Court of North Carolina and of the North Carolina Court of Appeals, respectively.

Opinions of the Supreme Court of North Carolina and the North Carolina Court of Appeals that are filed on or after 1 January 2021 should be cited using this format: [Case Name], [Traditional Citation to the Bound Volume and Page Number of the Court's Official Reporter], [Universal Citation to the Year, Court, and Opinion Number], [Pinpoint Paragraph Number].

e.g., *State v. Smith*, 375 N.C. 152, 2020-NCSC-45, ¶ 16.

State v. Smith, 255 N.C. App. 43, 2020-NCCOA-118, ¶ 23.

By virtue of this administrative order, the Appellate Reporter, the Director of Appellate Division Computing, and the Supreme Court's Administrative Counsel are hereby instructed to implement this formatting and citation form and to promote its use by the stakeholders in our legal and judicial communities, subject to further orders of the Court.

Ordered by the Court in Conference, this the 4th day of December, 2019.

s/Earls, J.
For the Court

WITNESS my hand and the seal of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, this the 4th day of December, 2019.

s/Amy L. Funderburk
AMY L. FUNDERBURK
Clerk of the Supreme Court