



# SMALL & RURAL LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION

*Serving America's Small, Rural & Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies*

## **PRESS RELEASE** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Alexandria, Virginia

### **Sheriff Vanessa Crawford, Petersburg, Virginia, receives 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award for Dedication to Community and Law Enforcement Profession**

City of Petersburg, 8/1/23 - Sheriff Vanessa Reese Crawford, the long-serving Sheriff of the City of Petersburg, has been honored with the prestigious 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association. This award recognizes Sheriff Crawford's remarkable dedication to her community and her exceptional contributions to the law enforcement profession throughout her illustrious career.

In a historic moment, on December 15, 2005, The Honorable Vanessa Reese Crawford became the first female Sheriff of the City of Petersburg. Born and raised in Petersburg, she has been a formidable presence in the law enforcement arena, serving with distinction and unwavering commitment. Sheriff Crawford's dedication to her community and the pursuit of justice is evident in her numerous accomplishments and accolades over the years. Sheriff Crawford's impressive journey began with over 28 years of service in the Virginia Department of Corrections, where she became the first female to manage an all-male facility. Her groundbreaking achievements continued as she became the only African American female Sheriff in the United States from 2014 to 2017, further exemplifying her leadership and trailblazing spirit.

Throughout her tenure as Sheriff, Vanessa Crawford demonstrated exceptional leadership, professionalism, and commitment to the welfare of her community. She became the sole Sheriff in the Commonwealth of Virginia to attain certification as a PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) Auditor by the Department of Justice, showcasing her dedication to ensuring humane and secure correctional facilities.

Her involvement in community initiatives extends to tackling domestic violence issues and advocating for social justice. Sheriff Crawford has been an essential figure in organizing the Petersburg Task Force on Domestic Violence Training Institute and the "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" event, showcasing her commitment to addressing pressing societal concerns.

"I am deeply humbled and honored to receive the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association," said Sheriff Vanessa Crawford. "My passion for serving my community and the law enforcement profession has been the driving force behind my work, and I am grateful for the opportunity to make a positive impact."



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Her contributions and dedication have not gone unnoticed, as she has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Sojourner Truth Award, the Social Justice Transformer Award, and the Magnus Leadership Award, among others. Sheriff Crawford's commitment has also earned her national recognition, being appointed to various esteemed national boards, such as "Fight Crime: Invest in Kids."

Her remarkable achievements and leadership have inspired many, making her the recipient of the 2023 Hometown Heroes Award from Allen and Allen. Additionally, Sheriff Crawford has received the esteemed title of "Sheriff of the Year" from the National Sheriff's Association, an acknowledgment of her outstanding contributions to law enforcement nationwide.

As Sheriff Crawford embarks on her fifth term as the longest-serving elected official in the city of Petersburg, her legacy of dedication and leadership will undoubtedly continue to shape and influence the law enforcement profession and her community positively.

About Sheriff Vanessa Crawford:

Sheriff Vanessa Reese Crawford has exemplified steadfast dedication and exceptional leadership as the first female Sheriff of the City of Petersburg. With a remarkable career spanning various law enforcement roles, she has tirelessly served her community and the entire Commonwealth of Virginia. Her trailblazing efforts and commitment to justice and community welfare make her a respected and revered figure in law enforcement circles.

About SRLEEA:

<https://smallrural.org>

The Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives' Association (SRLEEA) is an organization dedicated to supporting law enforcement agencies in small, rural, and tribal communities across the nation. Our mission is to advocate for, strengthen, unite, and raise the capacity of small, rural & tribal law enforcement executives and the agencies they serve.

For further information, please contact SRLEEA at [admin@smallrural.org](mailto:admin@smallrural.org) | (571) 758-4170 or the City of Petersburg, Office of the Sheriff at 804-733-2369.