

# Chief Rosemary Cloud

## East Point, Georgia

A new dawn has emerged for the citizens of East Point, Georgia. There's a new Fire Chief in town and she goes by the name of Rosemary Cloud, the first African American, female Fire Chief ever appointed in the country. The city of East Point is a growing bedroom community. At 18 square miles, it has a population of 40,000 residents.



Rosemary was also born and raised in East Point with the values of family, honesty, hard work, courage and self-discipline, Chief Cloud is the youngest child of a very large family. She accredits the type of person that she is to her older siblings who lead by example.

They worked hard and met challenges head on. This great influence helped Rosemary realize that there was nothing in life that she could not achieve.

Encouraged by an ad campaign seeking African-Americans to join the Atlanta Fire Department, as the result of a consent agreement, Chief Cloud began her 22 years of service as a recruit.

There she learned the science of fighting fires and made the decision to dedicate her life to helping others as a Firefighter. Over time, she worked her way up the ranks from Firefighter to Chief Officer.

Before being appointed Fire Chief of East Point, Rosemary was responsible for providing fire protection and medical emergency services to one of the largest and busiest airports in the world, Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport.

While the strategy of fighting fires is the same, aircraft rescue and firefighting demands a different type of training and special equipment, such as foam, dry chemical and dry powder, in addition to the water. It was also Rosemary's responsibility to make sure that personnel met both federal and state training standards.

Currently, Chief Cloud is in charge of 4 stations, has 6 fire trucks and 2 rescue units. Community service is a top priority for her fire department. Rosemary serves many hours at local churches, schools, the senior center and various community groups giving education and prevention presentations.



The East Point Fire Department has an intense campaign to educate the community about fire safety. Their firefighters present a safety message each month at community neighborhood meetings.

For Rosemary, her greatest challenges as Fire Chief involves firefighter safety, emergency communications and adequate training.

"Because we have such an overwhelming desire to help others when we respond to medical emergencies and rescue victims, we often take extraordinary risks. I have to make sure that I develop and implement policies and procedures that meet safety standards in order to make sure that firefighters don't put themselves in undue or avoidable danger."

As a woman, there were physical challenges to overcome in her quest to become a firefighter. Many of the entry level physical exams concentrate heavily on upper body strength that simulated exercises such as ventilating a roof, pulling ceiling tiles, dragging a hose line up flights of stairs or carrying a person out of a building.

However, she found that these challenges could be overcome through physical fitness training and practicing techniques.

Another challenge was adjusting to the shared living and sleeping quarters with men. She notes that the future planning of fire stations should include segmented quarters in order to respect the privacy needs of both men and women.

Chief Cloud has an extensive educational background. She attended the National-Louis University where she received her B.S. degree in Applied Behavioral Science. She also attended the Harvard University School of Government, Dillard University and the National Fire Academy.

She currently works with the local schools and youth organizations as a mentor. Rosemary has been featured in Who's Who in Black Atlanta and received the prestigious Millennium Pacesetter Award from the Atlanta Business League.

She was also recognized by the City of Oakland Fire Department and received the Nelson Mandela Medallion.

Her professional affiliations include the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Fire Chief, Women in Fire Service, Women Chief Officers, the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters, National Association of Black Public Administrators and the National Fire Protection Association.



Chief Cloud's statements reflect the degree that she was impacted by the 9-11 tragedy. "We should be proud to know that although the attack on America was a horrible act of violence, and although September 11th was a day of terror and fear, it was also a day of courage and heroism."

Today, Rosemary is still taking the necessary actions to ensure that the City of East Point Fire Department is prepared in times of crisis by providing ongoing training, collaborating with other fire chiefs, attending Homeland Security Seminars and identifying and supplying the necessary resources for readiness.

Also, Chief Cloud is in the process of organizing and training a group of citizens to form a Community Deputy Fire Marshall program that will become part of the Community Emergency Response Team.

Many thanks to Chief Cloud for graciously contributing to the March, 2009 Firefighter Diversity Recruitment Council conference as the Keynote Speaker.