



RESTORING DRIVING PRIVILEGES

DRIVE-TO-WORK

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Board member Sheriff Vanessa Crawford Wins National Award



Petersburg Sheriff Vanessa Reese Crawford, a member of Drive-to-Work's Board of Directors, has been honored with the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives' Association.

The award recognizes Sheriff Crawford's remarkable dedication to her community and her exceptional contributions to the law enforcement profession during her trailblazing career. She has been a formidable presence in law enforcement, serving with distinction and unwavering commitment.

Sheriff Crawford became the first female sheriff of Petersburg, where she was born and raised, on December 15, 2005. From 2014 to 2017, she became the only African American female sheriff in the United States. Before becoming sheriff, she served for more than 28 years in the Virginia Department of Corrections, where she became the first female to manage an all-male facility.

Throughout her tenure, Sheriff Crawford has demonstrated exceptional leadership, professionalism and commitment to the welfare of her community, according to the association. She became the first sheriff in 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. She 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.

"I am deeply humbled and honored to receive the 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association," she said. "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."

Sheriff Crawford has received numerous honors, including Sheriff of the Year from the National Sheriff's Association, and has served on a variety of national boards, such as Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.

"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," the association noted.



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DTW Receives Community Enhancement Award



DTW President Sara R. Wilson and DTW Founder O. Randolph Rollins accepted the award at an April 11 luncheon.

The VCU Wilder School's 16th annual Excellence in Virginia Government Awards program honored Drive-to-Work with its Community Enhancement Award for our commitment to improving the quality of community life in the commonwealth.

At an awards luncheon on April 11, DTW was lauded for its work in providing legal services to low-income and previously incarcerated persons to restore their driving privileges so they can drive to work and keep a job. The annual event celebrates Virginians who have made extraordinary contributions to the practice of government and the welfare of our communities and citizens.

"We are deeply honored to receive this award, which speaks to the dedication, commitment, and hard work of our team, Board of Directors, and supporters," said Sara R. Wilson, president of DTW.

The award commended DTW, founded in 2007, for being the first organization in Virginia to advocate for helping people to get their license restored through legal and driver education services. DTW recognizes that losing driving privileges is not necessarily because of poor driving but can be a result of enforcing nondriving-related payments, such as civil judgments resulting from motor vehicle accidents and child support payments.

The award cited DTW's successful advocacy to establish a new law to prohibit the suspension of a person's driver's license due to failure to pay Virginia court fines. The law was passed by the General Assembly in 2019. As a result, more than 525,000 Virginians saw nonpayment of court fees information removed from their driving records, and some had their driving privileges restored.