

BIO / Chief Cerelyn “C.J.” Davis, Durham Police Department

Durham Police Chief Cerelyn “C.J.” Davis has more than 32 years of dedicated service in the law enforcement profession. Known for her emphasis on employee wellness, community engagement and efficient police operations, she is the first African-American woman to lead the Durham Police Department. Prior to coming to Durham, Davis spent 30 years with the Atlanta Police Department, where she learned the essential elements of community engagement and relationship building as a young officer. There, she rose through the ranks, ultimately serving in the role of Deputy Chief before retiring in June 2016 to accept the position of Chief of Police for the City of Durham.

Chief Davis is a graduate of the 225th session of the National FBI Academy. She completed senior management training at the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) in Boston. Chief Davis is a graduate of Leadership Atlanta, Leadership Triangle, and she has completed Mercer University’s Public Safety Leadership Institute.

Chief Davis has experienced training opportunities abroad at the Emergency Preparedness College in York, England in 2005, and as a participant in an executive exchange session with the Israel National Police, in the cities of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Netanya in 2012. As a result of her mission, Davis developed a leadership curriculum designed to groom bright and extremely prepared leaders for 21st Century Policing. Recently, Chief Davis was selected to travel to Budapest, Hungary as a guest presenter, highlighting her career journey at the Women in Policing Conference, an annual U.S. Department of State event.

In August 2019, Chief Davis was sworn-in as the 42nd President for the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). After serving the organization for more than 20 years, Davis’ priorities are to continue work outlined in the organization’s new strategic plan, which includes: criminal justice reform, community engagement initiatives, and gun control. She also seeks to expand the “*Law and Your Community*” training, which emphasizes safe encounters between police and their citizenry, specifically focusing on young adults of color.

Chief Davis was also appointed to the board of directors of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), where she serves on the Financial Review Committee and the TRUST Initiative Committee. She is a member of the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police, a recent appointee to Governor Roy Cooper’s Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission, a member of the Durham Rotary, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., The LINKs Inc., and other professional affiliations.

An advocate for the advancement of other women in her field, Davis has used her experience and leadership acumen to leverage mentoring relationships for women in a variety of career fields. She has a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice and a master’s degree in Public Administration.