

Woodson African-American Museum Honors CHAPLAIN EDIE DARLING

Growing up, **Edie Darling** was taught: If you see the cops, run!

So when her mother decided to call the police after her three older brothers had just been robbed outside their home, Edie's jaw dropped.

"I'm thinking, 'Mom, you don't want to do that,'" Edie said. "Every negative thing I've learned about the police, and she wanted them to come into our house?!"

But when the St. Petersburg Police Officer shook her young impressionable hand upon arrival, politely sat at her family's dinner table, and graciously vowed to do his best to catch the suspects upon his departure, Edie's view of law enforcement, and the course of her whole life, changed instantly.



Senior Chaplain Edie Darling

That night was one of the first stops on what Edie Darling calls her "journey." Today, this journey has led Edie to becoming the first African American female Senior Chaplain at the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Department of Detention and Corrections – an achievement for which she was recognized by the Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American Museum.

In honor of Women's History Month, nine women, who ranged from doctors and lawyers to our own Chaplain Darling, were commended for their remarkable achievements and the outstanding example they set as black women who continue to strive for freedom, equality, and justice as the first in their fields of endeavor.

But her current position is not her first with the Sheriff's Office. In January 1994, Edie joined the PCSO as a patrol deputy recruit assigned to the Field Training Program. As she worked for 16 years throughout the agency as a patrol deputy, a bailiff, a school resource deputy, and a crime prevention specialist, Edie found a way to weave her religious passion into her work, sharing her uplifting messages to co-workers and criminals alike.

"I would always say to individuals whom, unfortunately, I had to take to jail, 'This moment in time does not have to defeat you nor define you, you can turn this situation around,'" Edie said.

In 2010, Edie became a minister, founded an outreach ministry and devoted her efforts to her ministry full time. In 2014, Edie returned to the agency as Senior Chaplain and supervises five chaplains, a senior office assistant, and volunteers.

"I'm honored to be back," Edie said. "I'm honored to represent our agency once again. It's nice to be home, doing what I love to do most, encouraging and serving my fellow brothers and sisters. To me, this is what life is all about."
