

Savannah District wins three *Women of Color Technology Awards*

Hollis, Pierce, Small Receive National Recognition for Outstanding Achievements

The Savannah District congratulates three special team members for receiving national recognition this year from the *Women of Color Awards* Conference – Ms. Leila Hollis, Ms. Wilhelmina Pierce, P.E., and Ms. D'Lorah Small.

Each year, the *National Women of Color Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)* conference recognizes minority women from various career fields across the country – both private and government employees – for their demonstrated leadership and accomplishments in their fields. *Women of Color Award* recipients are viewed as role models with unique, powerful stories to tell.

“The Savannah District employs some of the most highly-skilled and talented people in the country – and these three women are among the best of the best,” said District Commander Col. Ed Kertis. “We are proud to have them on our team and are thankful for the service they continue to provide to the nation.”

Leila Hollis **2009 Women of Color Technology All-Star**



Current Position: Chief, Savannah District Small Business Office

Education: Georgia Southern University, M.P.A; Albany State University, B.S. Business Management

Hometown: Albany, Georgia

What this award means to me:

“Winning the *Women of Color Technology Award* means that I have reached one of the highest pinnacles in my life, by reaching a high standard for myself and my family to share with all women, co-workers and friends. It is rewarding to me for a professional, national organization to recognize my achievements, capabilities, hard work and accomplishments, in the workplace, church, and the community. I feel as though a miracle has



been granted to me, and God has given me the strength, knowledge, and innate capability to be the best that I can be and to move a chapter in my life from good to great.”

Career Background:

As the Chief of the Savannah District Small Business Office, Leila manages small business programs for Savannah, Charleston and Wilmington districts, together exceeding \$2.8 billion. She joined the Savannah District in 1994 in the contracting division, and was promoted to her current title in 2004. Before joining the Corps team, Leila worked in contracting for the U.S. Army Forces Command and the U.S. Navy.

With more than 25 years of Federal service, Leila is the first African-American to become the chief of Savannah District’s small business office. Aside from her successful professional career, she is an avid community volunteer, Sunday school teacher and youth advisor for her church.

Wilhelmina Pierce, P.E. **2009 Women of Color Technology - Special Recognition**



Current Position: Resident Engineer, Special Operations Resident Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Education: N.C. State University, B.S. Mechanical Engineering

Hometown: Mebane, N.C.

What this award means to me:

"I am honored and humbled to be the recipient of this award because it re-emphasizes the significance of how the little things we do in our jobs everyday can add up to make a positive impact overtime. It makes me even more grateful for every professional and career opportunity I've had, and for the friends and coworkers that have invested in me and believed in me. I'm so thankful



for the opportunity to fulfill my dream of public and global service with the Corps of Engineers."

Career Background:

Currently the Resident Engineer for the Special Operations office in Fort Bragg, N.C., Wilhelmina first joined the Corps in 1992 with the Wilmington District. She spent several years in Corps districts in South Korea and Japan and later joined Savannah District in 2002. Before joining the Corps team, she worked with the North Carolina Office of State Construction.

Wilhelmina attributes the start of her engineering career to a summer engineering camp she attended as a high school student at Clemson University. "I had no idea what engineering was about, but I applied for the camp," she said. "After being exposed to various fields of engineering, I discovered that mechanical engineering was the perfect major for me."

D'Lorah Small 2009 Women of Color Technology Rising Star

Current Position: Project Engineer, Barracks Resident Office, Fort Bragg, N.C.



Education: Regent University, M.B.A; Old Dominion University, B.S. Civil Engineering; Tidewater Community College, A.S. Civil Engineering; Hampton University - Civil Engineering

Hometown: Virginia Beach, VA

What this award means to me:

"Winning the *Women of Color Technology Award* means further recognition of minority success in this field. It means that opportunities will continue to develop for women in technology, and that the once overlooked population can continue to advance into a solid, united force in this field. It is important to encourage other women in technology to achieve their goals and embrace opportunities for growth and development. Winning this award illustrates the support the Corps of Engineers has for the development of women in technological fields."

Career Background:

As a project engineer at the Barracks Resident Office in Fort Bragg, N.C., D'Lorah manages more than \$180 million of MILCON projects to include the 2nd Brigade



Barracks Complex Phases 3 & 4, and the 108th ADA Complex projects. D'Lorah joined the Corps in 2006 after several years of service with the U.S. Department of Agriculture – U.S. Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Transportation. She has also worked in the engineering field for NASA.

As an extremely talented and gifted student, D'Lorah graduated high school at age 14 and graduated college with a Bachelor's Degree at age 18. She was inspired to pursue civil engineering as a child because of her strong liking for math and science. "My drive and determination has been innate since as far back as I can recall," she said. "My ambition has led me to take the path to where I am today." 🇺🇸

By Tracy Robillard, Staff Writer