

2010 Tribute to Women Honoree – Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Oledia Bell, USAF



Oledia Bell is the first woman to serve in the position of Deputy Wing Chaplain at Offutt AFB. She leads a staff of 23 Chaplain Corps Personnel, 27 contractors and 125 volunteers as she coordinates the needs of many different faith groups.

Chaplain Bell created, organized, developed and taught the first ever Chaplain Corps Cultural Diversity academic class at the United States Air Force Chaplain's School. She is the first African American woman chaplain to serve at the prestigious HQ Chaplain's Recruiting located at Randolph AFB San Antonio. As Deputy HQ Chaplain Recruiting she had the honor of recruiting the Air Force's first woman Rabbi. Additionally, Chaplain Bell is the first woman to serve as President of the historical African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church's Henry McNeil Turner Chaplain's Association.

Chaplain Bell continues to pave the way for future leaders. Her involvement as ordained clergy and commitment to the community has helped her integrate faith based initiatives in conjunction with Offutt's Sexual Assault Response (SAR) program and recently introduced a proposal to form a partnership with YWCA Omaha which will integrate expanded training programs to further combat intimate partner violence targeting churches, the military and local communities. She is also leading the charge to develop a curriculum to assist chaplains and clergy in a more holistic response to domestic violence and other healthy family issues facing the faith community.

Federal Woman of the Year in 2003, Chaplain Bell has received numerous awards and honors for her military service and service to the community. She understands the importance of giving back and of building strong leaders who will shape the future health of our community. Ch Bell devotes much of her personal time to mentoring and developing those interested in pursuing ministry utilizing her experience as an Air Force and A.M.E. chaplain. She spends much of her professional energy on programs that enrich the quality of life for Airmen and their families.

Most recently she developed a mentoring program for women, *Mother 2 Mother*, which provides mature women trained as role models to support young military mothers who are geographically separated from their extended families. This provides an opportunity for mothers to share their experiences and connect with others sharing similar situations.

Over the past twenty five years, Chaplain Bell has become known for her passionate preaching and for empowering and educating those around her. In her role as a community leader, she touches the lives of thousands of women. She has been called “a pastor’s pastor” and a trusted agent for those needing confidential counseling. She is often a voice for those without a voice. Chaplain Bell continually demonstrates a commitment to “Warrior Care,” providing spiritual strength, professional growth and a healthy balance to those who serve our nation during a time of war.