

My name is Tamara Bell, Managing Director of the Southwest Regional Communications Center (SWRCC). I have 23 years of service in 9-1-1 public-safety; 16 years working directly with Karima Holmes in two 9-1-1 agencies. I have experience in call taking, dispatching, training, quality assurance, operations and now as the department head, I oversee all things operational and administrative.

Karima has always operated in excellence. She is a natural leader. Before she promoted to her first supervisory role, she was the person our team looked to for help or encouragement. Sometimes, even the supervisor would seek her assistance in certain situations. She often seeks ways to improve procedures operationally. Karima is not afraid of tough challenges. Sometimes things do not come easy but she does not give up. She strategizes and works the challenge until she overcomes. She works hard behind the scenes to help her team succeed wherever she may be stationed at the time.

I have worked with Karima through multiple 9-1-1 system changes including Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD), and 911 phone systems. She takes the lead and assures the team is trained well and prepared to smoothly transition. In our most recent stint working at SWRCC, she led our department from a dark place of low morale to a thriving and more hopeful atmosphere. Upon arrival, she solicited concerns from the staff as well as from the stakeholders (fire, police, and citizens). She along with the administrative team met monthly with stakeholders to discuss operational procedures and set internal goals and policies for all public-safety personnel that would better aid our departments and the community as a whole. In turn, the frontline employees from all agencies were able to work cohesively which was something that did not exist before Karima's tenure. This was not an easy task, it took all parties acceptance and willingness to get on one accord. I imagine the leadership traits she used at both of the agencies we worked for are the same leadership traits she has shown at DC OUC. I understand DC OUC is a larger agency and busier than most agencies. However, as stated before, Karima is not intimidated by challenges and uses every tool in her toolbox to overcome the obstacle professionally.

This is not to say mistakes and inaccuracies do not occur. While we train and work hard to serve our communities, we are not perfect. I have not seen nor heard of a 9-1-1 agency that does everything at 100%. One of the most challenging things facing all Centers today is location accuracy. There are many nuances that go along with ascertaining the correct location. Sometimes the caller is in a panic and gives the wrong location; streets sound alike; numbers sound alike; updated information is given, but the dispatcher is busy dispatching and receiving radio traffic simultaneously and does not see or cannot give the update in a timely manner. Sometimes the emergency moves and the caller never shares that specific information to the call taker. Emergency calls do not stop rolling in just because another emergency is being handled at the time. We try our best to process each call properly according to the nature of the emergency that was relayed to us.

Across the nation, the majority of emergency calls are handled properly and we won't hear a congratulations, keep up the good work. The moment a mishap occurs, we get negative comments thrown our way that are a lot of times disrespectful. We may not respond to the scene but we respond to the call by being the first contact of an emergency. We respect the public and do our best serving them when they are in need. We respect and support our fellow first-responders as well and would love to feel their support as fellow public-safety responders working together to keep the community safe.

I highly support OUC/DC 911 operations under Acting Director Holmes' leadership. To work with or for Karima means working with the best of the best of 9-1-1. She is dedicated wherever she involves herself. She helped prepare me for the director position I currently hold and she is always willing to help

whenever I call. When looking for a subject matter expert on all things 9-1-1, Karima is the person to call. To know her is to love her.

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