

**BIO of**  
**Captain Sonia Y .W. Pruitt (retired)**

**Sonia Y. W. Pruitt** retired from the Montgomery County Police Department in Maryland after 28 years, where she became the first African American woman to attain the rank of Captain in the history of the police department. Her assignment before her retirement in 2020 was Director of the Community Engagement Division.

Sonia holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice, a Master of Arts degree in Forensic Psychology, and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Criminal Justice with a specialization in Policing.

Sonia is the Founder of The Black Police Experience, which promotes the education and history of the intersection of law enforcement and the Black community. She is also a member of the speakers' bureau of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP), which advocates for criminal justice and drug policy reform. Sonia is past chairperson of the National Black Police Association.

In addition to her other significant undertakings, she also works in conjunction with other law enforcement partners—think tanks, sociologists, and anthropologists—to create training, education, and programming, such as with the National Strategy for Blacks in Policing. The programming is designed to create courageous and ethical law enforcement leadership and to support Black police officers in their quest for equity inside police departments. In addition, Sonia is a member of a group of law enforcement officials called the National Criminal Justice Practitioners who advocate for the Black community on issues affecting the criminal legal system.

Finally, Sonia is a professor of Criminal Justice at Montgomery College in Maryland where she is the Program Director for the Community-Informed Policing Program, which she helped create to educate and train police officers in the expectations of a diverse community, in areas such as social justice, police reform, and equity. Sonia is also an adjunct lecturer in Criminology at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Sonia has spoken on a variety of law enforcement-related issues, both in the United States and internationally. You may have seen or heard her commentary on MSNBC, CNN, BBC, BNC, and NPR as well as on other video and radio media. She particularly likes to speak on matters that acknowledge the divide between law enforcement and the community at large. Her interest is law enforcement issues as they relate to officers of color, Black women, and vulnerable communities, and she looks to offer information to spur personal education and growth.