



CLAYTON COUNTY FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

LANDRY MERKISON

FIRE CHIEF / DIRECTOR,
EMERGENCY SERVICES

Phone: (770) 473-7833

Fax: (770) 473-3837

www.ccfes.org

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Battalion Chief Laura Richardson

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678-776-4506

“CLAYTON COUNTY FIRE CHIEF RECOGNIZED AS OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL BY COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY”

ORANGE BEACH, ALA. — A strong drive for excellence and stellar career in the fire service are perhaps the best reasons Columbia Southern University (CSU) recently awarded its Outstanding Fire Service Professional Award to Landry Merkison, fire chief of Clayton County Fire & Emergency Services in Georgia.

The award was established as part of National Fire Prevention Month and to recognize CSU fire service students and graduates for their commitment to safety, professionalism and their accomplishments in the industry. Many students submitted nominations and CSU faculty selected a winner based on the above criteria. “I have always possessed an insatiable thirst for knowledge and a drive to be the best officer I can be,” said Merkison, who is seeking an MBA with a concentration in public administration at CSU.

The fire chief, a native Georgian, credits his education with CSU as honing his drive for excellence. “The topics and discussion with my peers throughout the program have broadened my knowledge in all areas of public administration,” said Merkison. “After 25 years in public safety and government operations, it has been a breath of fresh air to address old problems with fresh ideas and perspectives.”

Those fresh ideas are another reason Merkison was praised for his accomplishments and “vision for what could be in fire/EMS, rather than for just what has been,” according to one nomination letter. The letter commended Merkison’s efforts with the Community Treatment Unit as groundbreaking. The Community Treatment Unit consists of three units staffed by nurse practitioner/paramedic partners who can respond to any 911 incident, but cater to those when there is a less than life-threatening need.

Additional accomplishments include:

- Region Three EMS Director and EMS Agency of the Year (2016, 2017)
- Ronnie Thames Foundation Leadership Award (2017)
- Commission on Fire Accreditation International Accredited Agency (2017)

Merkison earned his bachelor’s in fire science from Columbia Southern University in 2015.

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7810 Hwy 85
Riverdale, GA 30274