

Kelvin Cochran's Story

“My name is Kelvin Cochran, former Fire Chief of the City of Atlanta. I was terminated for living out my faith in Jesus Christ.”

This is how Kelvin opened his testimony last year at the First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

Kelvin, one of six children, grew up very poor in Shreveport, Louisiana – so poor that the family frequently ran out of food. His alcoholic father left the family when he was quite young. He had a dream to be a firefighter, and he achieved that dream, rising to the position of the Fire Chief of Shreveport in 1999. Kelvin was the first African-American to serve in this position in Shreveport.

In 2008 he was appointed Fire Chief of the city of Atlanta, and one year later President Obama appointed him the United States Fire Administrator to run the Fire Administration, a division of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In 2010 Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed asked Kelvin to return to his position as Atlanta's Fire Chief, which Kelvin did. But in 2015 he found himself in the midst of a firestorm because of his sincerely held biblically-grounded beliefs regarding sex and marriage. He was fired on January 6, 2015.

Kelvin's life story is one of deep faith, overcoming poverty, rising to leadership, and paying a price for his convictions. As the *National Review* noted, “In any other circumstance, Cochran would be the subject of inspirational books and movies.” His message about how to walk with God through trials and tribulation is an inspiring testimony to “living the fullness of Christ-centered leadership in turbulent times.”