

Cheryl L. Blake

Retired - National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

In 2017, Cheryl L. Blake retired from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), headquartered in Springfield, Virginia, after more than 33 years of service in the Federal Government.



Ms. Blake began her career in 1984 as a cartographer with the Defense Mapping Agency, a predecessor to today's NGA. Early on, Ms. Blake held a number of positions in the acquisition and technology fields. She helped modernize Agency-wide systems and processes to create and obtain maps, imagery and geospatial data, as the Agency transformed to a digital environment. Later, she served as technical lead to acquire the Joint Mapping Toolkit, that provides common capabilities to use and display geospatial data in systems across the Department of Defense.

Subsequently, Ms. Blake held several key liaison and leadership positions, directing NGA teams and working with U.S. policymakers and military customers to meet their needs for geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) based on the analysis of imagery and geospatial data. She supported U.S. Air Force geospatial data requirements to enable the transition to electronic flight bags, and maintain global reach capability. At US Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, VA, she worked closely with Command staff and the Military Services on policy, training, procedures and technology to improve joint warfighter access to GEOINT. At US Africa Command, her team provided GEOINT used in cooperative engagements with African and other partner nations, and for military operations in support of US security interests and a stable and secure Africa. Within NGA, she managed an analytic division that examined energy, industry, transportation infrastructure and environmental issues around the globe as related to U.S. national security.

Ms. Blake earned her Master of Science degree in Strategic Studies in residence at the Air War College, and her Master of Public Administration degree from Auburn University – Montgomery. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from University of Maryland – University College, and dual Bachelor of Arts degrees in Geography and Political Science from Kansas State University. Ms. Blake is a graduate of NGA's Dynamics of Strategic Leadership program, and a recipient of NGA's "Outstanding Women" leadership award, NGA's Meritorious Civilian Service award and K-State Geography Department's Outstanding Alumni Award. She was named a 2017 K-State Alumni Fellow/College of Arts and Sciences.

She serves on the Kansas State University's Geography Alumni Advisory Board, and the Kansas State University Foundation Board of Trustees. Ms. Blake is a native of St. George, KS. Having lived in Washington, DC, for most of her career, with several other domestic and international assignments thrown in, for her there is "no place like home" and she is happily retired in Manhattan, KS. She enjoys travel and fishing, pretends to garden, and loves purple. Go 'Cats!