

Rhonda Smith Assumes Role of HMEPS Acting Executive Director

A strategic thinker with a record of bringing positive change and a fresh management style is what makes Rhonda Smith a great asset for the Houston Municipal Employees Pension System. Rhonda came to HMEPS in 2008 from the Houston Firefighters' Relief and Retirement Fund to serve as the Director of Administration, and recently has taken on the role of acting executive director of HMEPS.

As HMEPS Director of Administration, Rhonda has provided leadership and oversight for the System's benefits and accounting sections, internal auditing, financial reporting and human resources. She also has worked with the executive staff on actuarial, investment and legislative matters.

Within two years, Rhonda was at the helm when she assumed the role of acting executive director after the retirement of longtime Executive Director David L. Long. In addition to her extensive service on behalf of City pension members, Rhonda's roots with the City of Houston run deep.

Rhonda started her career in public accounting at Deloitte and Touche. After spending time in the private sector she began working in the Finance & Administration Department at the City of Houston. She completed her Master's in Business Administration while working, and then as Administrative Manager in the Regulatory Affairs Division she assisted in creating the audit team responsible for the City's franchise fees.

Rhonda went to work as the CFO for the American Red Cross for five years before starting a career in the pension industry as a citizen appointee for the Houston Firefighters' Relief and Retirement Fund. Her first staff position with the firefighters' fund was deputy director, and it came at a time when there were leadership changes in the mayor's office and on the firefighters' pension board.

Additionally, Smith sits on the national board of the Government Finance Officers Association where she is chair-elect of the audit committee and a member of the Committee on Retirement Benefit Administration.

"I am fortunate to have such a committed Board and an experienced and dedicated staff to work with for our common goal of assuring a secure pension system, of achieving above average investment returns with manageable risk, and of providing our participants with excellent retirement and benefit education," Rhonda said.

At the city, Rhonda liked knowing that she could help impact the City of Houston. Now, she feels she is helping City of Houston employees, retirees and their families.