

Bylaws and branch policies



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The *NALC Constitution* not only provides the principles on which our organization was founded, and the rules it operates on, but it also stipulates the guidelines for the bylaws, which are created by our state associations and subordinate branches. I think this is important to note, because some of the submissions we receive for amendments tend to far exceed what is required, or do not take into consideration the parameters set by the *Constitution*. The fact that some may go over and beyond what is required is not necessarily a problem, if it does not conflict in any way with the *Constitution*. However, it

is problematic when the *Constitution* is not used as a standard and submissions are in stark contrast to the appropriate specifications in the relevant *Constitution*. Remember: The *Constitution*, by definition, is the basis by which the bylaws are created. In other words, you can't properly create bylaws without following the intent of the *Constitution*.

As I have written before, it is much easier for branches to use the *Constitution* for the *Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches (CGSFB)* as a guideline for creating bylaws and/or making amendments. Most often bylaws, which are easily reviewed and approved, follow the order as provided in the *CGSFB* or they simply make direct reference to the national *Constitution*. Likewise for state associations and provisions provided in the *Constitution* for the *Government of State Associations (CGSA)*. I have offered sample bylaws for branches that needed assistance, and I am always willing to offer insight on proposals that are being considered for submission. For a copy of sample bylaws, simply email me at julion@nalc.org.

That which I referred to as “over and beyond” may not be in conflict with the *Constitution*, but it could be something that is more aptly addressed in the branch’s “policies and procedures.”

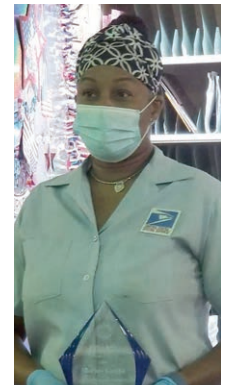
We understand that when you create or amend bylaws, you want to write them so that they are clearly understood and unambiguous. The meaning or intent should be so clear that years later it is understood, even if the author isn't there to interpret. Details that explain how certain bylaws are carried out could be in-

cluded in the policies and procedures that would make potential changes less cumbersome.

Take, for example, if your bylaws list the financial institution where your general funds are deposited. We have seen specific banks or credit unions identified (with address) included with the bylaw submissions. If for whatever reason there is a change to the financial institution, the bylaws will have to be changed as well. There could also be a provision as simple as the day and time of committee meetings, or the manner in which they are held. Do you really want this bound by your bylaws? It could be easier to change your “policies and procedures” than to propose, notify members and vote on bylaw changes. And of course, those changes would still have to be approved by the Committee of Laws before implementation.

For those who will attend the Branch Officers Training in Washington, DC, this month, we can discuss this topic in more detail.

April 28 is Workers Memorial Day. In February, I was asked by Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. if I would go to Chicago and present the memorial plaque to the family of a member who is memorialized on the wall in our Headquarters building. Without hesitation, I told him I would be honored to do so. Not only was Shirley Knight a member of Branch 11 in our Riverdale office, she was one of my stewards. Sister Knight was a staunch advocate for her co-workers, especially during the pandemic. The Riverdale office was “ground zero,” as the first wave of cases among postal workers in Chicago happened in that station. In 2021, as the pandemic was phasing out, I presented her with the “Steward of the Year” award. We lost our sister on the workroom floor in May of 2022. I write this in her honor and that of all the brothers and sisters who are no longer with us on this Workers Memorial Day 2024.



Above: NALC Secretary-Treasurer Mack Julion (above, far r) presents a memorial plaque to the family of Chicago, IL Branch 11 steward Shirley Knight (shown at right), who died in 2022.