



You don't have to call me Bubba!

This being the first of many articles to be written for the membership, I feel that I should in some way introduce myself. While I was given the name Ernest, I have had very little opportunity to use it. From “Butch” as a child, to “Da Coach” during my carrier years, to Ernie as a union representative, and, finally to “Bubba,” given to me by my dear friend, retiring Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Jim Korolowicz, I have had many names.

But unlike my names, my career choice was made early on as a letter carrier. I never found any job that I was better equipped or qualified for. Walking and talking—those were my strong points. While management may have taken issue with it, we referred to it as “floor time” in my delivery office. With age, the walking is harder, but the talking remains. While now I am a retired letter carrier, my entire career was spent secure with the knowledge that I was a letter carrier.

Even today, I still consider myself a letter carrier. While now retired from the USPS, I will never consider myself retired from the NALC. Our union is one of the few organizations that recognizes the benefit of having retirees remain active members. Our retirees were the backbone and foundation that supported this union during its early struggles. In many branches, retirees still provide leadership and direction to the younger members. My desire as your director is to in some small way repay you by my actions while I am in this position. I remember the first day that I carried mail and I remember the last day some 33 years later. I remember both fondly. My hope is that you have the same fond memories when dealing with this office.

When I came into the Post Office during the spring of 1970, most of the ground work had been completed in making the city letter carrier job one that a person could spend their entire career enjoying. This was being made financially possible by the recently concluded strike in March 1970. To those who took part and supported the union in that action and in those early years, I say thank you. I have always had a strong affection for the retirees and felt that they had created a debt for me that required some form of repayment. When I became the local union president, the retirees made sure that any goal or direction was in the best interest of all the membership. I know not to expect any less from retirees

now. I look forward to meeting and interacting with as many of the more than 85,000 retirees in our organization as possible during the coming years.

As this new year begins, it is with some reflection that I set any new goals. My hopes and plans are based in part upon the accomplishments of the past as well as realistic expectations of what “can be.” This new year will bring, I hope, a more worker-friendly Congress, and subsequently more retiree-friendly also. But any gains made in the halls of Congress will still require a very active and effective membership in this organization. While we should all continue to volunteer our time through the e-Activist program, we must at the same time continue to contribute to COLCPE. This fund allows us the resources necessary to support those who are for our rights as workers. We have all seen the effectiveness of this “muscle” in the recently concluded elections.

Retirees have always been there for this union and hence for themselves. As retirees we realize how we started and what we have accomplished together. Together we can only

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achieve more. I know I will see you out front and leading; you have always been there before.

In closing, I want to thank President Young for his confidence in me for this job. To retiring director Donald Southern: Many thanks for your work these past years and thanks for helping me find my desk. Leave your cell phone on; I will be calling. To everyone else: Let's get busy for a great year. ☒

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