

Seize the moment



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Rhine**

I still remember the first time I heard him pontificate.

It was the summer of 1996 in Orlando. President Sombrotto took the stage at the national convention to give his opening remarks, and I knew right then and there that I liked him.

I had been a regular carrier for all of two years before that convention, my first. I still remember his message: that the work of a person should not be determined by those times when things are going good, but by how you act when things are going bad.

From where I sit today—no longer a young convention rookie—those words could not ring truer.

Faced with the financial problems caused chiefly by the congressional mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits, the postmaster general has shown us how he and his work should be judged. His actions have made things worse, not better. He has no plan for growing the business of the Postal Service. He has no vision; only a slash-and-cut mentality. And with his last move—thumbing his nose at Congress—he has squandered any chance of ever earning the respect of letter carriers. There will be no redemption. It is time for him to go.

The easy thing to do would be just to sit back, throw stones at the postmaster general and wait for him to find the door. But as President Sombrotto said in 1996, we must be judged by our actions when things are going bad. And when I am put to that test, I want to be judged as someone who didn't back down from a challenge.

The proposal that the postmaster general has put forth to cut Saturday mail delivery is not the answer. If his plan is successful, it only is a matter of time before another day of delivery is cut. And then another. Five, four, three, two, one...done.

Cutting a day of delivery does *nothing* to address the pre-funding issue—the cause of the bulk of the financial losses the Postal Service has suffered. Cutting a day of delivery does *nothing* to grow the business. In fact, it will erode and eventually destroy the very core of our last-mile delivery network.

The postmaster general's disastrous idea would have a profoundly negative effect on the Postal Service and our millions of customers. His plan would only doom the Postal Service to failure.

Brothers and sisters, it is up to us to save the Postal Service. This is our judgment day—how do you want to be measured? Do you want to be remembered as the rank and file who said, “Who cares? I will get my weekends” and did nothing to preserve everything that those who came before us struggled for? Or do you want to be remembered as the men and women who fought for the future of the most efficient and affordable postal service in the world, the success of small businesses, the rights of Americans as provided for in the Constitution, the health of the economy, the preservation of the middle class, jobs, veterans, the quality of your life, and the inherent responsibility to pay it forward?

The citizens of this great country deserve better. You deserve better. But we must be united in our fight.

“When all is said and done, let them say that when faced with a challenge, we were undaunted.”

I have every faith that President Rolando will go to the ends of the earth and back to protect you and to save the institution that we have all dedicated our lives to working for. And I can promise you that the other national officers and I will be fighting right alongside him.

I urge one and all to fight with us, united in our purpose. When all is said and done, let them say that when faced with a challenge, we were undaunted.

We owe that to ourselves. We owe that to those who will come after us. And we owe it to those who fought before us. We owe it to President Sombrotto.

The loss of the most towering figure in the history of the NALC was and still is difficult. That initial gut judgment I made about President Sombrotto back in 1996 steadily turned into a deep respect and love for the man. We owe him so very much and he will forever be missed.

He has been judged; his work was a masterpiece. Seize the moment. Let us make this difficult time ours.