

After two-year-long COVID-19 delay, 2020 Leadership Academy graduates



Director of City Delivery Christopher Jackson presided over the graduation ceremony.

In March 2020, as the 28 NALC members attending the NALC Leadership Academy were in the middle of their second week of classes, it became clear to NALC leaders that the Academy couldn't continue. Developments in the COVID-19 pandemic already had forced NALC to keep officers and staff from appearing in the classroom, with the daily Academy instructors presenting the classes instead. The leaders then hurriedly arranged transportation for all of the attendees to return home.

NALC was committed to resuming the Leadership Academy once it became safe to do so. In April 2022—more than two years after it had paused—21 attendees resumed the Academy, repeating the second week of classes with the staff and officers as their instructors. The seven other students had decided not to continue or had left the letter carrier craft.

On July 1, after the third week of classroom work, 20 members of NALC Leadership Academy Class 25 graduated. (One was not able to return for the third week in late June.)

Director of City Delivery Christopher Jackson presided over the graduation ceremony at the Maritime Center in Linthicum Heights, MD, a few miles

south of Baltimore. He congratulated and commended them for their persistence in making it to the graduation, likening it to the story of the tortoise and the hare.

“Slow and steady, you all made it to this finish line,” he said. “You all made it past the finish line as NALC Leadership Academy graduates.”

Jackson called on them to take what they had learned and use it to represent the membership of their branches. “You can now go back and be that leader and resource for what you learned at this academy. Your membership on the floor, they’re going to be looking at you as that lighthouse to guide them. Make sure your light is always on, so you can give them the knowledge and the understanding of how you’re going to get them in the right direction as a letter carrier,” he said.

The commencement event capped the intensive training on the skills necessary for union members to become effective leaders. Under the tutelage of their mentors—established NALC leaders such as branch presidents—the students combined the three separate weeks of classroom learning at the Maritime Center with take-home assignments and special projects.

Jackson called new Vice President James D. Henry up to the podium to congratulate the graduates.

“We look forward to you being able to take what you learned and apply and move on into the future,” Henry said. “I have no doubts that one of you will be standing where I am one day.”

Henry took a moment to acknowledge the daily class instructors, including the ones who had retired or moved on to other duties after the first two weeks. They are former National Business Agents (NBAs) Troy Clark and Chris Wit-

A breakout group of attendees lead a presentation on the NALC Member App.





NALC Leadership Academy Class 25

tenburg; Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 President Keisha Lewis; Assistant to the President Ed Morgan; retired Director of Education Jamie Lumm (Weeks One and Two); retired Assistant to the President for Contract Administration Mark Sims (Weeks One and Two); and Assistant to the President for City Delivery Michelle McQuality (Week Two).

After the commencement, the graduates were assigned to work at their respective NBA offices for a week to learn in a different environment.

The 20 participants (listed below) now add their names to an ever-lengthening list of graduates of the NALC Leadership Academy. During their classes, students take part in often lively discussions on such subjects as the National Agreement and

the union's legislative agenda. They also learn more about the Dispute Resolution Process, strategic planning, branch financial responsibilities, retirement issues, DOIS and route protection, workers' compensation, effective negotiation techniques, getting NALC's message out and dealing with the news media. A number of NALC officers and Headquarters staff members are tapped to teach classes on a wide variety of topics.

Each week of the Academy also includes an emphasis on effective written and oral communication skills in such forums as membership meetings, awards ceremonies and dinners, as well as in written reports and oral presentations about the participants' take-home projects. **PR**

NALC Leadership Academy Class 25 graduates

Christa Abraham
Minneapolis, MN Br. 9

Kayla Quinlan
York, PA Br. 509

Kevin Blair
Dallas, TX Br. 132

Pat Dougherty
Cincinnati, OH Br. 43

James Frankford
Vancouver, WA Br. 1104

Michele Galda
Cherry Hill/Haddonfield, NJ Br. 769

Chris Grinnell
Fall River, MA Br. 51

Isaac Harper
Hudson Valley Mgd., NY Br. 137

Darius Holmes
Milwaukee, WI Br. 2

Travis Klemp
Fort Dodge, IA Br. 645

Kerwin Montes Lamb
Central Florida Br. 1091

Susanne Langolf
Mt. Clemens, MI Br. 654

Jason Leath
Nashville, TN Br. 4

Anthony Mangiavellano
Rochester, NY Br. 210

Jim Moulton
Aurora, IL Br. 219

Steven Murray
Kansas City, MO Br. 30

Patrice O'Banner
South Suburban Mgd., IL Br. 4016

Peter Palmer
Detroit, MI Br. 1

Jeremy Skinner
Norfolk, VA Br. 456

Tammy Swaney
Savannah, GA Br. 578