

NALC CONVENTION CHRONICLE

4004

Covering the second session; Tuesday, Aug. 9, 2022



On the second day of the 72nd annual NALC convention, letter carriers stood together for the common good. Working as one, the delegates demonstrated the power of unity and the strength of a union whose members hail from every corner of the nation.

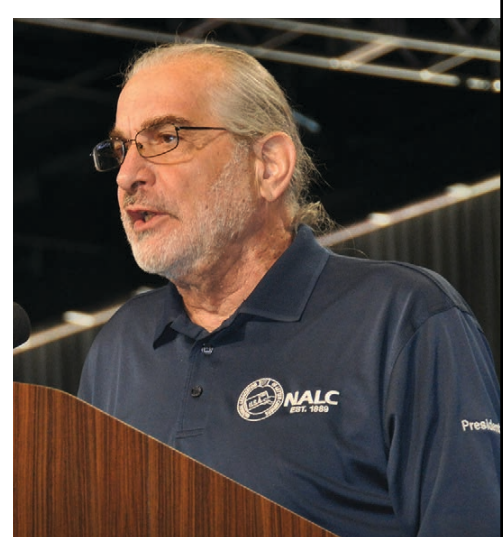
democracy, renewing their commitment to supporting access to the ballot for all citizens, especially voting by mail.

And they stood in solidarity with their union brothers and sisters as United Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts brought them frequently to their feet to proclaim their support for striking miners in Alabama.

When we stand together, Roberts told the delegates, workers can accomplish what seems impossible. "The American labor movement is one," he said, "and we are everywhere."

BUSINESS RESUMES

Tuesday's session of the NALC convention was called to order with a video from the 2000 convention in Chicago of the late Percy McRae of New York, NY Branch 36 singing the National Anthem. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Anthony Bultinck, a member of Moline, IL Branch 292 and president of the Illinois State Association. Rabbi Rena Singer of



Temple Shalom in Chicago delivered the invocation.

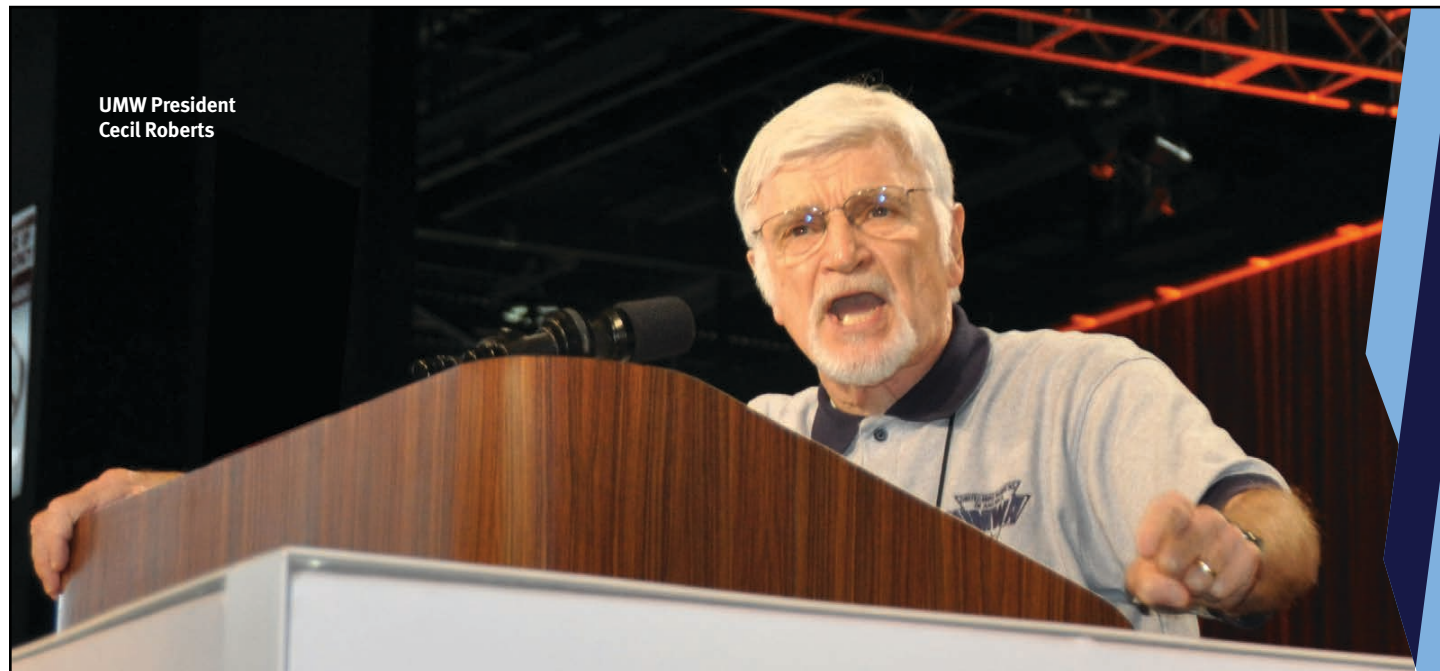
President Rolando brought Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe to the stage to introduce the Greetings to the Auxiliary

Top: The crowd erupts in applause for UMW President Cecil Roberts.

Above: President Fredric Rolando. Left: Delegates discuss resolutions and amendments.



They stood together as they carried out the democratic process of their union, discussing and voting on resolutions and amendments to make NALC even stronger, and even more representative. They stood for American



UMW President Cecil Roberts

The delegates thanked Comer with a Letter Carrier Cheer.

Returning to resolutions, the Executive Council did not make a recommendation on Resolution 13, which dealt with mandatory overtime and maximization of the use of junior full-time regulars. After hearty debate, the delegates voted down the resolution, with a teller vote of 1,151 for and 1,395 against.

UMW'S CECIL ROBERTS

Rolando then welcomed United Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts to the lectern. As he has done at past NALC conventions, Roberts electrified the delegates with a rousing speech.

Roberts praised NALC for its early monetary support of striking miners in Alabama. "Solidarity is not just a word; it's not just a verse in a song," he said. "You practice solidarity in this union, and so do we."

Pointing to the uncommon successes his union has achieved in Congress through activism and protest, Roberts said, "The labor movement is one, and we are everywhere."

Roberts called for reform of bankruptcy laws to prevent companies like Warrior Met Coal, the company that mine workers have continued to strike against for more than a year in Alabama, from escaping its commitments to its workers through bankruptcy.

"Did you know you don't even have a right to your job when the bankruptcy judge hits that gavel?" he asked.

"You don't have a right to be represented by your union," he continued, adding, "Brothers and sisters, we not only need labor law reform, we need bankruptcy reform."

Roberts then led delegates in a call-and-response cheer, which was

videotaped as a show of support for striking Alabama miners: "Warrior Met," he called, and the delegates responded, "has got no soul!"

"We are not totally free until we can join any union we want," Roberts declared.

"We need to be in the business of organizing," he said. "All we need from politicians is to give us our God-given right to join a union free of harassment."

"And then we'll go out across this country, and we'll pose these questions," he added. "Do you want higher wages? Join a union! If you want health care? If you want retirement security? If you want job security?" The delegates responded to each query with: "Join a union!"

The delegates jumped to their feet and rewarded Roberts with a Letter Carrier Cheer. The convention observed a moment of silence for victims of mass shootings. Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine then took the floor to deliver the secretary-treasurer's report. Following her report, the delegates viewed Part 1 of the film about the Great Postal Strike of 1970, "Revolt of the Good Guys."

VOTE AT HOME

Rolando then introduced Lori Augino, executive director of the National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI), to speak to the delegates.



A teller counts votes for Resolution 13.



National Trustees Sandra D. Laemmel, Chairman Lawrence D. Brown Jr. and Mack I. Julion

Committee, which was then released to go to the Auxiliary Convention, located elsewhere in McCormick Place. The members of the committee are Elisabeth Goodwin, Houston, TX Br. 283; Steve Amrhein, Indianapolis, IN Br. 39; Jim Thigpen, Northeast Florida Br. 53; Trelle Thomas, Baton Rouge, LA Br. 129; and Patrick VanEgeren, Green Bay, WI Br. 619.

AMENDMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS

The president then handed the microphone to Board of Trustees Chairman Larry Brown and Trustee Mack Julion to present the Executive Council's reports on proposed constitutional amendments. After delegates dealt with all 10 amendments, Rolando introduced recently appointed Trustee Sandy Laemmel.

Vice President James D. Henry then explained the process for the delegates

REP. JAMES COMER

President Rolando then introduced Rep. James Comer (R-KY), ranking minority member of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. Comer was escorted by delegates from Kentucky to the stage.

Comer, who played a crucial role in passage of the Postal Reform Act earlier this year, told delegates that the dedication of letter carriers was a critical part of the reform effort's success. In particular, the pandemic demonstrated how essential the Postal Service is to the public.

"Due to COVID, we all got a reminder just how important it is to all Americans," he said. "The letter carriers stepped up. I think America realized and appreciated the sacrifices you made."

The reform bill corrected a fundamental disconnect that Congress had imposed on USPS, he said, adding that Congress had said that the Postal Ser-

vice "had to operate like a business, yet required it to do things no other business would have to do, nor could do," such as having to pre-fund retiree health benefits.

Comer said that previous reform efforts in Congress or by postal management had failed because they focused on cutting service, while the Postal Reform Act freed USPS to change its business model to instead focus on growth.



Vice President James D. Henry



Rep. James Comer (R-KY) was escorted to the stage by delegates from Kentucky.

Many members of Congress like to compare USPS to its private competitors UPS and FedEx. Comer noted that USPS beat both in on-time performance last Christmas. "That's a big deal," he said, "because your performance last Christmas helped us make the case to Congress that the Postal Service is on the right track."



National Vote at Home Institute's Lori Augino with Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe

She lauded carriers for their work in 2020, delivering 4 billion pieces of political mail—a 96 percent increase over 2016—as well as 135 million mail ballots for the 2020 general election alone, even amidst a pandemic, social unrest and questions about USPS's ability to deliver so many ballots.

"Letter carriers, every one of you in this room, have been an essential partner in preserving our democracy and ensuring that voters can cast their ballots by mail with confidence," she said, adding, "Without you, elections would not happen in this country."

Augino presented Executive Vice President Renfroe with a plaque and a signed World Series baseball bat for his commitment to the NVAHI, for which he's served as a board member since its founding in 2018.

COMMITTEES

Rolando called Birmingham, AL Branch 530 member Antonia Shields, chairman of the Mileage and Per Diem Committee, to the stage to deliver her committee's report and introduce the committee members: Amy Breault, Pittsfield, MA Br. 286; Kenneth Montgomery, Rochester, NY Br. 210; Jim Moulton, Aurora, IL Br. 219; and Jose Romero, Albuquerque, NM Br. 504. Shields reported that

the committee had determined a per diem of \$266 per day per delegate.

Board of Trustees Chairman Brown announced that the board had approved the committee's report. By voice vote, the delegates voted to accept the report.

Renfroe then introduced the president of the NALC Auxiliary, Cythensis Lang, who delivered greetings to the convention. The other members of the board introduced themselves: Vice President Cynthia Martinez, Secretary Crystal Bragg and Assistant Secretary Linda Davis.

"It is so good to be able to come together and fight for this union," said Lang, who is retiring as president. "It's been my pleasure to serve you."

Vice President Cynthia Martinez told the delegates that she had been elected Auxiliary president for the next term earlier in the day.

After a few housekeeping announcements, the session adjourned shortly before 3 p.m.



Auxiliary President Cythensis Lang and the Auxiliary Board addressed the NALC Convention.

NALC AUXILIARY

TUESDAY, AUG. 9

Madam President Cythensis Lang resumed the convention with the Pledge of Allegiance and the collect.

Minutes from yesterday were corrected and approved.

Cynthia Martinez, our vice president, hosted our beautiful memorial service.

She had a flower and a plaque made for all our deceased members. Martinez recited a poem and the 23rd Psalm. Donna Beckwood of Birmingham, AL Branch 530 sang a beautiful song called "If It Had Not Been" to conclude the memorial service.

NALC Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe and the Greetings to the Auxiliary

Committee came to welcome us. Renfroe addressed us about legislation, health benefits and, most importantly, about how he is a big supporter of the Auxiliary. He is going to be working with the National Auxiliary Board to close the gap between the NALC and Auxiliary. We are excited!

Crystal Bragg, our secretary, updated the credentials report to 42 registered delegates.

Ohio State President John Dyce let our members know that he is a big supporter of the Auxiliary. We truly appreciate all the support we can get.

We had elections this year, and our new National Auxiliary Board for 2022-

2026 will be: President Cynthia Martinez from Phoenix, AZ; Secretary Crystal Bragg from Decatur, IL; and Treasurer Samantha Yerg from Toledo, OH.

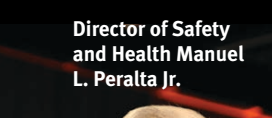
We continued with our bylaw changes. Four were accepted with additions and corrections.

The meeting was recessed to join the NALC Convention to be introduced by NALC President Fred Rolando to his members. Our meeting will continue at 10 a.m. on Aug. 10.

—Submitted by Linda Davis, NALCA Assistant Secretary



Director of Retired Members Dan Toth



Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr.



This is the NALC Convention Chronicle distributed to delegates

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NALC Bulletin is published semi-regularly by the National Association of Letter Carriers, Postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Membership Department, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS? Contact the Membership Department.

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Circulation: 50,000. Union-printed using soy-based inks.

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