NALC remembers Family Circus’ Bil Keane
Artist’s generosity helped promote food drive throughout country

Bil Keane, the cartoonist whose donated “Family Circus” artwork helped promote the NALC’s national “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive for many years, died Nov. 8 at his home near Phoenix. He was 89.

“Keane’s drawings served as a sort of unofficial logo for each year’s drive,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “His characters were so familiar to our customers that, when you saw the image of Billy, Jeffy, Dolly or P.J. on a promotional poster, bag or T-shirt, it seemed as if a close, trusted friend was encouraging you to dig deep to help feed the hungry.”

Keane began drawing the single-panel “Family Circus” comic strip in 1960. Today, it appears in nearly 1,500 newspapers. Although he officially retired a few years ago and turned his pen over to his son, Jeff, he continued to provide ideas and jokes for the daily strip.

In a 1995 interview with The Associated Press, Keane suggested that his cartoon had such staying power because of its consistency and simplicity. “It’s reassuring, I think, to the American public to see the same family,” he said. “‘Family Circus’ brightened a lot of postal customers’ days,” said Drew Von Bergen, the NALC’s longtime national food drive coordinator who retired last year. “Its broad and consistent appeal made it a perfect fit with our national drive.”

“While we will miss Bil’s generosity, his legacy lives on in his art,” the union’s Community Services Coordinator Linda Giordano added. “We look forward to keeping ‘Family Circus’ a part of our annual drive for many years to come.”

Help Us Stamp Out Hunger
Letter Carriers Annual Food Drive
Saturday, May 10, 2008

If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you ten times: We should all help feed the hungry.

10th Annual Letter Carriers Food Drive
Saturday May 11, 2013