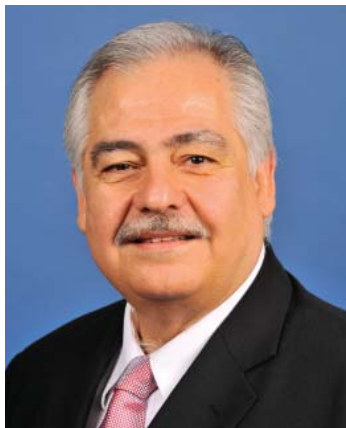


Thank you, President Sombrotto



**Manuel L.
Peralta Jr.**

Service that we be involved in electronic mail. He testified about the need to bring the USPS under OSHA, as the law at the time allowed an OSHA inspection only when

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the USPS invited the organization through the doors. He explained that we deserved Hatch Act reform, and he worked toward that end. He testified to protect your retirement systems and so many other things for us that you would be amazed.

I began my career in October 1979, joined the union and began receiving a magazine titled *The Postal Record*. Upon receiving the magazine, I would look through the pages to see what our union officers were reporting and how they proposed to handle various situations. Page after page would describe what we were doing and why. Vince kept us informed and moved us toward goals that he felt would better serve the membership of our union. Little did I know then how privileged we were to have Vince as our leader.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States, taking office the following January. The 1978 national agreement was set to expire on July 21, 1981, and

Vince wanted to make sure that the NALC was at the ready in an anti-union environment that began on Ronald Reagan’s arrival.

Vince explained that the postmaster general had drawn a line in the sand declaring that he would take away our uncapped cost-of-living allowances (COLAs). *The Postal Record* chronicles the fact that the postmaster general and his bargaining team initially refused to bargain with us and went so far as to be absent from the first scheduled bargaining session on April 22, 1981. It was only through the NALC’s legal efforts that management was forced to come to the bargaining table to meet with us.

At some point that year, Vince is reported to have said that in order to prevent a strike, we have to be ready for a strike. We had to make sure our membership was ready and willing to do whatever was necessary to make sure the needs of the membership were met.

I recall that my branch (1100) held a strike vote at the Retail Clerks hall in Buena Park, CA. There was a full house, and when National Business Agent Brian Farris concluded his presentation, more than 1,200 members in attendance voted unanimously to go out on strike. The media was outside the meeting hall waiting to report on the results. Many branches did the same throughout the country, and the media reported from coast to coast that we were ready if the employer was not willing to sit down and bargain in good faith.

We all got behind President Sombrotto, and he took us successfully through negotiations, forcing Postmaster General Bolger first to the bargaining table and then to a settlement of our contract. I smile thinking of the press conference at which the settlement was announced and recall Vince saying that “the only cap in this contract is this one,” and then placed a cap on the postmaster general’s head.

Vince successfully navigated us through treacherous waters six more times at the bargaining table through a negotiated settlement or an arbitrator’s decision over his 24 years as our president.

I last saw Vince in October 2011 during the rap session in Las Vegas just prior to the expiration of the 2006 National Agreement. Vince spoke with passion and love for our union and for you, the membership, making it clear that he could have achieved nothing without you behind him and that you need to always be behind your union.

Rest well, Vince. We love you always.