

Together we are strong



**Judy
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This being my first article, I'd like to start by thanking the membership for electing me and giving me the opportunity to serve as assistant secretary-treasurer for the next four years. The trust and confidence placed in me is humbling. Together we will continue the great work already begun, and I look forward to representing the membership as a whole.

I'd like to tell you a little about my NALC background. I began my career in 1980 as a letter carrier and soon became interested in becoming a steward after seeing the way management treated letter carriers and how supervisors routinely violated the contract. I was fortunate to

belong to a branch with experienced leaders who encouraged me to become active. Once West Coast Florida Branch 1477 officers saw me show an interest, they gave me an opportunity to become an alternate steward and provided the necessary training and mentoring.

Three years later, I transferred to my current branch (Tallahassee, FL Branch 1172) and quickly became involved. In 1984, I was elected branch trustee and steward. Following the trustee position, I held the office of branch vice president and president for many years, while continuing to deliver mail. I also held several state positions, serving as the District 5 executive board chairperson and later as director of education for the Florida State Association.

In the fall of 2000, President Vincent R. Sombrotto appointed me as a full-time regional administrative assistant. Then in April of 2004, I was appointed and later elected national business agent, giving me the honor and distinction of becoming the first female to hold that position. I continued to serve as Region 9's NBA until being installed as assistant secretary-treasurer this past December.

A few other union positions I held were arbitration advocate, district joint route inspection team leader, DPS coordinator, UMPs representative and EI facilitator. My entire career has had one constant objective: Serve the membership with the best representation possible.

Much of the credit for my success goes to the members for their past and present support. I want to continue with the NALC tradition of providing education, having open communication and encouraging involvement at all levels within the union. Each of these will help us to achieve great things.

One important factor that we must never forget: We need to pull together at every level of our union to effectively meet the challenges that we will face. However, coming together for the good of the membership takes work. First, we must support each other every day on the workroom floor, as well as at the local, state, regional and national levels while remaining aware of those external issues facing labor, the Postal Service and working men and women. If we are not united, the forces working against us will ultimately weaken us.

This past November our country held elections that resulted in a change of power in the U.S. Senate. Now, both the House and Senate are controlled by one party. The NALC is fortunate to have friends on both sides of the aisle in Congress who understand the importance of having a viable Postal Service. However, there are many who would love to see the Postal Service privatized and the union contracts voided. Therefore, we need to do our part when called upon by President Rolando and take the time to become e-Activists and contribute to COLCPE. If you are already on board, many thanks. If not, why not?

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Also, I want to congratulate those recently elected and re-elected branch officers and stewards; you will need the members' support to continue our work, making it better for those letter carriers who follow us. To all members, please support your officers and stay involved or get involved! Together we are strong; divided we fall.

On a personal note: I'd like to extend my best wishes to my NBA colleagues retiring from office, Neal Tisdale and Danny Pittman. Thank you for all your dedicated years of service. It has been a pleasure working with you on the Executive Council. You will be missed. In addition, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Sister Jane Broendel for your friendship, assistance and guidance throughout the years. As the first female NALC national officer, you led the way for other women to follow. Enjoy your retirement in good health and much happiness. You will be missed by many!

I look forward to serving the members and NALC as assistant secretary-treasurer and wish everyone a very happy and healthy New Year!