

A shared future, a shared vision



**Jim
Williams**

men and genius. I watched him “up close and personal” as Vince negotiated contracts and led our union. He was an amazing person.

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The one thing I learned from him that has stuck with me, though, is the need for leaders to have a vision. Vince was always looking 10 to 20 years down the road. He understood, when many didn't, that NALC's future was inextricably linked to our employer. He often reminded the Executive Council of that truth. His life was devoted to the membership and their future.

Vince also held our relationship to MDA dearly. He made sure we kept our promises to those families affected by muscular dystrophy.

Bruce Simon, NALC's legal counsel, once said that every president was the right person at the right time for the NALC. I couldn't agree more. We are fortunate that each president of the NALC served at the time that his skills were just right for the challenges they faced. Bill Young and Fred Rolando have continued that tradition.

If vision is a prerequisite for effective leadership, then each of us needs to evaluate our view of the future. That is

true in each branch, state association and at headquarters. That also is true as it relates to our relationship with the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

As I write this article, President Rolando and I are preparing to hold meetings with MDA representatives in Chicago to discuss the future of our involvement with MDA and what assistance we can expect. As always, we are mindful of the reason NALC began this crusade as the Muscular Dystrophy Association's first national sponsor. We are proud that we were there at the beginning, and we're even more so now. We are not quitters. The road has been long, but genetic diseases are incredibly expensive to fight and the science is difficult. No one said this was going to be easy—nothing worth doing ever is.

But the time is now to look ahead. What is the connection we can expect from MDA in the future? Many of the fundraisers we have sponsored have depended on help from the professionals MDA employs. The downturn in the economy has caused cutbacks for us all. NALC is not immune, but we go to meet with MDA representatives so that our branches can know what to expect in the future. I'll be reporting on our talks in future articles.

Every year, in one article I thank those who, in the midst of busy lives, work to raise money for MDA families. These branch members give of their time to develop and plan events in our branches several times a year, and are the ones who deserve praise for all they do.

These MDA coordinators are the folks who have a vision to come alongside families who are in need, and they try their best to get others to have the same vision. Is your branch involved in MDA? I hope so. If not, why not take the opportunity to name an MDA coordinator in your branch now?

Choose a person who has a heart for those in need. Once your branch chooses someone, give him or her support from the executive board and branch elected officials. You never know what you can accomplish until you try.