

Strike remembered in oral histories



Letter carriers who were involved in the Great Postal Strike, which began 45 years ago on March 18, 1970, are telling their stories for a new book about the walkout.

The book is being written by Philip Rubio, an associate professor of history at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro and author of *There's Always Work at the Post Office: African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality*.

He conducted interviews last year at the NALC National Convention in Philadelphia.

"I am collecting as many oral histories of 1970 postal strike veterans as I can," Rubio said. The book will examine the United States Postal Service from the 1970 strike and its immediate aftermath to the current financial crisis.

While he had interviewed many strike participants for his previous book, including NALC President Emeritus Vincent Sombrotto, he interviewed an additional 55 people in Philadelphia and hopes to speak to more as he works on the book.

The picture the interviews paint is one of a rich tapestry, with differing opinions and experiences.

"Carriers told me of strike debates and votes held in union halls, bars, swing rooms, or even on the workroom floor," he

New RAAs, Headquarters staff appointed

NALC President Fredric Rolando has announced his appointments of several letter carriers to regional administrative assistant (RAA) and other positions.

All of the new appointments are effective March 2.



Dixon

Rolando appointed **Debra Dixon** of Olympia, WA Branch 351 as an RAA for Region 2 (Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington). Dixon's current positions include vice president of her branch, Region 2 arbitration advocate and district dispute resolution team member, as well as director of education and executive council member for the Washington State Association of Letter Carriers. She previously served as branch president, secretary-treasurer and trustee, and is a graduate of the Leadership Academy.



Claxton

Region 10 RAA **Ken Claxton** of Austin, TX Branch 181 is retiring this month. Claxton became chief steward at his branch shortly after beginning his letter carrier career in 1985, and went on to serve as branch treasurer and arbitration advocate before

being named RAA in 2002. "We're grateful for Ken's service to NALC and we wish him the very best in his retirement," Rolando said.

Dallas Branch 132 member **Shawn Boyd** was named an RAA to replace Claxton in Region 10, which serves the letter carriers of Texas and New Mexico. Boyd has served as a chief steward, Formal Step A designee, branch trustee, branch newsletter editor and congressional district liaison. He was a state board member and treasurer for the Texas State Association of Letter Carriers and has worked as a local business agent and national headquarters advocate. He also graduated from the Leadership Academy. Most recently, Boyd served at Headquarters as an assistant to the president for contract administration.



Boyd

Louisville, KY Branch 14 Executive Vice President **David Mudd** was named an RAA for Kentucky-Indiana-Michigan Region 6. Mudd began his mail-carrying career in 2003 after 12 years in the Army and three



Mudd



Arbitration training

Letter carrier activists from around the country began the first of a series of training sessions on arbitration in February at the Maritime Center in Linthicum, MD, to sharpen their advocacy skills.

Arbitration advocates represent fellow carriers involved in unresolved grievances that reach the arbitration stage.

A total of 64 advocates from all 15 regions are scheduled for one of four training sessions to be held this spring. In a break from previous arbitration advocate education, the training has been divided into four sessions to accommodate more students while making classes smaller so that students can get more in-depth instruction and skill development.

NALC Vice President Lew Drass and Director of Education Jamie Lumm will lead the sessions, with Contract Administration Unit staff members Shawn Boyd, Greg Dixon and Mark Sims as facilitators.

The instruction will cover topics that include reviewing an arbitration file, interviewing and preparing witnesses and preparing and making opening and closing statements.

Two mock hearings will give students a platform for fine-tuning their skills as advocates for the letter carriers they represent in arbitration. With the help of the facilitators and mock arbitrators, the students will play the role of advocates. After receiving a critique of their performance, a second mock hearing will give them an immediate chance to try again and measure their progress. **PR**



NALC City Delivery Route Alternative Adjustment Process (CDRAAP) team members from throughout the nation were in Maryland for special training to help letter carriers in their branches get the best results from the process. During the day-and-a-half training sessions led by Director of City Delivery Brian Renfroe and several Headquarters Contract Administration Unit staff members, emphasis was placed on properly using Carrier Optimal Routing (COR) as a tool in route adjustments. A total of 370 activists attended one of the two training sessions at the Maritime Center in Linthicum, MD, held Jan. 20-23. Renfroe has written about the training and using the PS Form 1840 Reverse in his column beginning on page 29.

said. "Some of these debates and votes started in the weeks preceding the strike, while others happened spontaneously.

"Once the strike started, some local union officers would have to 'disappear' to avoid being served with court injunctions. Real rank-and-file leadership was being exercised by those who often had little or no experience in daily union affairs, and whose only communication was telephone, word of mouth, or news reports."

While much of the attention was on the New York City strikers, carriers throughout the country were engaged in the movement.

"Participants frequently told how they felt they owed it to New York strikers to not leave them stranded," Rubio said.

One interesting interview came from someone who wasn't even a carrier during the strike, but instead was one of the troops President Richard Nixon called up to try to move the mail in New York during the strike.

"After he retired from the military, he went to work as a letter carrier and became an NALC member," Rubio said.

After the book is completed, Rubio intends to house the oral histories at the Duke University archives in Durham, NC, where the interviews he conducted for his previous book are housed. Anyone with a historical interest will be able to access them.

For those who wish to get in touch with Rubio about his work or to share a story with him, please e-mail *The Postal Record* at postalrecord@nalc.org or call 202-662-2480. **PR**

years as a postal clerk. He has served as a route adjustment district lead, arbitration advocate and dispute resolution team member, and in 2008 was named steward of the year for Region 6. Mudd also is a Leadership Academy graduate.



Collins

John Collins will serve as an RAA for Region 11, which serves the letter carriers of Ohio and upstate New York. Collins was president of Zanesville, OH Branch 63 for nearly 25 years. He has served as a member of the Ohio State Association Executive Board and a primary dispute resolution team member for Region 11. He will move from his current position at Headquarters as assistant to the president for contract administration.



McKay

President Rolando named **Tim McKay**, president of Charleston, WV Branch 531, as Headquarters city delivery assistant. Aside from the branch presidency, McKay has served his branch as a steward, trustee and newsletter editor. McKay is vice president of the West Virginia State Association of Letter Carriers and previously served as its director of education. He also is an arbitration

advocate and local business agent, and served as district lead for route adjustments. **PR**