

# The right leader for the right time



Director of Education  
Jamie Lumm

**T**he candidates for the 2016 Leadership Academy have finally been announced (see page 25.)

Class 21 will begin on July 24, and when it does, it will also begin a new chapter in its history. As was noted in the January 2016 *Postal Record*, the founder and driving force behind the Leadership Academy, former NALC Executive Vice President Jim Williams, stepped down last December after shepherding nearly

600 students through the 20 Leadership Academy classes that have graduated since it was established in 2005. Although he retired from the NALC in 2006, Jim continued to serve as the “headmaster” of the Academy, traveling back to DC from his home in Washington state at least six times each year not only to teach, but to advise, counsel and mentor the students in each class.

I have considered Jim a close, personal friend since we first met more than 30 years ago when I was the director of education for the Washington State Association of Letter Carriers and he was the sole regional administrative assistant for Region 2. I have had the pleasure of working with and for Jim on many different projects and assignments

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over the years, including arbitration advocacy; Employee Involvement; national, state and regional trainings; the intervention and the dispute resolution processes, just to name a few. But the most rewarding of all has been to work alongside of Jim during the last 14 Leadership Academy classes since 2009, when I was appointed to my current position. Jim’s passion for the NALC and his attention and care for each of the students has been as inspiring for me as I’m sure it has been to the students.

**And what a legacy. In addition to the hundreds who** have gone on to serve as leaders in their branches and state associations, currently 16 regional administrative assistants, six NALC Headquarters staff members, four regional workers’ compensation assistants, two national business agents and one resident national officer are graduates of the NALC Leadership Academy. All of this in just 10 years—a truly remarkable accomplishment.

If asked, Jim would tell you that it was not he, but the commitment of the national officers and the dedication and hard work of the students, that is responsible for the success of the Academy. While there is a lot of truth to that,

it would not have happened if Jim had not had the vision and resolve to see it through. And while Jim’s presence will be missed, especially by his fellow instructors, he has made sure that the Academy will continue to generate future leaders at all levels of this great union.

Something Jim emphasized to each Leadership class was that “one of the most important jobs of a union leader is to prepare his or her successor.” And he practiced what he preached, as an RAA, as an NBA, and as executive vice president. In preparation for his departure from the Academy, Jim made sure that the next 20 Leadership Academy classes would receive the same high level of instruction and attention that the first 20 classes did.

Since 2014, Jim has been mentoring RAAs Troy Clark (Region 6) and Lynne Pendleton (Region 9) and Headquarters staff member Geneva Kubal to step in to fill some of the void that his departure would leave. Additionally, former NALC Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Jim Korolowicz, who has been a core Academy instructor from the beginning (and who had also planned to step down at the end of 2015) has agreed to stay on as “headmaster” during the transition to the new chapter of the Academy.

The future is bright for the Academy and those fortunate to attend. I’m looking forward to working with Troy, Lynne and Geneva and am glad that Jim Korolowicz will be around a while longer. It will be different without Jim Williams, but that’s OK.

**I’m reminded of something that Bruce Simon, general** counsel to the NALC, said when he was discussing the history of collective bargaining with Leadership Class 14: “The NALC has always had the right leader for the right time.” Jim Williams was certainly the right leader for the first 11 years of the Leadership Academy and because of that, I have no doubt the future of the Academy and the future of the NALC are in the right hands.



Former NALC Executive Vice President Jim Williams (above, ) led the Leadership Academy from its inception in 2005 until December 2015.