

New leaders part of union- building effort

NALC Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe, an NALC Leadership Academy graduate himself, presided over the graduation ceremony of the 30 members of Class 21. The ceremony was held at the Maritime Center in Linthicum Heights, MD, a few miles south of Baltimore, on Dec. 9.

"I have a unique perspective on the Leadership Academy in that I was a student, had the opportunity to take advantage of the skills I learned in my branch, and several opportunities since then," he said.

"You remember in Week 1, a discussion about something called union building?" Renfroe asked the graduates. "It's a term that covers all sorts of activities and roles within this union. That's really what this Academy is about: union building.

"That union building takes place at the station level, the branch level, the state level and headquarters level, through every aspect of what we do as representatives of letter carriers."

Renfroe told them what he thought was the most important lesson they should take from their time at the Academy.

"So what makes you successful? What I think makes you successful is when you leave here, you approach everything you do with humility and for one single reason: to help the members. That's all that matters.

"It doesn't matter what job you have. It doesn't matter how much you get paid. It doesn't matter what type of recognition you receive. What's really

important, and a true test of your character and dedication is what you do when no one is looking and when you work hard and you don't care who gets the credit."

The commencement event capped several months of intensive training on the skills necessary for union members to become effective leaders. Under the tutelage of their mentors—established NALC leaders such as branch presidents or national business agents—the students combined three separate weeks of classroom learning at the Maritime Center with take-home assignments and special projects.

The 30 participants now add their names to an ever-lengthening list of graduates of the Academy. Former NALC Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Jim Korolowicz coordinated a well-rounded and effective curriculum with the full-time assistance of Director of Education Jamie Lumm, Director of the Information Center Nancy Dysart, Region 6 Regional Administrative Assistant Troy Clark, Region 9 RAA Lynne Pendleton and Assistant to the President Geneva Kubal. For each class, they tap a number of NALC officers and Headquarters staff members and experts to teach classes on a wide variety of topics.

During their classes, students took part in often-lively discussions on such subjects as the National Agreement and the union's legislative agenda to save America's Postal Service. They also learned more about the Dispute Resolution Process, strategic planning, branch

Class 21 of the NALC Leadership Academy

financial responsibilities, retirement issues, DOIS and route protection, workers' compensation, effective negotiation techniques, getting the NALC's message out and dealing with the media.

Each week of the Academy also included an ongoing emphasis on effective written and oral communication skills in such forums as membership meetings, awards ceremonies and dinners, as well as written reports and oral presentations about their take-home projects.

The next class is planned to kick off this summer. Look for the attendees to be announced in a future *Postal Record*. **PR**

Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe presented a graduating certificate to David Picconi of Lakewood, NJ Branch 1089.

