

# Leadership Academy graduates urged to use training to help fellow NALC members

**NALC Executive Vice President** Brian Renfroe presided over the graduation ceremony of the 29 members of NALC Leadership Academy Class 22. The ceremony was held at the Maritime Center in Linthicum Heights, MD, a few miles south of

Baltimore, on Dec. 8.

Renfroe, a Leadership Academy graduate himself, told the gathering that as they completed the class, they could best understand the aim of the academy. “This class gives you the opportunity to shorten the learning

curve, to learn things that people take 20 years to learn through their own experience,” he said. “This class is not about us as individuals; it’s about an investment in the future of our union—in our members—and arming you with those skills. You probably didn’t understand that the first day, but I think you all do now.”

He explained that with the opportunity that they were granted, there’s an obligation as well. “You’ve been given the tools to become someone who can do good things for our members, because all it’s ever been about is our members,” he said. “The same things that make you successful in this class will make you successful from here on out. Those traits are working hard; humility; and understanding it’s never about you or about position, it’s about what you can do to help your members—no matter what role that is, no matter how large or how small it is.”

He encouraged the graduates to use those skills in the roles they find. “Take advantage of whatever opportunity you’re given to help our members,” he said. “If that’s being a shop steward, being a food drive coordina-



NALC Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe congratulates the graduates of the 22nd Leadership Academy while encouraging them to pass on what they’ve learned.

## NALC Leadership Academy Class 22 graduates

**Stacey Adams**  
Camden, NJ Mgd. Br. 540

**Jason Atchley**  
Decatur, AL Br. 1314

**Keith Beltz**  
Shawnee, OK Br. 883

**James Bensinger**  
St. Charles, MO Br. 984

**Amber D. Blank**  
Wilmington, NC Br. 464

**Richard Byrne**  
Greeley, CO Br. 324

**James Beau Cadien**  
Columbus, GA Br. 546

**Tracy Cozad**  
Longview, WA Br. 2214

**Daniel Estep**  
Toledo, OH Br. 100

**Karen Evans**  
Stamford, CT Br. 60

**Laura Friedman**  
Moline, IL Br. 318

**Tammy Gatlin**  
Kent, WA Br. 2038

**Laura C. Hennessey**  
Rockville, MD Br. 3825

**Bradley Jasper**  
Yonkers, NY Br. 387

**Bradley Johnson**  
Salina, KS Br. 486

**Paula Johnson**  
Lynchburg, VA Br. 325

**Matthew Leger**  
Fall River, MA Br. 51

**Allen J. Meier**  
St. Paul, MN Br. 28

**Michael Morrissey**  
Northeastern NY Br. 358

**Anna Mudd**  
Louisville, IN Br. 14

**Joshua Peterson**  
South Central IN Br. 828

**Philip Riggi**  
Providence, RI Br. 15

**Patrick Rothwell**  
Pittsburgh Br. 84

**Christopher Schroeder**  
Kenosha, WI Br. 574

**Stephen Stewart**  
Chicago Br. 11

**Ryan Stockton**  
Sacramento, CA Br. 133

**Tamara Twinn**  
Albuquerque, NM Br. 504

**Johnny Watson**  
Mobile, AL Br. 469

**Dietra Young**  
Houston Br. 283





**Above: Class 22 of the NALC Leadership Academy**

tor, being someone involved with the Letter Carrier Political Fund—whatever role you take on, remember: It's always about the people you represent.”

Finally, he called on them to pass on the learning they've received to others back in their local branches, state associations and regions. “Our investment goes way beyond the several hundred people who have been in these classes,” he said. “Every one of those people has gone home and mentored others. That's the real reach of this training program. And you're an important piece of that.”

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—the students combined three separate weeks of classroom learning at the Maritime Center with take-home assignments and special projects. After the commencement, they were all assigned to work at their national business agents' offices for a week to learn in a different environment.

The 29 participants (listed at left) now add their names to an ever-lengthening list of graduates of the Academy. Several NALC officers and staff coordinated a well-rounded and effective curriculum. They are 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, a number of NALC officers and Headquarters staff members and experts are tapped 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 financial responsibilities, retirement issues, DOIS and route protection, workers' compensation, effective negotiation techniques, getting NALC's message out and dealing with the news media.

**Below: Tamara Twinn of Albuquerque, NM Branch 504 receives her certificate of completion.**





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 in July. NALC is now accepting

applications for the 2018 Leadership Academy. The application is at [nalc.org/leadership](http://nalc.org/leadership). Look for the attendees to be announced in a future *Postal Record*. **PR**

## Training opportunities available for members

**B**ranches around the country are investing in their futures by sending branch members to various trainings for NALC activists. In addition to the various trainings available at the local, state and regional levels, NALC Headquarters continues to develop courses to provide resources necessary for our activists who have stepped up to represent their brothers and sisters.

Since it was launched in 2016, the **Advanced Formal A and Beyond** course has trained close to 500 NALC members, taking participants from the point of receiving an Informal Step A grievance appeal through all aspects of processing a grievance at Formal Step A to the point of writing a Step B decision. It has taught them to look at every Formal Step A case file from an arbitration advocate's point of view. This training also sharpens the skills needed for enforcing the National Agreement at Formal Step A and provides an experience of what it's like to serve as a Step B representative.

The weeklong training courses are conducted at the Maritime Institute just outside Baltimore, with expenses associated with attending the training paid by the branches that decide to send participants.

For more on the course, see Vice President Lew Drass's column on page 34.

Additionally, NALC holds several sessions of the **Branch Officers Training** every year. Branch Officers Training sessions consist of three and a half days of educational seminars tailored to assist branch presidents, vice

presidents, treasurers, recording secretaries, financial secretaries and trustees in the performance of their duties.

It covers the basics for financial officers: taxes, accounting systems and maintenance of proper controls, reporting to the Department of Labor, fiduciary duties under the Landrum-Griffin Act, bonding of branch officers and IRS reporting requirements. Additional training topics include the *NALC Constitution* and branch bylaws, branch operations and identifying of branch policies, running a branch meeting, maintaining accurate and complete meeting minutes, member notification requirements, record keeping, branch elections and branch dues as well as how to read a dues roster.

Last May, NALC conducted the first weeklong **New Member Training** at the Maritime Institute. Thirty participants from 30 branches attended. All participants were either former or current city carrier assistants (CCAs) who had demonstrated a commitment to working for letter carriers and who are involved in branch activities.

The goal of the training was to educate these newer members on NALC and labor history and on the structure of NALC. Each participant learned about the roles and responsibilities of the various officers and departments at



President Rolando answers questions during a recent session of the Advanced Formal A and Beyond course.

Headquarters. They also learned about the representational, legislative and fiduciary duties of branches and state associations.

The class was given information on a variety of issues, including the grievance-arbitration procedure, NALC's legislative and political efforts, injury compensation representation, retirement, city delivery, the Contract Administration Unit, the *NALC Constitution* and bylaws, fiduciary responsibilities and postal finances.

Attendees received the opportunity to practice a number of skills, including writing, public speaking and communications, teaching techniques and active listening.

"We plan to continue to conduct these trainings and others as long as it serves to educate and develop activists," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "I want to commend the branches that have invested in their futures by making it possible for letter carriers to get the training that will serve their fellow branch members." **PR**