

# TAKING HIS SHOOT

PHOTOS BY  
*D Adams Jr*

A photo of New York City by letter carrier Douglas Adams Jr.

“I love the post office. I love being a letter carrier,” Douglas Adams Jr. said, before adding, “My passion is photography.”

The New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member has done both for decades.

He first picked up a camera as a child, and would take photos with his father. Wanting to take things further with photography, he said, “I used to chase ambulances. I had a police scanner and would show up on the scene. That’s how I got started.”

He expanded that work in 2005, when he started his own business working with his cousin, taking photos of a variety of events, including weddings, birthday parties and corporate events. He also became a freelance photographer in 2008 for two local newspapers

in New Jersey, mostly for sporting events. That work led to his biggest shot.

The carrier had been shooting a women’s professional soccer team, Sky Blue FC, in New Jersey in 2009. When they won the Women’s Professional Soccer championship, they were invited to the White House by President Barack Obama. Adams decided to send in his information and was able to get press credentials, and so he went to the 2010 event.

“After that, I called the White House press office and asked them to put me on the press list,” Adams said. “They did.”

So, every time there was an open press event, he got an email with details of the occasion and sometimes even Obama’s prepared speech. If he could make it, he would send his information, get confirmation for his credentials, and go.

The carrier would normally wake up at 1 a.m., catch a Megabus from New York at 3 a.m., go to the event in Washington, DC, for the day and then come back that evening and go to work at the post office the next day.

“It was very nerve-wracking in the very beginning,” Adams said of the experience, adding that many of the press pool members knew each other well. “Over time, a lot of the people who worked there got used to me. I’m just thankful and grateful to have the opportunity.”

The carrier ended up going to the White House 77 times in seven years to photograph events.

“I’ve shaken the president’s hand,” Adams said, adding that Obama would greet him with a “What’s up, man?”

He counts state dinners among his favorite White House events to photograph.

While at the state events, Adams used the crowd to his advantage to get “into the Oval Office with world leaders three times,” the carrier says.

Adams, an Air Force veteran, also

Douglas Adams Jr.



Adams attended 77 events at the White House during seven years of the Obama administration.

loved attending Medal of Honor ceremonies. “I tried to make as many of them as possible, as a veteran myself,” he said. The carrier served in the military for 18 months, during which time he was stationed in Spain.

The letter carrier hopes to compile a book with the many photographs he took of the Obamas over the years, including at other major events such as the second inauguration and the White House Easter Egg Roll. So far, he’s collected his photos into an online gallery called “44x8x10,” at [douglasadamsjr.com](http://douglasadamsjr.com).

The carrier said he’s now switched up the focus of his photography. “I’ve really slowed down on events,” he said. “I used to do a lot of weddings. It was time-consuming and I got burned out. Now I just do my own thing.”

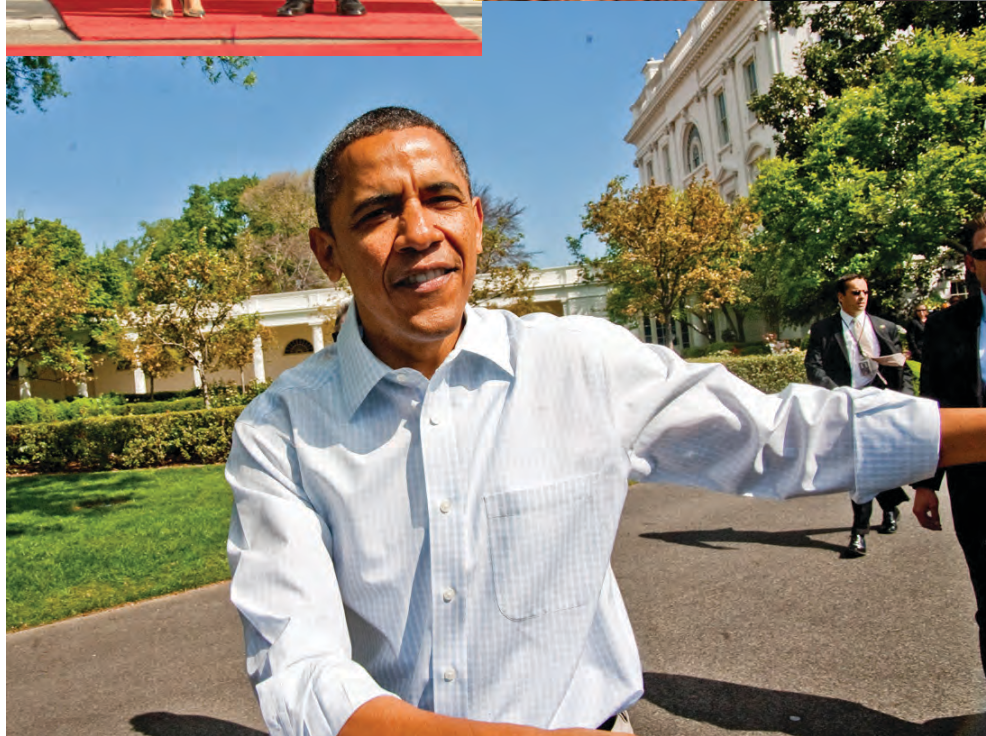
He also wants to do a book on the changing face of letter carriers. When he became a letter carrier 37 years ago, there were very few women letter carriers in Newark, he says.

Now, their presence in the ranks has dramatically increased, Adams says.

That change intrigued him and he gives a form to some of his female co-workers to gather permission to both interview them and allow him to take their photos both on the job and off.

Another long-term project he’s undertaken with his cousin involves photographing New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. He had a special interest in documenting the city and the changes it’s undergone.

“My baby sister lives there,” he says. “We’ve been going back every year since 2006.” His work on the series—including meeting Brad Pitt in the Lower Ninth Ward, a





neighborhood that was severely damaged during the storm—has appeared in galleries in New Jersey, North Carolina and Georgia, as well as in an insert by ESPN in a 2015 edition of New Orleans' *The Times-Picayune*. Adams also created a video in 2010 about the ongoing project.

Structuring his collection also is paramount. "I have so many images on hard drives that I've never even edited," he says. "I'm going to start organizing my images."

The carrier is not inspired by any single photographer in his work. "For me personally, I want to make my own mark," he said. "Some try to copy styles. I want to leave a legacy myself."

"Good photography to me doesn't mean it needs to be perfect," Adams continued. "I like to catch what I catch when I catch it. I just like to capture that moment in time." **PR**

Adams has taken all kinds of photos, from military memorials (top) to vow renewals (above). When he's not working at USPS (below), he can be found out getting his shot (right).



Adams takes photos at his branch events whenever he can, at baseball games during the Anaheim and Philadelphia NALC national conventions, and at his postmaster's installation at a federal courthouse. He has also gotten hired by a lot of co-workers for their private events over the years.

So where does Adams hope to go from here? As he looks toward retirement from the Postal Service in a few years, the carrier still has a few benchmarks in mind to meet.

"I want to be in museums. That's my goal," he said.

His work has appeared in galleries in a few states over the years, and he'd love to expand that.

