

FREDRIC V. ROLANDO

18TH NALC PRESIDENT
JULY 2009–DECEMBER 2022



A LEGACY OF FOCUS, RESOLVE—AND ACHIEVEMENT— DURING AN ERA OF UNCERTAINTY AND CASCADING CHALLENGES

During the last 14 years, the United States Postal Service has lurched from one historic challenge to the next: the Great Recession, the pre-funding crisis, the decline in letter mail volume, a push by postal management and then Congress to eliminate Saturday delivery, a U.S. president tweeting out postal disinformation, the same president's stealthy attempt to privatize USPS, the most mail-intensive election the country has seen, and the perils inherent in delivering during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not only was each of these difficult to deal with; they often interacted in ways that created truly monumental challenges for the postal service and its letter carriers.

Through it all, the National Association of Letter Carriers' 18th president has steadfastly guided his fellow letter carriers to protect their jobs, pay and benefits, and to carry out their increasingly essential work. He also mobilized them to help preserve the Postal Service itself.

At national and state conventions, rap sessions, state trainings, branch meetings and everywhere in between, President Fredric Rolando has reminded members that the strength of NALC derives from representing letter carriers from every part of the country and across the political spectrum. Rolando's calm and steady approach to leadership—listening with an open mind to all perspectives, positions and suggestions; examining a variety of

options and taking into account factors from key details to the big picture; striking a balance between seeking consensus and exercising decisiveness; deploying a unique sense of humor to relax members and officers so they can focus on the mission at hand or to disarm others ranging from negotiating partners to journalists—has allowed NALC to not only weather this era of uncertainty, but to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

This month, as Rolando prepares to perform his last official duty on Dec. 17, swearing in his successor, Brian Renfroe, and the rest of the newly elected Executive Council and AFL-CIO delegates, *The Postal Record* takes a look back at the man and at some of his major accomplishments in the face of such daunting obstacles.

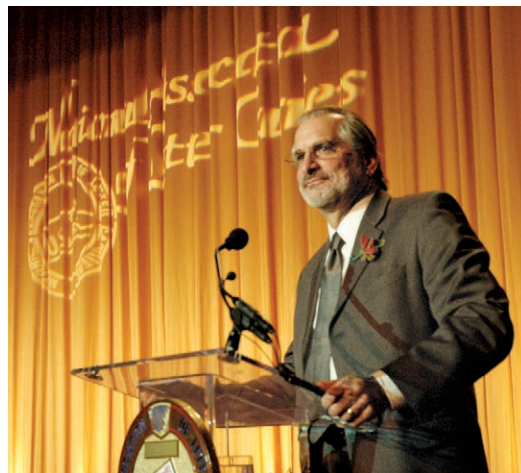
43 YEARS OF UNION SERVICE

After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in criminology and psychology—studies that Rolando has joked came in handy during his time with the Postal Service—Rolando became a letter carrier and a member of South Florida Branch 1071 in 1978. It didn't take him long to stand up for others.

"I got active in the union because of the antagonistic way management treated letter carriers," Rolando explained. He served as a shop steward for the branch from 1979 until 1984. In 1984 he moved to Sarasota and soon became Branch 2148's chief steward. He was elected president in 1988 and served in that role for 11 years.

Opposite page: President Rolando leads members in a "U.S. Mail is not for sale" rally on Oct. 8, 2018.

Below: Rolando thanks members for electing him president during his installation in December 2010.



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President William H. Young swears Rolando in as president on July 2, 2009.

From 1992 to 1999, Rolando also served as a part-time regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region 9, and he was director of education for the Florida State Association of Letter Carriers from 1993 to 1999.

In 1999, NALC President Vincent Sombrotto appointed him as a full-time RAA for the region, and in February 2002 as director of city delivery, a national officer position. He was elected by acclamation to the same post at the 63rd Biennial Convention in Philadelphia later that year.

As director of city delivery, Rolando had an opportunity “to become familiar with many of the specific issues that affect letter carriers, both common and unique to different areas of the country,” he said. He took a leading role in preparing the union for “future city delivery issues, which will likely include transitions necessitated by changes in the Postal Service itself,” he said upon his appointment.

At the 65th Biennial Convention in Las Vegas in 2006, Rolando was elected executive vice president by acclamation, serving alongside President William Young. Rolando used his time as executive vice president to continue working with USPS to jointly evaluate and adjust delivery routes in a manner that protected contractual rights while adapting to the changing mail environment.

When Young retired on July 2, 2009, Rolando became the president of the union and mailed a letter to all members, saying, “As I begin my tenure as your president, I want every member to understand that our great union will have to be better than ever to meet the challenges we face. I therefore ask for your support and your commitment to do what you have always done: join together and stay together to defend our rights while serving the country we love.”

That unity of purpose would prove to be NALC’s underlying strength, al-

lowing it to accomplish all that it did under Rolando’s stewardship.

UNWAVERING FOCUS ON MEANINGFUL POSTAL REFORM

Rolando assumed the presidency at a pivotal juncture for the Postal Service—the economic fallout of the Great Recession was worsening even as the mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits contained in the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) required USPS to shell out annual payments ranging from \$5.4 billion to \$5.8 billion. This was an unfair and unaffordable burden borne by no other entity, public or private.

Over the course of the next 13 years, under Rolando’s leadership, NALC defended the Postal Service from attack after attack while advancing solutions that would allow the Postal Service to position itself to continue to serve the nation well into the future.

Though the pre-funding obligation accounted for the bulk of postal red ink, many observers and much of the media attributed USPS losses to the internet and the diversion of mail—a misunderstanding or, in many instances, an intentional ploy that created a false narrative. As a result, many in the public, the press or political office viewed the Postal Service as the victim of technological progress, about which little could be done, rather than of flawed public policy, which could be addressed. In fact, the Postal Service realized operating profits for many years, made possible in part by the dedication of letter carriers across the country.

The artificial financial crisis opened the Postal Service and its employees to relentless attacks from members of Congress and other politicians, and from think tanks and groups looking to privatize whatever they could; as well as to efforts by USPS management to cut back services to the public. In response, Rolando



Rolando explains why cutting Saturday delivery is the wrong way to save the Postal Service during a rally in 2014.

mobilized tens of thousands of NALC activists, encouraged members to change the national conversation by getting the facts out, and solidified our common bonds with sister postal unions.

The central battle line was drawn during Rolando's first week in office, when then-Postmaster General Jack Potter proposed to slash Saturday delivery as a way to find savings. Rolando rallied NALC activists to get the message out that reduced service would diminish the value of mail, that eliminating Saturday delivery would reduce mail volume and hence revenue, and that additional cuts would likely follow, sending USPS into a death spiral.

Potter's successor, Patrick Donahoe, took the challenge to Saturday delivery to a new level in 2013, by declaring that USPS would unilaterally eliminate Saturday delivery. NALC quickly engaged its legislative operation, contacting key members of Congress, asking them to quickly thwart the PMG and to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigate Donahoe's legal authority to take such action. Donahoe should have known that he stood little chance of receiving authorization from Congress, given that for several years, Rolando had made it a priority that NALC activists work to educate lawmakers about the need to retain Saturday delivery. Long before Donahoe's announcement, NALC activists had helped bring a bipartisan House majority to co-sponsor a resolution calling on USPS to maintain Saturday delivery.

The skirmishes continued in the House, with Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and others taking every opportunity to try to eliminate Saturday delivery or door-to-door delivery, and in the Senate, which passed a bill in 2014 that included eliminating Saturday delivery.

Rendering the challenge Rolando and NALC faced all the more dire was the fact that the Obama administration also favored eliminating Saturday delivery.

Even while playing defense, Rolando led NALC in effort after effort on bills that would alleviate the manufactured financial crisis and give USPS the ability to serve the needs of the American people. NALC's president played the long game, keeping the fires for consensus legislation going for years, until the timing was right.

After fighting off an effort by PMG Donahoe to unilaterally end USPS participation in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, NALC wisely left open the door to a joint health care task force. Ultimately, this led the bargaining parties to develop a consensus approach to Medicare integration that was eventually adopted in H.R. 3076, the postal reform bill that became law earlier this year.

NALC faced a new challenge with the 2016 election of Donald Trump as president. During his tenure, Trump turned increasingly hostile to the Postal Service. In 2018, his administration called for the privatization of USPS. A postal task force established by the administration proposed repealing the collective-bargaining rights of postal workers—eliminating NALC's right to directly negotiate pay and

Called upon to give testimony, President Rolando urges senators to work on consensus postal reform in 2010.



FREDRIC V. ROLANDO

18TH NALC PRESIDENT

JULY 2009–DECEMBER 2022



benefits that had been won in 1970 and thereby exposing letter carriers to the political whims of Congress with the return of “collective begging.” The task force further called for gutting the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), contracting out postal worker jobs and enacting massive service cuts, while sharply raising postage rates for packages.

And, yet again, Rolando led NALC activists to step up when called upon and convinced a bipartisan majority in the House to co-sponsor a resolution opposing privatization. By the time the task force released its report, the proposals were dead on arrival in Congress. The work of these activists halted the administration in its tracks and forced it to abandon its postal plans.

Despite noisy calls by others to oppose newly appointed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy at every turn, Rolando wisely started extensive conversations with DeJoy in 2020 centered around the need to jointly rally behind an agenda that included six-day delivery, repeal of the pre-funding mandate, and prospective maximization of Medicare. Those conversations paid off in the current Congress, with the bipartisan leadership of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY), agreeing to work with their counterparts on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH), to fashion a narrow, consensus postal reform bill, the Postal Reform Act (H.R. 3076).

While not a solution for all of the Postal Service’s challenges, the Postal Reform Act allows USPS to step out of the shadow created by the artificial financial crisis stemming from the PAEA’s pre-funding mandate. It’s an accomplishment that President Rolando called on NALC activists to take pride in.

“We have worked long and hard on postal reform,” he said. “We have sought to foster a broad coalition of stakeholders as well as office holders, Democrats and Republicans alike, to strengthen the Postal Service and its employees, and to serve the common good. There is more that we can and will accomplish, but passage of this legislation is real and important progress.”

PROTECTING LETTER CARRIERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

When you are president of a labor union, you need to be ready for the unexpected, and few could have foreseen the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization declared the global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and nearly all Americans found themselves staying away from offices, businesses and schools to avoid the virus.

Though always critical to the functioning of the country’s social and economic life, the Postal Service became a lifeline overnight. Letter carriers ensured that the nation still received prescription drugs, public health information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and essential household goods that residents ordered online rather than frequenting stores. In essence, letter carriers performed their new role so tens of millions of Americans could shelter safely at home and help prevent the spread of the virus.

Later, as Congress passed coronavirus stimulus packages, letter carriers delivered relief checks to households in great need. The U.S. Census Bureau conducted the 10-year census, which included hundreds of millions of mailings to and from American households. In the 2020 primary and general elections, the Postal Service was integral to the smooth delivery of tens of millions of mailed ballots as many states adopted emergency measures to make voting by



Rolando thanks President Biden for signing the Postal Reform Act into law earlier this year. The signing ceremony capped 12 years of struggling for meaningful postal reform legislation.



A letter carrier shows off a thank-you note from a patron on the cover of *The Postal Record* in 2020.

mail more accessible, partly to prevent long lines at the polls that posed a dangerous public health risk. And the Biden administration partnered with USPS to mail hundreds of millions of free, at-home rapid COVID-19 tests to make testing more accessible.

For letter carriers, the crisis was particularly challenging—both personally and professionally. As front-line “essential” workers who had to remain on the job to deliver vital mail and packages to keep our country going, letter carriers were asked to risk their health and even their lives—and the well-being of their loved ones—to do this essential work, all while struggling with the same inconveniences and anxieties that everyone else was facing.

Through his calm and steady demeanor, his inspiring words about the importance of what carriers were doing, and his behind-the-scenes work with postal officials to improve safety measures, Rolando helped keep members’ spirits up during the trying times.

“Letter carriers have a long history of serving the United States in times of crisis,” he said. “Our service in difficult times transcends the delivery of mail. By delivering our routes, we bring a sense of normalcy and stability to anxious customers. And by showing up to do our jobs in the face of uncertainty and danger, our members were truly heroic, overcoming fear to serve our country. I have never been prouder to represent letter carriers.”

In the face of this unprecedented public health crisis, which already had tragically killed 13 active city letter carriers by the end of April 2020, the attention of President Rolando and the other NALC leaders necessarily focused on responding to the health and safety threat to the men and women they represent.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Rolando had two overriding and immediate goals: First, NALC was

dedicated to protecting the health and safety of letter carriers—and therefore the health and safety of their families and patrons. Second, NALC fought to ensure that the Postal Service had the resources to continue operations.

Rolando and other NALC leaders had to navigate ever-changing public health guidelines, mask mandates and social-distancing policies. Staffing shortages due to the absence of colleagues who had contracted the virus, or who needed to stay home to care for family members or to take care of children whose schools and child care centers had closed, exacerbated this stress. By January 2022, thousands of letter carriers had contracted COVID-19 and thousands more were forced to quarantine.

Over several months in the spring and summer of 2020, Rolando spoke dozens of times with Postmaster General Megan Brennan, her successor Louis DeJoy, and the Postal Service’s top executives, to find ways to reduce the threat of infection among active letter carriers. NALC worked to set up a system to acquire and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to every postal employee—including masks, gloves, sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer—sharing daily information on workplaces facing shortages and identifying COVID-19 hot spots. Under Rolando’s leadership, NALC worked with USPS leaders to get information from the CDC to postal workers.

Rolando and other national officers negotiated a number of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and protocols aimed at: promoting safe working practices by requiring face masks; initiating programs to test and quarantine those

President Rolando unveils a special display at NALC Headquarters to honor letter carriers who died while on duty.



FREDRIC V. ROLANDO

18TH NALC PRESIDENT

JULY 2009–DECEMBER 2022



President Rolando delivers a fiery opening statement to Postmaster General Donahoe during the 2011 round of negotiations.

exposed to the virus; providing sick leave for city carrier assistants (CCAs) with COVID-19-related issues; implementing new liberal leave and leave without pay (LWOP) policies to allow letter carriers to handle gaps in child care coverage caused by school closings and other COVID-19-related family issues; staggering work starting times of letter carriers; reconfiguring carrier workplaces (where possible) to maximize social distancing; and ensuring the delivery of mandatory stand-up talks on COVID-19 policies. NALC and the other postal unions also negotiated with postal management to help deal with operational bottlenecks and service failures resulting from staff shortages caused by COVID-19.

All through the summer of 2020, Rolando and the other national officers worked with the national business agents and branch leaders to identify service problems caused by the growing staff shortage due to the pandemic, as well as pre-existing managerial failures that contributed to improper staffing. This work continued when Postmaster General DeJoy took office in June 2020, as NALC and USPS renewed and improved the COVID-19-related MOUs.

Speaking about the pandemic overall, Rolando said, “Looking back on this period, we can take legitimate pride in how we used our collective-bargaining role to keep letter carriers as safe as possible during perhaps the scariest and most dangerous period in the history of the Postal Service. I have no doubt that our efforts saved lives.”

BARGAINING HIGHLIGHTS

A chief task for any NALC president is negotiating national agreements to advance the protections, pay and benefits for every letter carrier in the craft. While the 2011 round of bargaining had to be resolved in interest arbitration that concluded with an award by arbitrator Shyam Das, Rolando and the NALC bargaining

team were able to successfully negotiate voluntary deals in both the 2016-2019 and the 2019-2023 National Agreements.

The 2016 agreement saw two wage increases and a pay upgrade/pay scale consolidation for all letter carriers. Career carriers received wage increases of 1.2 percent and 1.3 percent for the first two years. In the third year of the agreement, all Grade 1 letter carriers were upgraded to Grade 2 (an average increase of 2.1 percent) and all carrier technicians also received a 2.1 percent wage increase. The cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) clause was maintained for career carriers, giving them seven COLAs over the span of this contract.

CCAs have never received COLAs, so they got an additional 1 percent increase on the effective dates of the three general increases, for a total of 2.2 percent, 2.3 percent and 1 percent plus the upgrade in November 2018. Additionally, the CCA pay scale included two step increases.

In a move to help former transitional employees (TEs), under Rolando’s leadership, NALC negotiated that qualifying former TEs would receive pay step credit as career employees or when they became career employees. CCAs also received holiday leave pay for six holidays per year and the local parties were required to include provisions in their local memorandums of understanding allowing CCAs to be granted annual leave selections during the choice vacation period and for incidental leave.

Several new MOUs were agreed to as part of this contract, including continuing the process for filling residual vacancies and incumbent-only full-time regular opportunities through CCA conversions and transfers, which led to tens of thousands of CCA conversions. There also was a one-time conversion to career status for CCAs with 30 months of relative standing and employed in an installation that had 100, 125, or 200 or



Rolando and the NALC Executive Council exchange opening statements with USPS during the 2019 round of negotiations.

more workyears of employment.

The 2019 agreement included four wage increases of 1.1 percent, 1.1 percent, 1.3 percent and 1.3 percent. Seven COLAs were included for career letter carriers, and CCAs received an additional 1 percent increase on the four general wage increases in lieu of COLAs. The CCA Step CC was eliminated and new CCAs started at the higher-paying Step BB.

One of several new and improved MOUs provided that CCAs who have not been converted to career after 24 months would be automatically converted to a new PTF career status (Step AA) in their installation, providing full fringe benefits and peace of mind to non-career carriers. Another allowed CCAs to take leave after 90 days of employment as a CCA rather than as a career letter carrier. Additionally, letter carriers now had the option to elect to receive annual leave instead of holiday pay.

The agreement also created the City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force, which jointly seeks methods to improve the cultural and operational environment in city delivery offices. MOUs on improving the new employee experience and staffing, including a pilot program for CCA mentoring, were some of the many ways this task force works to develop solutions and to test alternative procedures in city delivery offices related to creating a positive work environment/culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

NALC members overwhelmingly approved of the contracts negotiated under Rolando's leadership, ratifying both the 2016 agreement and the 2019 agreement by more than 95 percent.

Unsurprisingly, Rolando deflects much of the credit.

"Our recent experience—both with responding to COVID-19 and securing

a decent contract in difficult circumstances—shows the power of collective bargaining," he told convention delegates in Chicago in August.

GIVING LETTER CARRIERS THE ASSISTANCE THEY NEED

Though not as high-profile as postal reform or a pandemic, under President Rolando's leadership NALC has strengthened the representational abilities of branch and regional leaders by creating new positions to assist members in a number of areas. While there are a lot more acronyms to remember—RWCA, RGA, LPO—the benefits are paying off for the membership and for the letter carriers taking on these new roles.

First, giving members added resources helps protect their rights and their clout, whether in workers' compensation, in the legislative process or in arbitration. But creating these new positions also enables letter carriers to develop the highly specialized skills—such as in negotiating the rules of workers' compensation or focusing full time on the ins and outs of being an advocate—that help them grow as leaders in the union.

In 2015, President Rolando made a serious commitment to assist and protect NALC members who are injured on the job when he created several full-time regional workers' compensation assistant (RWCA) positions. This new position was created to provide members with direct Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) representation.

While some branches already provided such representation to their members, other branches did not, for one reason or another. Though branches are required to represent all letter carriers in the grievance procedure,

MDA's Jerry Lewis thanks letter carriers for their contributions during the Labor Day Telethon in 2008.



FREDRIC V. ROLANDO

18TH NALC PRESIDENT

JULY 2009–DECEMBER 2022



One of Rolando's favorite duties as NALC president was joking with MDA ambassadors, as he did at the 2018 Biennial Convention.

Rolando gives his keynote address at the 2010 Biennial Convention.



there is no such requirement to provide OWCP assistance to members who have on-the-job injury claims, and the level of knowledge about the process ranges widely from branch to branch.

The assistance and protection afforded to injured members has been much more effective than in the past. RWCAs' existence ensures that every member who needs help with an OWCP claim receives it.

In 2017, President Rolando created the position of legislative and political organizer (LPO) to assist NALC state associations. LPOs help develop and implement plans specifically designed for the challenges within each state. They then train other letter carriers, officers and rank-and-file activists to help carry out the plans and recruit new activists while advancing NALC's legislative and political agenda in each state.

The scope of the LPOs' work has included interacting with LCCLs to develop better relationships with members of Congress, increasing Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) participation, recruiting new activists in each state, and using branch, state, and national events to educate and mobilize members to better position each state association to be successful.

In 2019, Rolando created the position of regional grievance assistant (RGA) to make sure that all letter carriers are represented in the grievance procedure, no matter how big or small their branch is. While most branches are fortunate enough to have the local resources necessary to fully represent their members' needs, that is not always the case. Some branches may have only a few members and therefore have minimal financial resources to obtain training. Other branches may have the financial resources but lack volunteers willing to take on the role of union representative. Still other branches may have the resources they need but require help keeping up with the workload. In all these instances, RGAs can step in to help.

In 2022, Rolando created the full-time advocate (FTA) position. Arbitration is the final step in the joint grievance-arbitration procedure established by NALC and the Postal Service, and it is the battleground where the union fights over the most difficult and contentious issues. All decisions by an arbitrator are final and binding, and neither management nor the union has any further avenues in which to take their dispute.

NALC is fortunate to have hundreds of active and retired letter carriers throughout the country who serve as arbitration advocates representing other letter carriers. Although they spend hours studying the case file, researching, interviewing witnesses scheduled to testify, and presenting the case at a hearing, they generally perform this work on a part-time basis.

The FTA position was created to further increase NALC's representational abilities in arbitration. In addition to presenting cases before an arbitrator, FTAs also work directly with the NALC vice president's office and the 15 NALC regions to review grievance files, conduct pre-arbitration sessions with USPS to try to resolve cases, and strategize on the best way to present certain issues in arbitration.

Also in 2022, Rolando created the regional office assistant (ROA) position as a result of the vacancies of several regional field secretary positions throughout the country. Regional field secretaries are vital to the capacity of our union to provide clerical, organizational and operational support to their respective NALC regions. The vacancies gave President Rolando an opportunity to once again increase the representational abilities of NALC by hiring experienced union representatives to fill those positions. These representatives not only possess the skillset necessary to provide such support for their regional offices, but they



also provide additional contractual and representational support to the regions and the members. And since they are letter carriers themselves, they have the unique ability to relate to the everyday issues of the NALC members who call the regional offices on a daily basis. (For more on the recent appointment of five ROAs, see story, page 5.)

On top of all these efforts to strengthen the NALC's capacity to provide excellent representation in the workplace, Rolando took action to create the NALC's Disaster Relief Foundation to help members whose lives are disrupted by natural disasters. Over the past several years, the Foundation has raised money from NALC members to provide emergency assistance to other members victimized by wildfires, tornados, hurricanes and other disasters. As he leaves office, the Foundation has been providing essential aid to carriers in Florida, the Carolinas and Puerto Rico suffering from the impact of hurricanes.

SERVING THE PUBLIC, PROMOTING DEMOCRACY

Over the course of his presidency, Rolando promoted the broader mission of the Postal Service to serve the evolving needs of the American public. This meant celebrating and promoting all the ways letter carriers serve their communities, from long-standing efforts like the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive and the Carrier Alert program to new initiatives like the NALC Veterans Group, which not only provides information, assistance and support for former members of the armed

forces who now work as city letter carriers, but also mobilizes those carriers to serve America's military vets in general.

NALC also launched the National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI) in 2017 to make voting easier by spreading the practice of voting by mail across the United States. Prompted in part by a growing wave of voter suppression unleashed by the Supreme Court's gutting of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, Rolando worked with activists in several western states (Oregon, Washington and Colorado) where elections are conducted entirely by mail to create an organization to promote its use in other states. Thanks in part to NVAHI's efforts, no-excuse absentee voting and other vote-by-mail reforms quickly spread eastward, most notably in Virginia, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

The timing of these efforts could not have been more propitious as the COVID-19 pandemic led dozens of states to turn to vote-by-mail in 2020, aiming to give Americans a safe way to vote during a public health crisis. NVAHI was there with the expertise to help election officials across the country establish or expand mail voting operations.

But President Rolando's pro-democracy efforts didn't stop there. Concern over President Trump's invective against vote-by-mail and DeJoy's appointment on the threshold of the national elections in 2020 led Rolando to propose and help guide a multi-union task force with postal management to safeguard the entire process of voting by mail through the postal

The spirit of solidarity is in the air at the 2018 Biennial Convention as Rolando leads a Letter Carrier Cheer for AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

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18TH NALC PRESIDENT

JULY 2009–DECEMBER 2022



Delegates cheer for Rolando at the Biennial Convention this past summer following the announcement of his pending retirement.

Presidents Emeriti (from l) James Rademacher, William H. Young and Vincent R. Sombrotto join Rolando at the 2011 Rap Session.



network. This joint task force helped calm public fears and was vindicated when absentee ballots were delivered overwhelmingly on time both to the voting public and back to balloting locations.

A LEADER IN THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT

Rolando also used his position of leadership in the AFL-CIO to both advance the cause of letter carriers and serve all of America's trade unionists. He served as a vice president of our national union federation and as a member of its Executive Committee. Thanks to his efforts, the entire labor movement got behind NALC's campaigns to save Saturday delivery and to enact postal reform legislation. In 2010, AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka made six-day delivery a central plank in the federation's jobs campaign. In 2017, the AFL-CIO convention adopted a resolution drafted by NALC and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) to embrace universal vote-by-mail. And in 2020, postal reform was included in the AFL-CIO's Five Economic Essentials—its COVID-19-relief lobbying campaign—which led to \$10 billion in financial relief for the Postal Service.

President Rolando is admired by trade unionists around the country. He is a valued member of the Legislative and Political Affairs Committees of the AFL-CIO, and he serves as vice chairman of the federation's Finance Committee—helping the AFL-CIO navigate some of the most difficult economic times in recent history. As AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler observed, "Fred is one of the most respected leaders of America's labor movement."

PREPARING NALC FOR THE FUTURE

It's easy to get lost in the details of postal reform efforts or the suddenness of the COVID-19 pandemic, but taken

as a whole, it's also easy to see one of the driving forces behind President's Rolando overarching accomplishments as he makes way for a new generation of union leaders: All of his efforts have been driven by a desire to leave NALC, its members and its employer in a better place than he found them.

By fostering consensus on postal reform legislation and negotiating beneficial contracts, by protecting letter carriers during a frightening pandemic and empowering a large group of capable letter carriers, and through countless decisions made day in and day out after careful consideration and extensive consultation, Rolando has strengthened the union in important ways. Most notably, he has left the union's finances in perhaps the strongest position in our history by working closely with the Board of Trustees and leaders of the NALC's Health Benefit Plan and the Mutual Benefit Association to responsibly manage the union's resources. Rolando is especially proud of the financial and operational turnaround achieved at Nalcrest during his time in office—investing in its refurbishment, eliminating its vacancies, and leaving office with a healthy waiting list for new residents.

But President Rolando, ever humble, gives credit for the accomplishments of the last 13-plus years to the members. That humility, of course, is not merely a positive trait; it is well known that leaders who willingly share credit, and who care more about the success of a mission than about who gets the applause for it, are more likely to achieve success for their organization because the strength of a committed team is greater than that of a single person. Nowhere is that more true than in the case of a union, where collective action—and the energy of an engaged membership—are difficult to beat. Add to that the diversity of NALC, and Rolando says, "I have nothing but optimism about the future of our great union." **PR**