

Leadership Academy founder asks grads to serve other letter carriers back home



NALC Leadership Academy founder Jim Williams reflects on the 20 years since the first session was held in 2005.

On Dec. 12, retired Executive Vice President Jim Williams, the founder of the NALC Leadership Academy, returned to preside over the graduation ceremony of the 31st class and began his remarks by being happily surprised that there had been 30 classes since the first one. “When we started, I didn’t know that we were going to make it to Class 2, honestly,” he said. “One of the big arguments was that eventually the Academy would stop meeting because we’d run out of quality candidates to attend. I sat through the last three days of this class, and I could tell you the quality has never been higher.”

Williams was joined at the luncheon by retired Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Jim Korolowicz, who was Williams’s partner in creating and running the Academy during its early years. The ceremony was held at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, MD, just south of Baltimore, and 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 Conference Center with take-home assignments and special projects.

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

safety and health, retirement issues, route protection, workers’ compensation, effective negotiation techniques and the use of social media for branch communications.

Each week of the Academy also includes an emphasis on fine-tuning written and oral communication skills. Back in their branches, graduates will make use of those skills in such forums as membership meetings, awards ceremonies and dinners.

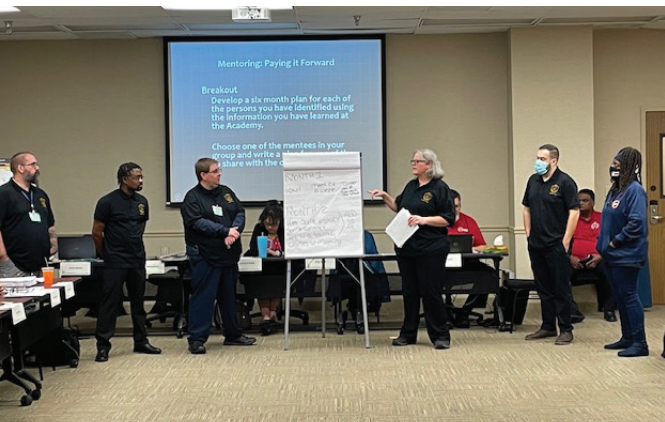
NALC President Brian L. Renfroe, other national officers, and Headquarters letter carrier and professional staff members are tapped to teach classes on a wide variety of topics. The attendees also were guided by daily class instructors: former National Business Agents (NBAs) Troy Clark and Chris Wittenburg, Region 6 Regional Grievance Assistant Anna Mudd, Region 5 Regional Administrative Assistant Larrissa Parde and Assistant to the President Ed Morgan.

After the commencement, the graduates were assigned to work at their respective NBA offices for a week to learn in a different environment.

Williams urged the graduates to understand the importance of completing what you start. “The piece that I would like you to remember as we finish up this class is the importance of finishing well, to be in it for the long haul, to know that it is worthwhile to not just start things, but to finish them and do it with class and dignity,” he said. “Those are the qualities I want you to take home.”

He also called on them to return home with the humility to know what they don’t know. “Most people are not aware of what it is that they need to change,” he said. “They don’t accurately judge themselves. One of the

Leadership Academy attendees present a group project during Week 3.





important things for you to do to finish well is that you are humble enough to see yourself accurately and make changes in your life.”

The key to this is to never stop learning. “I’ve heard people say, ‘I am done learning.’ I say to those people, ‘You’re wrong.’ If that’s the point of view that you live your life, to me, that’s a very dismal way to live. Being a lifelong learner is acknowledging that you’re humble enough to look at yourself accurately and make the changes you need to be successful for the people that we represent,” he said.

But the ultimate goal of leaders and of the NALC Leadership Academy is to

serve others. “I have always felt and believe, and I think it has something to do with my own faith, that the best leaders are those who learn how to serve others well,” he said. “Be a person who causes the people around you to be better than they were when you met them. That’s what true leadership to me is all about.”

Finally, he took a moment to thank the students on the 20th anniversary of the graduation of the first Leadership Academy class. “My heart is full because I come to a place like this, and I see an idea that has grown beyond anything I would have asked or imagined. Thank you all,” he said. **PR**

Leadership Academy Class 31

Artegus Felder receives his certificate from retired Executive Vice President Jim Williams (l) and retired Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Jim Korolowicz.



NALC Leadership Academy Class 31 graduates

Kimberly Bertch
York, PA Branch 509

Jamel Borner
Mobile, AL Branch 469

Charles Bundy
Chicago, IL Branch 11

Julianna Burton
Wichita, KS Branch 201

Christopher Cotto-Sanchez
San Juan, PR Branch 869

Shane Davis
Jonesboro, AR Branch 1131

Artegus Felder
Montgomery, AL Branch 106

Angel Garcia
Lansing, MI Branch 122

Robert Gray
Kenosha, WI Branch 574

Michael Hansen
Salt Lake City, UT Branch 111

Carl Jenkins
Gretna, LA Branch 2730

Benjamin Kayser
Cedar Rapids, IA Branch 373

Anthony Kennedy
Greensboro, NC Branch 630

Tonja Koch
Laramie, WY Branch 463

Aaron Le Duc
Fond du Lac, WI Branch 125

April Litty
South Jersey, NJ Branch 908

Jamie Lukens
Barberton, OH Branch 897

Angelo Martinez
W. Warwick, RI Branch 2158

Mark Murphy
Erie, PA Branch 284

Ryan Raeke
Wichita Falls, TX Branch 1227

Esteban Ramirez
San Antonio, TX Branch 421

Edwin Robertson
New York, NY Branch 36

Josh Roe
Canton, OH Branch 238

Corrinna Salas
San Bernardino, CA Branch 411

Diana Sanchez
Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100

Emmitt Saunders
Baltimore, MD Branch 176

Matthew Slivinski
Wilkes-Barre, PA Branch 115

Nora Stamper
Seattle, WA Branch 79

Torra Stewart
South Florida Branch 1071

Colleen Wood
S. Macomb, MI Branch 4374