

The face of the Service



**Mack I.
Julion**

If you have been a letter carrier for any length of time you have probably heard it said that we are “the face of the Service.” We are the ones who interact directly with our customers on the streets, door to door, wherever they may live. This places an additional burden of representing our agency while we engage in the very arduous and physical task of delivering mail.

As letter carriers, we perform our duties on good days and bad, in all kinds of extreme conditions, including natural disasters and pandemics. We provide a consistent daily service that some may have taken for granted, at least

until COVID-19 reminded everyone just how valuable we are within their communities. I have been thinking about this lately with so much public discourse about the fate of the Postal Service.

Recently, I had the privilege of meeting and celebrating our Heroes of the Year at the annual luncheon that recognizes their heroic deeds. It’s amazing to me because I know that there are so many above-and-beyond acts of our co-workers that are not celebrated. Although every month some are recognized in this periodical, I know there are many more stories that are not told. Things that we too may take for granted because it’s all in day’s work, and as most would say, “It was the right thing to do,” or, “Anyone would have done it.” We all know that is not entirely true, and unfortunately some of us see that every year during the food drive.

While many of us joyously look forward to the opportunity to serve our communities and customers by participating in the letter carriers’ annual food drive, there are still others who refuse. I have never been able to understand their reasoning or wrap my mind around why getting paid to help others is a bridge too far for some people. Some of you may recall that I wrote about that in my May 2024 column (a must read!) about carriers who call off work or won’t deliver the cards or pick up the food. I won’t use this space to focus on them again, rather I want to salute all the heroes and “she-ros” who do participate—the food drive coordinators and carriers who get it. One of the reasons that the

Postal Service is always ranked at the top of the list of most trusted government agencies isn’t because of the way our company is run; rather it’s because of us, *the face of the Service*.

While management consistently makes poor decisions that devalue the Service by delaying mail and degrading the service standards, our customers still appreciate us, their letter carriers. That may go a long way, especially if they are willing to advocate for us to their congressional representative. At some point, they may have to be willing to pay more for a stamp or to support annual appropriations to sustain a Postal Service that provides universal service. The truth is we need them more than they need us. We may have been around longer than this government, but that doesn’t make us untouchable. We are indeed blessed to have good government jobs and are not on the receiving end of the food drive. Without these jobs, many of us would be, “*but for the grace of God...*”

I will share with you two pictures from the food drive week in Chicago. One is the heroic coordinators who do all they can to make sure their unit is as successful as they can be. The other is a picture of my letter carrier, Shawn Goodman. I offered to drop off the food for him and he refused, saying, “I got this, man—this is what I do!” He then carried the bag while delivering the last couple of addresses. I know what you’re thinking...the bag wasn’t that light! Kudos to all who participated!

