The NALC honors its retirees in a unique way. Our retirees are an integral part of our organization and, as such, retain both their membership and union rights. But more than that, when they have belonged to the NALC for 50 years or more, we honor them with either a gold card membership card, a lapel pin or a plaque. The gold cards are present to our 50-year members (since 1939); the lapel pins are given to our 60-year members (since 1954), 65-year and 55-year members (since 2012); and the plaques are awarded on the members’ 70th and 75th anniversaries (since 1974). A number of 80-year plaques have also been awarded (since 2014).

Most of our branches make quite an occasion of the actual presentations, and the national president writes a letter to the retiree expressing their personal gratitude for the member’s continuing support of NALC over the years.

The following presentations of life membership awards and above have been made since the Detroit convention:
- 75-year plaques 32
- 70-year plaques 249
- 65-year pins 530
- 60-year pins 1,438
- 55-year pins 2,675
- 50-year gold cards 7,958