

Rolando becomes 18th NALC President

Top offices for Mullins, Mignosi, Rhine

President Rolando (l) discusses the issues facing NALC during an Executive Council meeting that took place as this issue went to press. A full report on the meeting will appear in the September issue of *The Postal Record*.

Fredric V. Rolando, a member of Sarasota, Florida Branch 2148, has been installed as the 18th President of the National Association of Letter Carriers. He officially became leader of the 300,000-member union on July 4, just eight weeks before the 120th anniversary of the NALC's founding.

Rolando, 56, had served as Executive Vice President since December 2006 and moved up under the terms of the *NALC Constitution*, succeeding William H. Young, who retired after more than six years as president (see pages 14-19). Young served as the installing officer when Rolando took the oath of office at a special ceremony at NALC Headquarters in Washington on July 2.

The change at the top led to a shuffling of other officers. President Rolando immediately announced the appointments of Vice President Gary H. Mullins of Wichita Falls, Texas Branch 1227 as the new Executive Vice President, and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer George C. Mignosi of Brooklyn, New York Branch 41 as Vice President, succeeding Mullins.

On July 15, Rolando announced the appointment of Region 5 Regional Administrative Assistant Nicole Rhine, of Lincoln, Nebraska Branch 8, as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, filling the vacancy left by Mignosi's promotion.

Rolando will serve the remainder of Young's second four-year term ending in December 2010, when all other Executive Council terms end as well.

In a move unrelated to the shifts involving resident national officers, Rolando also selected Region 10 RAA Kathy Baldwin of Branch 842, Beaumont, Texas, to become National Business Agent for the Dallas Region, filling the vacancy created by the retirement of NBA Gene Goodwin. Her appointment was effective July 18.

Under the *Constitution*, the president has the authority to fill vacancies on the Executive Council until the next election and installation. In addition to the president, the Council includes nine other resident national officers based at NALC Headquarters in Washington, 15 National Business Agents and three National Trustees.

President Rolando began his postal career 31 years ago as a carrier in South Miami, Florida. As a member of South Florida Branch 1071, his first union post was as a shop steward. After relocating to Sarasota in 1984, he soon became chief steward there, and in 1988 he was elected president of Branch 2148. He later served as director of education for the



Florida State Association of Letter Carriers and as a Regional Administrative Assistant for NALC's Atlanta Region 9 before coming to Washington as a national officer.

Rolando, who holds a bachelor's degree in criminology and psychology from Florida International University, was appointed Director of City Delivery in February 2002 by then-President Vincent R. Sombrotto to fill a vacancy. He was elected to a full term by acclamation at the 2002 NALC Convention in Philadelphia. In 2006, he was elected Executive Vice President.

Executive Vice President Mullins, 58, was elected Director of City Delivery in 1998 and served in that post until February 2002, when he was appointed by Sombrotto to fill a vacancy as vice president and to head up the union's Contract Administration Unit. He was elected NALC Vice President for a full term by acclamation at the 2002 Philadelphia Convention and re-elected in 2006.

Mullins, who has a bachelor's degree in business administration, started carrying mail in 1971. He was a shop steward for 18 years and president of the Wichita Falls branch from 1978-1990. He was also president of the Texas State Association from 1987-1990 and then served eight years as National Business Agent for Region 10 (Dallas).

Mignosi, 50, represented letter carriers in metropolitan New York for more than two decades before moving to Headquarters in 2006 as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer. He began his postal career in 1979 at the GPO in New York City as a clerk, but soon moved to the carrier craft and became a member of Brooklyn Branch 41 in 1980.

After a stint as Region 15 (New York Metro) Regional Administrative Assistant, Mignosi was appointed National



Top: Former President Bill Young installs new President Fred Rolando during a retirement event held in Young's honor at the Vincent R. Sombrotto Building in Washington, DC, on July 2.

Above: New Vice President George Mignosi (l) and new Executive Vice President Gary Mullins (r) join Young and Rolando on stage.

Below: The newest members of the Executive Council, from l: Region 7 National Business Agent Chris Wittenburg, Region 10 NBA Kathy Baldwin, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine, Region 11 NBA Dan Toth and Region 4 NBA Roger Bledsoe.





In farewell remarks July 20, former President Young thanked Executive Council members for their service to the NALC during his presidency and urged them to support President Rolando in the same manner.

Business Agent in February 2002 to fill a vacancy, and was elected to that office by acclamation at the Philadelphia Convention later that year. At the 2006 National Convention in Las Vegas, he was elected Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, again by acclamation.

Rhine, 44, was tapped by President Bill Young as an RAA for Region 5 (Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas) in December 2006. In addition to serving as a steward, branch secretary and president of Lincoln Branch 8, she was a local business agent and arbitration advocate, as well as president of the Nebraska State Association and a congressional district liaison. A letter carrier for 15 years, she holds a journalism degree from the University of Kansas.



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The following is the text of a letter sent by new NALC President Fredric V. Rolando to all of the members of the NALC.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

On Independence Day, I became the President of the National Association of Letter Carriers when, in accordance with the *NALC Constitution*, I succeeded President Bill Young following his retirement after a 41-year career in the Postal Service. We are all grateful for Bill's exceptional career of service to our great union and I am deeply honored to serve as the NALC's 18th National President.

I use the time-honored method of a first class letter not only because of its obvious symbolism to us all, but also to convey the seriousness of the message I have to deliver with the hope that you will use it as a springboard to serious discussions with family, friends and co-workers.

I am very conscious of the "boy crying wolf" syndrome, the Chicken Little "sky is falling" tendency. We are all properly skeptical of purveyors of doom and gloom—and I will try my very best now, and in my future messages to you, not to fall into that trap. But truly extraordinary circumstances demand honest confrontation. So here goes.

By any measure, we face daunting challenges at this moment in history. The worst recession since the Great Depression has already cost the jobs of more than 6 million Americans, driving the unemployment rate up to 9.5% and reducing the average work week to just 33 hours per week, the lowest level since the government started tracking the figure. Wages are falling, pensions and health benefits are being slashed and millions of Americans face the loss of their homes to foreclosure, developments that could worsen the crisis in the months to come.

The housing, real estate and finance sectors, where this crisis began, are among the most important sources of mail. Their collapse in 2008 has led to a sickening drop in mail volume. In the first half of 2009, mail volume dropped by 11.9 percent—it fell by 14.7% in the second quarter alone. We are facing the worst decline in mail volume since the 1930s. Even before this crisis, the negative impact of the electronic substitution posed a serious threat to the Postal Service. With this national economic crisis, the danger to the USPS and our jobs has become extreme and immediate. The Service faces a loss of between \$6 and \$7 billion this year, an amount that

exceeds its annual \$3 billion debt limit. There is no way to sugarcoat it: Extraordinary measures will be needed to preserve the Postal Service.

As you know, NALC has taken extraordinary measures in recent months to help the Postal Service survive. The Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Program is just the latest such measure. We have responsibly adjusted routes to cut costs in reaction to falling mail volume. We are leading the fight on Capitol Hill to secure financial relief for the Postal Service through H.R. 22, a bill that would significantly reduce the heavy burden of pre-funding retiree health benefits over the next eight years. That is a legal burden that no other company in America is required to carry. In addition, we are actively engaging leaders in Congress and in the Obama administration on longer term solutions to the Postal Service's financial crisis.

Unfortunately, there are many ideas being proposed that we cannot support. Ending the mandate to provide 6-day delivery is the most dangerous of these. Cutting a day of delivery would not only threaten 1 of every 6 carrier jobs, it would also open the door to the emergence of competitors to fill the void. We believe it is a short-sighted, wrong-

Rolando tells the Executive Council to prepare for the fight for six-day delivery (see page 6).

In announcing the appointment of Baldwin as NBA for letter carriers in Region 10, covering Texas and New Mexico, President Rolando praised Goodwin for his longtime, dedicated service to the membership. “Gene has been instrumental in our union’s efforts to reduce the backup on grievances through use of alternative dispute resolution procedures,” Rolando said. “His knowledge and skills will be missed and we wish him an enjoyable retirement.”

Baldwin, 50, served as Beaumont Branch 842 secretary from 1986 to 1990, and then as president until 1999, during which time she became a strong advocate of the annual Letter Carriers Food Drive. She also was a local business agent and arbitration advocate. ✉



headed approach that will sacrifice one of the Postal Service’s key advantages over private companies. We will resist it with all our strength. Also gaining some currency are mandated cuts in USPS operating expenses—with some advocating a legislated increase in postal employee contributions for health and life insurance benefits. This approach is totally unacceptable to the NALC. Congress should respect our collective bargaining rights.

NALC flatly rejects the notion that we should downsize the Postal Service to meet the diminished demand of a recessionary economy. That would only leave us unprepared to serve the country when the economy recovers. Instead, the Congress should review the retirement benefit funding decisions made by the Bush administration with the goal of providing much needed financial relief to the USPS. Postage ratepayers should not have to pay for FERS military pension benefits. The USPS should be eligible for employer subsidies under the Medicare Part D program. And a more reasonable schedule for pre-funding a fairly assessed liability for retiree health benefits is essential for the long-term viability of the Postal Service.

Going forward, it will not be enough for us to “just say no” to proposals we oppose. We will have to step forward with better solutions—at the bargaining table and on Capitol Hill. I have no doubt that we will have to

reform to survive. But the reform should focus on removing unfair burdens on the Postal Service, increasing revenues, maximizing the value of the Postal Service’s invaluable last-mile delivery network and finding new ways to serve the country through new uses of the mail such as Vote by Mail and expedited merchandise returns.

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. It is no longer enough to do your job faithfully and professionally, your job and your union now needs your help, in a serious way. In practical terms, that means going to branch meetings, reading *The Postal Record*, giving to COLCPE, participating in the e-Activist Network and generally doing your part as an active union member. I realize that sounds a bit like “same old, same old”—just another in a long line of gentle reminders to be a good, active, union member. But the simple fact is that some basic truths—though sounding a bit shop-worn—really are the answer to harsh realities. The city letter carrier job is as good today as it is—and our wages and benefits and protections are as sound as they are—because this union has always been strong,

and its members have always stood up when they had to be counted. This is one of those times. You must stand up and fight to protect what you have. We must stand together to fight for what we have to protect.

For my part, I promise to always tell you the truth and to work night and day with my fellow Executive Council members to do what is best for letter carriers and their families.

As difficult as conditions are today, I am confident that we will emerge from this crisis better and stronger. This union, with its 300,000 members and its incredible 120-year tradition of solidarity and success, and this country are too great to be held down for too long. And the trust that the American people have in the Postal Service and in their letter carriers, earned six days a week in every city, town and neighborhood across the nation, is too strong to be destroyed. We cannot allow the Postal Service and our jobs to be victims of a crisis we did not create. Instead, we must adapt and reinvent the Postal Service for the 21st century.

Now it is time to get to work. I can’t wait to see what we can do together.

In Solidarity,

Fred Rolando
President