

## **NALC Public Relations Department Records**

1985-1995

5 Linear Feet

Accession No. 1912

Records of the Department of Public Relations were deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) in 2001 and opened to researchers in December 2007.

The NALC Public Relations Department was established in 1988 to promote the activities and programs of the union. At that time, Mr. Drew Von Bergen joined NALC as director of public relations and assumed the duties and responsibilities of that position.

The director's functions encompass a wide range of responsibilities. He issues press releases, answers media inquiries, and coordinates press conferences and interviews. Internally, he assists NALC branches and state associations as needed, provides information and seminars on public relations at conventions and conferences, and compiles news clippings for members of the Executive Council. The director also writes and edits the *NALC Bulletin*, and provides editorial assistance for NALC's monthly *Postal Record* and the annual Health Benefit Plan "Open Season" drive.

A significant portion of the director's work deals with the union's extensive involvement in community services. Von Bergen coordinates NALC activities with the AFL-CIO Department of Community Services, and acts as liaison for NALC with Red Cross officials on disaster relief, blood drives, and assistance to military during conflicts. He is also a member of the National Labor Advisory Committee of United Way of America. Von Bergen assisted in developing the NALC food drive, coordinating the ten-city pilot program and subsequent national drives, and is the NALC representative on the Executive Committee of the Postal Employees' Relief Fund.

At this time (2007), Von Bergen continues to serve as the director of the NALC Public Relations Department. He is a native of Scranton, PA and holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Scranton. From 1963 to 1985, Von Bergen was editor of Washington news as well as a congressional, labor and political reporter for United Press International. He was UPI reporter for the Gary Hart and Walter Mondale campaigns during the 1984 presidential primaries and at the Democratic National Convention, and served as "night editor" for Washington in late 1984 and early 1985. From 1985 to 1986 Von Bergen served as press secretary for Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum (D-OH) and, from 1986 to 1987, he was vice president and director of media relations for The Kambler Group, a Washington-based public relations firm specializing in union and political clients.

Materials in this record group reflect the functions of the Public Relations Department and document the activities of the department director. Records consist of correspondence, reports, press releases, media contact lists, advertising, news clippings, transcripts, minutes, testimony, and other materials created while promoting the activities and programs of the union.

**Important correspondents in this collection:**

Chavez, Cesar  
Frank, Anthony M.  
Hightower, Jim  
Inslee, Jay  
Keane, Bil

**Important Subjects in this collection:**

Combined Federal Campaign  
Contract negotiations  
Disaster Relief  
Food Banks  
Floods Middle West (U.S.)  
Floods United States  
Hurricane Andrew, 1991  
Hurricane Hugo, 1989  
Hurricanes  
Letter Carriers  
Natural Disasters  
Storms  
Tornadoes  
United States Postal Service  
United Way

## Contents

### 5 Storage Boxes

#### **Series I, Chronological Files, 1989-1995, Boxes 1-2:**

##### **Subseries A, General Files, 1990-1995, Box 1:**

The bulk of material in this subseries consists of correspondence to and from the public relations director. Also included are reports, memoranda and other miscellaneous items relating to the many functions of the Department of Public Relations. Material is arranged in chronological order.

##### **Subseries B, Electronic Transmissions, 1990-1994, Box 1:**

This subseries consists of print copies of facsimile (fax) communications, commonly referred to as *drufaxes* within the Public Relations Department. These electronically transmitted messages reflect the common method of communication between the director and members of the media, and were frequently used to distribute press releases and other pieces of information. Material is arranged in chronological order.

##### **Subseries C, President's Files, 1990-1994, Box 2:**

Files in this subseries contain correspondence to and from NALC president, Vincent R. Sombrotto. Many of these communications were either copied to or forwarded on to the public relations director. Other communications were prepared by the director at the president's request. Materials also include a number of editorial responses and several keynote addresses delivered by the president. These papers are arranged in chronological order.

#### **Series II, Director's Reports, 1989-1994, Box 2:**

The reports contained in this series were prepared by the public relations director as supplemental material for the 1992 President's Report and as annual departmental reports for the Executive Council. Each provides a detailed description of the yearly activities of the department.

#### **Series III, Advertising and Media, 1989-1994, Box 2:**

This series relates to promotional activities and interaction with media. Material consists of advertisements and ad copy for placement in various publications, correspondence, memoranda, news clippings, media contact lists, press releases, communications with newswire services, and transcript of a Sombrotto interview with radio commentator Jim Hightower. Of interest is a 1990 press release which includes Sombrotto's reaction to the Hatch Act Reform vote and subsequent veto by then president George H. W. Bush. Folders are arranged first alphabetically, then in chronological order.

**Series IV, Subject Files, 1985-1995, Box 2-3:**

Subject files are self-explanatory and reflect the range of responsibilities and activities of the Public Relations Department and its director. It should be noted that a significant number of files relate to community service programs. Files for the United Way of America relate to Von Bergen's position on the National Labor Advisory Committee of that organization. Of special interest in this series is material generated during the 1990 contract negotiations and arbitration case which includes transcripts of the NALC president's "hotline" messages to members, USPS telephone information messages, and President Sombrotto's statement on the arbitrator's award.

**Series V, Postal Employees' Relief Fund, 1990-1994, Box 3:**

**Subseries A, Fund Administration, 1990-1994:**

Records in this subseries relate to the establishment and early years of the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF). Included is the Declaration of Trust Agreement, signed by the U.S. Postmaster General and postal union presidents as Grantors, creating a permanent relief fund for postal employees in need of assistance following specific natural disasters. Files also contain correspondence, reports, financial statements, criteria lists to determine eligibility for assistance, and materials generated by the Grantors Committee and Executive Committee, including agendas and minutes, which provide details of the administration of the fund. Public relations director Drew Von Bergen sits on the Executive Committee of PERF as the representative for NALC.

**Subseries B, Fund Disbursements, 1990-1993:**

Records in this subseries relate to the distribution of funds to victims of specific natural disasters. Included are communications with both contributors and recipients of funds, as well as a sampling of applications for relief. These are the first groups to receive financial assistance from the Relief Fund.

**Series VI, NALC National Food Drives, 1990-1994, Box 3:**

Material contained in this series consists of information relating to the NALC food drive program. Background information describes the branch food drive conducted in Phoenix which became the model for the national program, along with suggestions from Phoenix for a successful drive. Also included are records documenting the planning and coordination of the 1991 ten-city pilot program, as well as the 1993 and 1994 national drives. Files contain planning materials, reports, coordinator lists, memos, branch correspondence, congressional correspondence, press releases, newsletters, public service announcements, brochures, video production materials, and collection tallies.

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**Chronological Files, 1989-1995**  
**Boxes 1-2**

**Subseries A, General Files, 1990-1995, Box 1:**

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**Box 1**

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**Subseries C, President's Files, 1990-1994, Box 2:**

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**Box 2**

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