

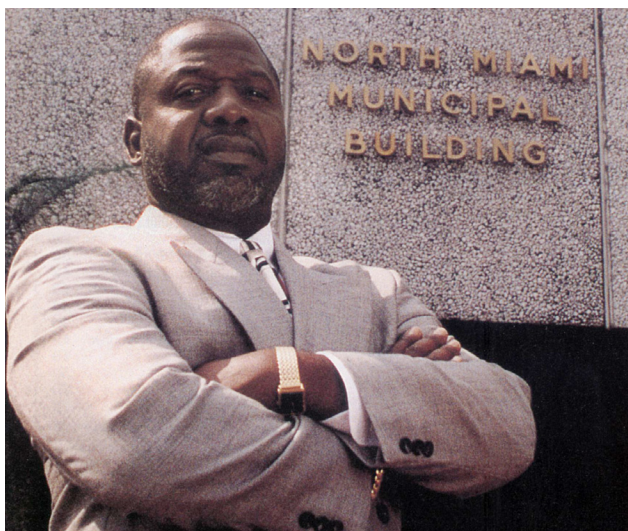
A street named

SOREY

“Life is so good when you’re doing positive things,” says **Arthur “Duke” Sorey Jr.**

The South Florida Branch 1071 member has served those in his community through many avenues, including in his years on the city council, and to honor his legacy, the city of North Miami named a street for him in February.

Following the birth of his first child, Arthur “Duke” III, Sorey left the Army after eight years of service, including a tour in Vietnam, to spend more time with his family. He and his wife of 49 years, **Doretha Sorey** (also a letter carrier and Branch 1071 member), settled in North Miami, FL, in 1978, and had two more children, Andre and Anitra.



Sorey was featured on the May 1998 cover of this magazine because of his city council role.

“I had a tough childhood and didn’t have a lot of involvement with my father,” he said. He vowed that he’d be a part of his kids’ lives.

He joined the Postal Service the following year and delivered mail for 37 years out of the same station, while also serving as a shop steward from the 1980s until his retirement in 2016. During his postal career, he helped out as

coordinator for the food drive and the Combined Federal Campaign, as well as doing fundraising for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

“I was born to do this,” he said. “I always volunteered to do what was necessary to help. It was embedded in me.”

When his children were young, he began coaching—first T-ball, then eventually baseball with the National Little League Association, as well as football and soccer with the North Miami Parks and Recreation Department. For 12 years, “I was coaching year-round,” he said, and he was known to many as “Coach Duke.”

After attending clinics to learn about sports officiating, he began doing that as well for high school sports—including baseball, softball and volleyball, which he continues to this day.

Sorey wanted to provide youngsters with opportunities that he didn’t get as a child. So, when he got off work, he’d go straight to the park.

His wife told him, “You’re never home. You’re doing too much. You have to say ‘no’ to people.”

His response? “The people need me,” he said.

Sorey spent so much time at the park, he eventually became vice president, then president, of the Little League, and served on the North Miami Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

“That was my first interaction with city hall,” Sorey said, explaining that the leagues weren’t getting enough money for uniforms and supplies, and fundraising wasn’t cutting it. Determined to change things, he went to city hall and told representatives, “You’re not doing enough for our [west] side of the city.”

During this time, he expanded his community involvement further by becoming a member of his homeowners association board, rising two years later to board president.



With Sorey’s extensive involvement in North Miami, people began to tell him, “You need to be an elected official.”

“I balked at it at first,” he said, but he ultimately decided to pursue a seat on the North Miami City Council for District 4 and won.

He served from 1995 to 1999, and he was the first Black elected official in the city of North Miami. Though he felt pressure because of that, “I was always happy to be doing what I was doing,” he said, adding that he simply wanted to be known as “somebody who got things done.”

Once elected, he gave up his homeowners association and Little League leadership, but offered help to those organizations whenever needed. He also started training parents as sports officials.

Through it all, he always delivered in his postal career. “There were a lot of [city council] meetings where I showed up in my postal uniform,” he said.

During Sorey’s four years as a city councilman, “I didn’t have enough time to get everything I wanted done,” the carrier said, but there were plenty of actions he was proud of.

When crime increased on the west side of the city, he helped to increase the plainclothes police presence

through a crime suppression unit aimed at stopping street and drug offenses. He also pushed to make a western city border using mostly foliage instead of a fence or wall. “It cut down on crime [and] made a huge difference,” he said.

The park where he spent a lot of time didn’t escape notice, either. When Sorey saw that tennis courts were unused, he worked to establish a tennis program. At his urging, the city also agreed to renovate the local pool, where he often took his children, along with neighborhood kids. To thank him, the water playground at the pool was named for him.

Sorey also pushed to get funding for a new computer lab at a community center to offer free computer classes, as well as access for children and adults who might not be able to afford a computer at home.

Even while doing this work on the city council, Sorey loved being a letter carrier. “Branch 1071 was my life. I’m a union member,” he said, adding, “a union is only as strong as its people.”

Top: A ceremony to officially name a portion of NW 128th Street in North Miami was held on Feb. 28.

Above: A reception followed at the pool that Sorey had lobbied for, and where the water playground is named for him.



Above: Sorey collects donations for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Indeed, South Florida Branch 1071 President **Jeannette Triana** describes Sorey as an “outstanding brother and advocate for the NALC.”

Delivering on the same route for 30 years helped Sorey see what types of services and programs his customers needed. “On my route, I was family,” he said. “I went to weddings, funerals, baby christenings. I was honored that these people cared about me.”

Outside of his career, the carrier says that parenting is one of his most important endeavors, and he tried to teach his now-grown kids through volunteerism. “You’re not here just for you,” he’d tell them. “You have to have compassion for people. We’re all human, but we’re not all alike. We’ve got to give back.

“I taught them about looking to make where you live a better place,” he added. “I know they were listening.”

Sorey’s children have taken that advice to heart in selecting their own careers. Duke III was appointed city manager for North Miami Beach, Andre is a supervisor for North Miami’s parks and recreation department, and Anitra is a neonatal intensive-care unit nurse. His two sons also coach sports in the city.

In 2013, Sorey was added to North Miami’s “citizens hall of fame” inside city hall for people in the community who gave above and beyond. And more recently, the carrier received a phone call from the office of Vice Mayor Alix Desulme, whom Sorey has known since the vice mayor was a child. Desulme’s assistant told Sorey that people frequently invoke his name for having opened up doors for people, adding, “You left city hall, but you have a ghost still there.” She told him that the city wanted to name a street



After campaigning for President Bill Clinton, Sorey (l) met him in South Florida.

after him and dedicate it during Black History Month.

Sorey was shocked at the number of people who attended the Feb. 28 event, including some he hadn’t seen in 30 years. “It was mind-blowing to me,” he said.

Duke III spoke at the ceremony, saying of his father, “I knew he loved us and that he cared, because he spent a lot of time with us.”

After the dedication of the North Miami street, a stretch of NW 128th Street between NW 10th Avenue and 11th Avenue, there was a reception at the pool that had been such a part of Sorey’s life—a full-circle moment that the carrier called “heartwarming.”

He has plenty of advice for other letter carriers who want to get involved in their communities. “I would say, you’ve got to have a desire to do good. And then help others do good. You’ve got to do it because you care—about your family and the community.”

He continued: “Give people respect and get to that middle ground about what needs to be done in the community.”

Sorey doesn’t plan to stop his community involvement anytime soon. He continues working on political campaigns, both local and national, and still frequently officiates high school sports.

Public service is “just something that’s in me,” he says. “I’m living my best life right now.” **PR**