

# 'Magic Man' postal clerk Ross retires

by LAUREN KOENIG  
Senior Reporter

Postal clerk William Ross Sr.'s retirement marks the end of his 57-year run of service to Vanderbilt Mail Services at the Station B Post Office. A friendly and familiar face to many around campus, Ross has watched Vanderbilt grow since May 14, 1951.

"He never meets a stranger," said Postmaster Mickey Anglea. "He's just so upbeat and positive all the time, and just a genuine, good man ... full of stories."

Throughout his many years of service, Ross has experienced many changes.

"When he first started here he walked the route with a leather bag. At some point, they got him a bicycle that had racks on it. It's just neat to hear him talk about different things, his progression from walking to a bicycle ... to actually driving a van," Anglea said.

Anglea said Ross is famous for delivering smiles as well as mail. He added that whenever Ross would meet someone, he would tell them, "Have a great day, and make the best of it!"

In addition to his work at Vanderbilt, Ross also earned a reputation as a magician, even though he said he's only practiced "some sleight of hands and worked with kids." Despite his humility, his hobby has carried him all the way to the small screen. Ross was

featured performing magic tricks on "The Bozo Show." Ross also played the timekeeper at the ballgame in a movie about legendary track star Wilma Rudolph.

On the weekends, he toured the East Coast as part of a gospel-singing group called "The Ross Brothers" along with his cousins.

"He's really sharp and he's really quick ... I'll ask him, 'Mr. Ross, do you have a quarter?' And he'll pull a quarter right out of a person's ear," Anglea said. "He's done work at the children's hospital and entertained people there at different events and functions."

"Performing for the kids is always a great thrill to me," Ross said in a 1989 article in the Nashville Banner. "I remember one time when I went (to the children's hospital) this boy looked so sad because he was sick. But my tricks had him smiling before long. I said to myself that was the greatest show I had ever done."

To commemorate his retirement, Anglea is compiling a memory book of favorite memories of the campus fixture. Ross is already in possession of some of these memories and has a scrapbook of pictures and letters from his time spent at Vanderbilt.

"I can't count the times you have wished me a good day and told me to make the best of it, and, sure enough, each day seemed better



William Ross Sr., who has retired after working for Vanderbilt Mail Services for over 50 years, became well-known around campus for his friendly personality and magic tricks.

for your advice," said Dirk Porter, associate professor of Slavic languages, in a letter to Ross in 2001.

"William Ross has added a touch of playfulness and magic to Vanderbilt for

many years," said Steve Caldwell, associate dean of students, in a letter to Ross. "We are all grateful for the brief return to childhood he has given to all of us." ■

# Lecture series to focus on environment

by HANNAHTWILLMAN  
News Editor

Soon Vanderbilt students will not be the only ones able to take classes on campus.

Beginning Feb. 7, Saturday University will meet in The Commons Center Multipurpose Room every Saturday until March 14. The series, which will start at 9:30 a.m. and end at 11:30 a.m., will feature interdisciplinary Vanderbilt faculty members from the College of Arts and Science, the School of Engineering, Peabody College and Vanderbilt Law School who will present on various aspects of the environment, energy and sustainability.

The six-part lecture series will be open to the general public. The cost to attend is \$99.

"This unique series allows inquisitive adult learners to rediscover the joy of education for its own sake, without entrance exams, homework assignments or final papers," said Martin Rapisarda, associate dean of the College of Arts and Science. "We've taken pains to schedule this so working Nashvillians can participate and experience Vanderbilt's outstanding faculty in action."

The lecture series is presented by the Vanderbilt College of Arts and Science in collaboration with the Vanderbilt Institute for Energy and Environment. Audio of the lectures will be recorded for posting on VUCast, the Vanderbilt News Service Web site.

Each session will focus on different environmental issues and will include both a lecture

and a question-and-answer session.

Distinguished Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering George Hornberger, who is also directing the program, will speak on "The Water-Energy Nexus," the idea that water and energy are two critical sources that are reciprocally related.

Associate Professor of Political Science Brooke Ackery, Associate Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences Steven Goodbred and Senior Lecturer in Earth and Environmental Sciences Jonathan Gilligan will lead a joint lecture about the intersection of science, engineering and social issues.

Professor of the Practice of Civil and Environmental Engineering James Clarke will give a presentation on "Electric Power Generation: Is It Time to Build More Nuclear Power Plants?"

Associate Professor of Human and Organizational Development Jim Fraser will speak on flood plain issues and why people participate in mitigation projects.

Professor of Law Michael Vandenbergh will present "The Behavioral Wedge: Individual Responses to Climate Change."

Forrest Perry, a lecture in electrical engineering and computer science, will moderate a panel discussion on "Ethics, Economics and the Environment." ■

Vanderbilt News Service contributed reporting to this article.

Seniors, the countdown has begun

January 28 marks the beginning of the 100-day countdown to graduation. Before you know it, your diploma will be in hand and you'll be on your way.

Before you leave, please consider the impact that Vanderbilt has had on your life by supporting the Senior Class Fund. It's your opportunity to show just how much the Class of 2009 appreciates the education, the friends and the memories Vanderbilt gave you.

To find out more or to give online, visit [www.vanderbilt.edu/seniorclassfund](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/seniorclassfund). And be on the lookout for information on upcoming special events. After all, senior year is definitely a time to celebrate.

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