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NNB News : 2015 : 03 : 18 : In Old Southeast, Mail Delivered In Song

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March 18, 2013 [Midtown](#) [No comments](#)

IN OLD SOUTHEAST, MAIL DELIVERED IN SONG



Many Old Southeast residents know exactly when their mail arrives. It isn't the barking dogs or the thud of letters falling through the mail slot that tips them off, but the smooth, sultry voice of Herman Andrew Edwards, their singing mailman.

He isn't listening to an MP3 player or a radio; he's a solo act. The soulful, jazzy lyrics of Neil Sedaka, the Temptations and the Four Tops are ingrained in his memory after years of listening.

Born March 5, 1955, in Pahokee, Fla., Edwards grew up loving to sing. His 24-year Air Force career took him all over the world, but whether in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, England or Panama, his music kept him close to home.

"That's my passion," he said. "I enjoy doing that most of all."

Edwards delivers mail to about 650 homes on a 6-mile route between Edwards Avenue South and 18th Avenue South, six days a week. He rises early to make the 45-minute commute from his home in Ruskin to the Midtown Post Office by 7:30 a.m. Some days are longer than others, depending on the volume of mail, he says. But he is usually driving home in his 2002 Corvette — sports cars are one of his hobbies — between 5 and 6 p.m.

Edwards has worked full time at the Midtown Post Office for 13 years. But he never planned on being a letter carrier.

When he returned home from his final stint as a master sergeant in the Air Force, he took time off to be with his family in an attempt to make up for all the years he would never get back. So much was missed in the lives of his daughters, Tameshia, Yolanda and Mary. His wife of 33 years, Yvonne, raised them mostly on her own.

"It's not easy being a military spouse," he says. "But the bond that a military family has, that's like no other."

At first, Edwards occupied his time playing golf, riding horses, scuba diving and, of course, singing. He joined a doo-wop group and an R&B group and sang in his church choir. But eventually he grew bored and his wife encouraged him to get a job.

"I guess she got tired of looking at my pretty face," he says with a laugh.

His favorite part of the job is the people he sees each day.

"For some of the elder customers, I'm the only face they see during their day," he says.

He talks about little Mrs. Meyers, Ms. Copeland and Mr. and Mrs. Erwin, who will always say, "Don't you have a song for us today, Herman?" And he always does.

"I'll pick a song and just start singing it," he says. "They love hearing me do it and I love doing it."

Edwards considers his customers part of his family.

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"I feel a real sense of camaraderie here," he says, perhaps nostalgic of the camaraderie he experienced in his Air Force days.

Edwards goes beyond the requirements of his job, bringing mail to customers' doors and smiles to their faces.

USF St. Petersburg junior Elizabeth Bonert, who lives on Edwards' route, says she can't help but smile when she sees him walking down the street.

"He's definitely not your average mailman," she says. "Everyone knows him and loves him."

But if Edwards realizes the impact he has on his customers, he is humble.

"I'm just walking, singing and delivering the mail," he says.

It's a few minutes after 6 p.m. Edwards is on his way home to his wife, his "high school sweetheart," and their poodle-schipperke, Shadow. As he drives over the Sunshine Skyway, he bids adieu to the setting sun with Neil Sedaka's "Breaking Up is Hard to do," his smoky baritone resonating off the windows of his car.

"You tell me that you're leaving. I can't believe it's true. Girl, there's just no living without you."

By Tyler Killete

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