



NALC Fact Sheet

Department of Government and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers

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Letter carrier Dan Hohenstein

Dan Hohenstein began working for the U.S. Postal Service as a casual letter carrier in Chicago in 1979. In his first year with USPS, he won a safety award.

In 1984, Dan moved to Denver and switched crafts to work as a machine clerk. But a year and a half later, he returned to carrying mail and has continued to do so for the last 30 years.

On Jan. 11, 2011, an inattentive teenager was driving his SUV at 30 miles per hour when he struck Dan and pinned him between his vehicle and the SUV—crushing his legs. At the time of the crash, he was working the mail at the rear of his postal vehicle.

Dan required multiple surgeries, including one to replace a damaged knee.

The letter carrier returned to work part-time more than a year and a half after the crash; he has been on the job full time since last August.

In his spare time, Dan had refereed high school, college and amateur hockey games, and was a National Hockey League off-ice official. But he can no longer be a referee because of his injuries.

And for the last 10 years, Hohenstein has also participated in a local “Adopt a Street” street-cleaning program.

Dan and his wife of 28 years, Chris, have two children: 26-year-old Lauren, who attends Texas State University; and 24-year-old Jordan, who goes to the University of Colorado. Dan and Chris also are the proud grandparents of a 2-year-old girl, Giana.



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Letter carrier Doug Poole

Doug Poole was hired as a letter carrier in Columbus, Ohio, in September of 1994. He has served as a safety captain in the post office where he worked.

In his spare time, Doug has worked as a youth baseball coach.

In January of 2012, the driver of an SUV struck Doug while he was standing at the rear of his postal vehicle, working the mail.

The letter carrier was pinned between the vehicles and his legs were crushed.

Doug went through 16 surgeries and suffered pneumonia, blood clots, vertigo and medication-induced hallucinations, and an infection caused his kidneys to fail. The firefighters who rescued him thought his severely damaged right leg would have to be amputated, but doctors managed to save it.

Many people doubted Doug would walk again, but after months of physical therapy, he continues to recover at home, where he is now able to walk by himself, often with the help of a cane, but sometimes without any assistance.

However, he has not been able to return to work.

Doug and his wife of 24 years, Tracy, have four children: an adult son, Carmine; Lucas, who is attending college; and twins Matthew and Sarah, who are still in high school.



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Letter carrier Keith Wagner

Keith Wagner joined the U.S. Postal Service in 1979 as a sorting clerk at a post office in Seattle, Washington.

Keith transferred to the letter carrier craft in September of 1983. In 2003, he earned a 30-year safe-driving award. He has also received two special incentive awards, and he has served as an on-the-job instructor for other letter carriers.

Additionally, he has worked as a coordinator for his local branch's participation in the National Association of Letter Carriers annual national "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive.

On the afternoon of July 17, 2012, Keith had just closed the back of his postal vehicle when an impaired driver hit a car that was parked behind the postal vehicle.

Keith initially suffered a broken left leg, but eventually he began having problems with his hips, shoulders and back, and he developed a blood clot in his left leg that took four surgeries to resolve.

He remains totally disabled and unable to return to work.

Keith and his wife of 31 years, Nancy, have six adopted children—Brandon, Nicholas, Tiffany, Julianne, Matthew and Teresa—who range in age from 25 to 34. Keith and Nancy also have seven grandchildren—Lily, Jonas, Justice, Taz, Zeila, Mason and Makina.



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Letter carrier Joel Cabrera

Joel Cabrera began his career as a letter carrier in October of 1983 at a post office in San Gabriel, California.

In June of 1990, Joel received as “Driver of the Month” award.

In gratitude for his efforts to help save a house that was on fire, Joel also was given a postal-themed artwork featuring the postage stamp honoring President Ronald Reagan.

Joel has received a special achievement award as well as a certificate from the “One Team, One Dream” program.

In May of 2013, a young woman lost control of her car and hit Joel as he stood behind his postal truck. The crash crushed his legs.

Before moving to rehab, Joel spent 92 days in Los Angeles County General Hospital, where he had four surgeries to repair severe injuries to both legs.

The letter carrier returned to casing duties in April of this year, but he is not yet able to carry mail.

Joel is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi honor society at California State University at Los Angeles. His only son, Michael Joseph, died at the age of 9.



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Letter carrier Dave Betts

Dave Betts was hired by the U.S. Postal Service in May of 2011 as a transitional employee. He was converted to city carrier assistant early in 2013. He works in Exeter, New Hampshire.

On March 21, 2014, Dave had just locked his postal vehicle and was at its side when a car driven by a distracted driver struck Dave's vehicle.

The force of the crash pinned Dave between his vehicle and a tree.

The letter carrier suffered an 8-inch cut on the left side of his head, an injury that required nearly a week of special hospital care.

Dave also sustained shoulder and foot injuries, as well as blood clots in his left leg.

Fortunately, Dave was able to get back to work part time less than two months later. He returned to carrying the mail full time just a few weeks ago.

Dave and his wife of five years, Emily, have a four-year-old daughter name Ireland and a one-year-old son named Mazeppa.



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Letter carrier Roy Rondeno

Letter carrier Roy Rondeno of New Orleans, Louisiana Branch 124 died on October 2, 2009, six days after his legs were crushed by a car as he sorted mail at the back of his postal van.

The 57-year-old letter carrier was weeks away from retirement.

Normally, Roy would have been off on Saturday, September 26, the day of the accident, but he volunteered to come in to deliver his route.

The 34-year postal employee was injured when a driver, after her car went through a stop sign, clipped another vehicle, sending the second car out of control and into the letter carrier.

Doctors amputated both of Roy's legs below the knee, and he had appeared to be recovering. Unfortunately, but he died of heart failure on the operating table during follow-up surgery.

Roy—known as “Deno” around his post office—was immensely popular with both his patrons and colleagues. He was described as a “sweet and affectionate man” and “a very nice guy,” and U.S. Postal Service officials in Louisiana released a statement calling Roy “a difference-maker.”

More than 1,000 mourners paid their respects at Roy's funeral, where the letter carrier was described by one speaker as “true gift from God.” Hundreds of people attended a memorial block party held along Roy's route, an event that featured live music, a raffle and auction, with prizes and goods supplied by local merchants and restaurants.

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed a Senate resolution naming a New Orleans post office in Roy's honor.

Shirley Rondeno is Roy's widow