

EUGENE SPELLMAN, POSTAL WORKER, 74

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Eugene F. Spellman, a postal worker and music aficionado from Hyde Park, died of cancer on Monday at his son's home in Providence. He was 74.

Mr. Spellman worked the night shift at the Air Mail Facility at Logan Airport for decades. It was an experience, his son, Sean, said, that spawned many quirky stories, including accounts of a temperamental machine that would occasionally shred - instead of sort - mail and a mysterious rule that anyone who took a Geiger counter to the workplace would be kicked out.

Although he never took up an instrument, Mr. Spellman was such a lover of music - listening to everything from Ella Fitzgerald and Stan Getz to David Bowie and Barry Manilow - that his co-workers nicknamed him "music man." Music seemed to take the edge off his job, his son said.

Mr. Spellman's exposure to music began early, when his parents put him into tap dance lessons.

Before World War II, he sang with the chorus on a radio program called "Youth on Parade," according to his son.

He served in the Army for two years in Germany immediately after World War II, sometimes forcing his way into houses to recover the furniture stolen from Jews during the war. He caught rheumatic fever and was discharged.

Born in Jamaica Plain to a fireman and a burlesque dancer, Mr. Spellman was raised in Dorchester and attended the Mather School, the oldest public elementary school in America.

Settling in Hyde Park, Mr. Spellman worked for the Postal Service for 32 years, the majority of that time at the Air Mail site. He retired in the early 1990s.

His son is his only survivor.

A funeral service and burial will be held at 12:45 p.m. tomorrow at the National Veterans Cemetery in Bourne.