

A life of optimism

By JAMES HART
The Kansas City Star

Who: Ronald R. McCoy, 68, a retired Kansas City, North, man who spent 33 years working as a mail carrier.

When and how he died: Jan. 26, of brain cancer.

How he enjoyed his life: McCoy knew practically everyone in Liberty and the surrounding area because he delivered mail there for more than three decades, his son said.

"He could always relate to anybody he came across," Ronald E. McCoy said. "And he could make them talk. If someone appeared to be standoffish, he could always get them to lighten up."

But there are few people who enjoyed their retirement as much as McCoy did, his children said. He had so many interests, so many hobbies, and being retired let him pursue them.

He bowled three times a week, and he exercised regularly, something he did throughout his life, his daughter Sandy Crowl said. A longtime music fan, he became a DJ, working wedding receptions and parties. He had a huge collection of records — "good-time music" like Elvis, the Beatles, Little Richard — that he kept carefully organized.

"He was very, very organized," Ronald E. McCoy said. "He kept track of everything."

Records weren't the only



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FAMILY

Ronald R. McCoy had a knack for conversation and organization.

thing he collected. He also had boxes of postage stamps, campaign buttons and baseball cards.

He kept track of pretty much everything, from the scores of his weekly Skip-Bo game to the progress of a bridge project near his house. He kept a journal and listed practically everything he did each day, said Mary Lou McCoy, his wife. Since he's been gone, she's been reading them.

Whenever he went on walks, he picked up aluminum cans. At the end of the year, he gave the money he made on recycling to his church and a charity.

True-blue fan: McCoy was a big baseball fan who regularly attended Royals games. His children can remember heading to the ballpark two or three hours before the opening pitch so they could

take photos and collect autographs. One time, Crowl remembers, she had to stay home sick when her favorite baseball player, Lou Piniella, was playing.

Her dad brought home Piniella's autograph, plus a message for her to get well soon. She still has the autograph.

He was a trouper: In July, McCoy was diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer. He underwent surgery, and it looked like the cancer was gone. It reappeared later in the year, and his health worsened.

Throughout his treatment, he tried to stay positive, his family said.

McCoy continued to bowl three times a week, even when he was going through treatment. He wore a bowling shirt to his radiation sessions, McCoy said. He also made a point of joking with other patients and trying to cheer them up.

"Everyone loves Ron," his wife said. "He likes to be a clown."

Survivors include: His wife, three children, two stepchildren and eight grandchildren.

The last word: "I can't remember a day when he was really down about anything," Crowl said.

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