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Postal Worker Witness to Portland Changes

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while Briggs was in the military, and through a program to help employ soldiers upon their return, Briggs found a job at the northeast Portland post office.

Briggs says he has seen a lot of changes in the neighborhood where he's worked for so long.

Briggs was born in Portland in 1949 at the county hospital. He grew up on North Kerby Avenue, attended Beech School on north Humboldt Street and graduated from Jefferson High School.

He remembers being a little kid, 4 or 5 years old, when the Vanport flood wiped out the largely African American community living at the wartime Kai-

member where from." He relates his job to being a bartender, where people come up to you and tell you their problems and know that you're going to be there day after day.

"I like people down to earth," said Briggs. "I don't care if you don't have money, as long as you have a good attitude and a good heart, I'm cool."

As the neighborhood builds and bustles around him, Briggs says he's watched people walk into the post office, into his life and out. "It's life—everything seems to have gotten a little bit better," said Briggs. "I enjoy it—have been all my life."

Briggs says the post office has also changed a lot in his 43 years.

When you're regulated by the

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— Postal worker Richard Briggs

ser Shipyards. He also remembers when Alberta and Mississippi streets were like ghost towns. "Now you can barely get down the street it's so busy," he said.

An influx of new people, including whites and Hispanics, into what was basically a black community is one of the biggest changes Briggs says he has witnessed. But he says, he doesn't mind. He likes all people and people tend to like him.

"You get to really know people, I like working with people," he said. "It's nice to see people and greet people." Some people he's known forever have stopped coming in, passed away, while he has enjoyed meeting new faces every day.

Briggs recalls a man stepping out of a resort in Mexico where the postman had been visiting. "Do I know you?" the man said, but couldn't remember where from. "Uh, the post office?" said Briggs.

"People just know me," said Briggs. "They just have to re-

government there will always be limitations and tough times, unlike UPS and Fedex, he said.

"But the post office will survive," he said.

People take for granted that you can still send a letter anywhere in the United States. Briggs hopes people think about the good things. "Everybody thinks we're going out of business, but we're not going out of business, we'll be alright."

Briggs lived in Gresham from 1977 to 1993 before he and his father-in-law built a house in Beaverton for Briggs's wife and six kids, where the family has lived ever since.

As you're reading this, Briggs will already be on a plane to Mexico with his family. He sold his house in Beaverton (in one day) and is exploring places to live in Cabo San Lucas.

But not to worry, in no more than 6 months, he'll be back. "I don't really want to leave Portland. I love Portland," said Briggs.

"I'm just trying to live life the best I can."