

By **PHYLISS BOATWRIGHT**
C-T Staff Writer

Monday July 12 was designated as Oscar Scott Woody Day in Roxboro and Person County, and the Roxboro Post Office now bears the name of the Roxboro postal clerk who lost his life on the RMS Titanic in 1912.

During dedication ceremonies Monday morning, the post office on South Main Street was officially renamed the Oscar Scott Woody Post Office in honor of the native son who died on the maiden voyage of the famous ship. Woody and his fellow postal employees lost their lives trying to save the 200 bags of mail the ship was carrying.

North Carolina's District 13 Congressman Brad Miller presented a plaque to Woody's descendants and a portrait of Woody that will hang in the post office. Miller said he was extremely honored to pay tribute to one of North Carolina's finest heroes.

"I am delighted that this occasion is occurring," Miller said to a large audience packed inside the post office's foyer. "I want to thank all the congressional delegations for their support (of the bill to rename the post office) in the House and Senate. I also thank all the local politicians."

Miller said that before he introduced the bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to rename the post office, he consulted local officials to make sure "it was OK locally" to honor Woody's memory by placing his name on the postal facility.

When he first began working on the renaming, Miller said he was fearful that "everyone would come forth with their own suggestions" as to who the post office should be named for and "there would be no way to do this without making someone mad." But, he said with a smile, everyone he contacted "thought Oscar Scott Woody was the guy."

Explaining that his father and grandfather were postal employees, Miller said that in the early 20th Century, "if you were from the rural South the post office was a good job that put food on the table. A job with the post office was a big deal; a good job."

But, Miller added, the job carried a great deal of responsibility as well as, many times, personal risk.

That Woody risked his life in order to do his job, said Miller, was the reason he felt so strongly that Oscar Scott Woody should be honored in his hometown.

When the RMS Titanic hit an iceberg on April 14, 1912, Woody and his fellow mail clerks were about to celebrate the Personian's 44th birthday. Seeing water creeping in and threatening the six million pieces of mail aboard the ship, however, the postal workers abandoned their plans and began working feverishly to get the 200 sacks of mail safely to the ship's deck. None of the men survived and Woody's body was found two weeks later.

"His service was heroic," Miller said Monday. "He did not shrink from his duty."

Roxboro Mayor Steve Joyner proclaimed July 12 Oscar Scott Woody Day and said he, too, was proud to honor a man as brave and dedicated as Woody. Joyner urged citizens to honor the memory of Woody.

A representative from North Carolina Sen. John Edwards' office was on hand for the ceremonies and said Edwards was pleased to have been able to work, with Miller, on gaining congressional approval to rename the post office.

Joyner said he and the city were grateful to Miller, Edwards and President George W. Bush, who signed the document making the renaming official.

Following the services at the post office, a reception was held at the Person County Museum of History. An exhibit at the museum honors Woody and the Titanic.