


John H. Ross

Teacher

 John Herbert Ross died at home Dec. 16, 2002. He was 77.

Ross was born in Boston, son of the late Thorvald S. and Edith (Parker) Ross, and was a resident of Cambridge for most of his life. He graduated from the Sbadly Hill School, Milton Academy, Harvard College with the class of 1948, and Northeastern School of Law. He practiced law for two years before earning an Ed.M. at the Harvard School of Education, launching a lifelong teaching career.

He taught at the Shore Country Day School in Beverly, Town School for Boys in San Francisco, Calif., Belmont Day School, the Fayerweather Street School in Cambridge, and Concord Academy.

He interrupted his teaching to take the fine furniture-making course at the North Bennet Street School in Boston. He spent the next decade teaching at the Belmont Hill School where a graduation requirement was the hand-carving of a mahogany wall panel.

On Saturdays he taught adults to use 19th-century hand tools at the Old Schwamb Mill in Arlington, at the Peabody Museum in Salem, and until his death, at the Andover Historical Society. His furniture has been exhibited in the Boston area and featured in "Back to Basics," a Reader's Digest book, and in the magazine, "Home Furniture."

He was a mountain climber and former president of the Harvard Mountaineering Club. He climbed in British Columbia, Alaska, the Rockies and the Alps. He spent two summers working on the Grenfell Mission in Labrador and in later years he traveled to Antarctica, the Northwest Passage and around Baffin Island.

During World War II, he served in the Navy V-12 program and saw active duty as a lieutenant in the far Pacific. He sailed for more than 60 years along the Maine, California and Canadian coasts. He and his wife spent part of many summers in the Colorado mountains, up the Frying Pan River, where he managed to sail on Lake Ruedi, a reservoir.

In the early 1960s he purchased a three-masted schooner and used it to administer a Save Our Ships program in Seattle. He completed the Munson Institute of Maritime History course, Mystic Seaport, Conn., and there, ran the mariner training program.

He was a member of the American Alpine Club, the Cruising Club of America, the Harvard Travelers Club (a member for 50 years and past president), the Delphic Club, the St. Botolph Club, the Economy Club, and the Early American Industries Association.

He was the husband of Barbara (O'Neil) Ross of Cambridge; father of Edith Ross Parker of Los Angeles, Calif., and Caleb Denman Ross of Sacramento, Calif.; brother of Thorvald S. Ross Jr. of Scarborough, Me., and Patricia Ross Pratt of Cambridge; grandfather of Danielle and Elizabeth Parker and Jacob Ross; great-nephew of Harriet F. Parker of Cambridge; uncle of Berit, Charles and Katherine Pratt, and Georgiana and Ogden Ross; great-uncle of Lily and Mei Lin Pratt, Sophie and Sam Pratt, and Serena Ross; and former husband of Louise Davidson Heyneman of San Francisco.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Feb. 1, at 11 a.m. at Christ Church, 0 Garden St., Cambridge.

Donations in Mr. Ross' memory may be made to the John H. Ross Woodworking Scholarship Fund, North Bennet Street School, 39 North Bennet St., Boston, MA 02113 or to Hospice of Cambridge, 186 Alewife Brook Parkway, Suite 300, Cambridge, MA 02138.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2002

Obituaries

John Ross, 77; was teacher, sailor, and furniture maker

By Maureen Costello

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

John Herbert Ross, a private school teacher and furniture maker who had an insatiable passion for sailing, died from lung disease on Dec. 16 in his Cambridge home. He was 77.

Born in Boston and reared in Cambridge, Mr. Ross graduated from Harvard College in 1948 and earned a law degree from Northeastern School of Law. After two years of practicing law, Mr. Ross returned to Harvard for a master's degree in education.

He then launched a career teaching science and creative arts at the Shore Country Day School in Beverly, the Town School for Boys in San Francisco, Belmont Day School, the Fayerweather Street School in Cambridge, Concord Academy, and Belmont Hill School.

Mr. Ross served as a Navy lieutenant in the Pacific during World War II. As a civilian, he worked two summers on the Grenfell Mission in Labrador, New Zealand.

In the early 1960s, Mr. Ross moved to Seattle to help found "Save Our Ships," a program to benefit antique water craft. Mr. Ross, who served on the museum's board of directors, planned to run SOS from the Wawona, a three-masted schooner he purchased and refurbished.

Before the program was fully established, though, Mr. Ross

moved to Mystic Seaport, Conn., where he ran the mariner training program at the Munson Institute of Maritime History as well as a sailing program for children.

Mr. Ross spent more than 60 years navigating the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, the Northwest Passage around the Baffin Islands, and the Frying Pan River in the Colorado Mountains, where he summered with his wife, Barbara O'Neil Ross.

When his wife asked him why he never tired of sailing, he told her, "There's a lot still to learn about these waters," she said.

Mr. Ross interrupted his teaching career briefly to take the fine furniture-making course at the North Bennet Street School in Boston. As a child, he had inherited antique woodworking tools from a relative, his wife said.

"He was always interested in working with his hands," she said. "He made absolutely beautiful furniture."

Mr. Ross's hand-carved pieces of early American furniture were featured in "Back to Basics," a Reader's Digest book. His hand-carved mahogany Charleston breakfast table was featured in Home Furniture magazine.

He also displayed his work in shows at Belmont Hill School, alongside his wife's pastel paintings. "That was one of the most wonderful things we did as a couple," said Mrs. Ross.



JOHN ROSS

Mr. Ross taught his trade at Belmont Hill School, where creating a hand-carved mahogany wall panel became a graduation requirement. One year, a senior asked him if a chainsaw could be used for the project. Mr. Ross, who was known for his wry wit, responded, "Well, you could. . . . But I wouldn't."

Mr. Ross's antique tool collection, which is at the Andover Historical Society, will be sold and the proceeds will fund scholarships to the North Bennet Street School.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Ross leaves a daughter and son from a previous marriage, Edith Ross Parker of Los Angeles and Caleb Denman Ross of Sacramento; a brother, Thorvald S. Ross Jr. of Scarborough, Maine; a sister, Patricia Ross Pratt of Cambridge; and three grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held Feb. 1 at 11 a.m. in Christ Church, Cambridge.

24 DEC 02

ROSS, John Herbert—Age 77, of Cambridge, died December 16, 2002 at home. He is survived by his beloved wife Barbara O'Neil Ross of Cambridge. Devoted father of Edith Ross Parker of Los Angeles, CA, and Caleb Denman Ross of Sacramento, CA. Dear brother of Thorvald S. Ross, Jr. of Scarborough, ME, and Patricia Ross Pratt of Cambridge and loving grandfather of Danielle and Elizabeth Parker and Jacob Ross. Nephew of Harriet F. Parker (97) of Cambridge. Uncle of Berit Charles and Katherine Pratt and Georgiana and Ogden Ross. Great uncle of Lily and Mei Lin Pratt, Sophie and Sam Pratt and Serena Ross. Former husband of Louise Davidson Heyneman of San Francisco. A Memorial Service and Celebration will be held at Christ Church, Zero Garden Street, Cambridge, on Saturday, February 1, 2003, at 11:00 A.M. Donations may be made to the John H. Ross Woodworking Scholarship Fund at North Bennet Street School, 39 North Bennet Street, Boston, MA 02113 or to Hospice of Cambridge, 186 Alewife Brook Parkway, Suite 300, Cambridge, MA 02138.



Many HTC members present:

Jim McCartney
George Wendelbach
Lyn Sgarzi
Harriet Provine
Norman Hill

A

Celebration

of the Life of

Tarot Swanson
George Whitehouse
Barbara Ross
Bob Bradford
Huntfield
Ogden Ross
The Longemoms

JOHN HERBERT ROSS

March 15, 1925 - December 16, 2002



Christ Church, Cambridge
Zero Garden Street
Saturday, February 1, 2003
11:00 a.m.



John H. Ross

1925-2002

John made such an impact on me in so many ways. He showed me patience, taught me respect for the details, introduced me to sailing and shared with me some of the most spectacular natural beauty on this good earth.

I will never pick up a fine woodworking tool without having thoughts of him. I'll never have a meal any more memorable than those aboard the OWL IV. I'll never look at a Hinckley yacht, feel the Maine fog on my face or see a channel marker nodding in the current without hearing the Captain calling, "What, ho!"

John found something interesting in just about every one and every thing.

I found in him a mentor, an artist, a scholar, an adventurer, an inspiring example of character and integrity, a gentleman and, most importantly, a friend. I will miss him.

*Ron Hazelton,
former owner of Cow Hollow Woodworks in San Francisco*

Ode to John Ross

Oh, what is so rare as a teacher
Of woodworking skills and the like
Who nudges his pupils so gently
They ease into doing what's right.

Who never says, "Don't do it that way"
But watches to see what we do,
And then, as the project progresses
Makes comments where changes are due.

Should I dovetail or dado or butt it?
Should I plane it some more (it's not smooth)?
Should I glue it or pin it or wedge it?
Have I chosen the right tool to use?

My progress is watched and then guided.
And I know that my choices are good
When I ask John if he'd do it "this way"
And his answer's a friendly, "I would".

*Marion Wohlhieter
Andover woodworking student*

For John, a job worth doing was worth doing slowly.

No task, no matter how simple or small, could be allowed to pass without having it call up a few good stories and spin off a few more. There was always an old tool to be used, after it was found, cleaned and sharpened and massaged in various ways - and revered for its suitability for just this kind of job. There were supplies to be gathered and, as in the case of the tools, old supplies were far better than new.

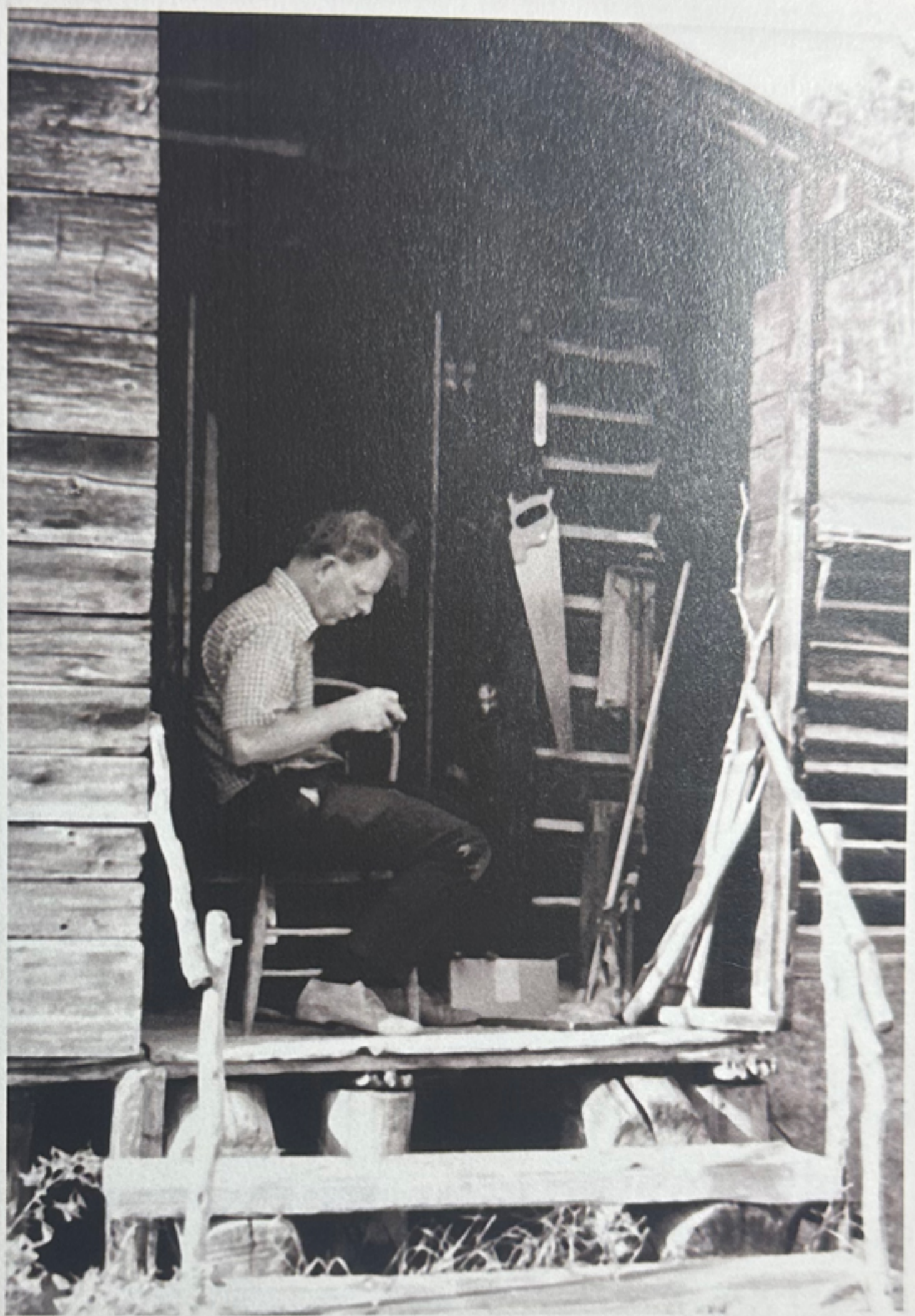
The rubrics of John's craft, incomprehensible to those of us who watched, and waited, seeing only the end **product** that we had envisioned and requested of him, were ritual and dance, not clearly connected to the simple job we had asked him to perform. He was frustrating us, surely. He was doing this to drive us nuts.

But those of us who eventually became drawn into the process, as helper or holder or recipient of the inevitable spin off materials that came from John's particular type of recycling, were not so sure. John's artwork was definitely astounding, his creations whimsical and wonderful, and the stories were always worth the time, but it was the **doing** of the job that counted, as became clear when one finally committed to John's pace and process. It was the journey more than the destination; it was the friendships forged that showed more brightly in the end than the newly oiled woodwork.

The little piles of nails and scrap wood, the broken bits that were left to be sorted, the seemingly endless sharpening and organizing, all took on new life in the light of John's freely shared sense of wonder. In these squirreled-away boxes of junk, John guarded the most amazing of goods, his understanding and perspective. He was always ready to find something unsought, to see what was really there, to look at the world with a fresh and open mind. And as much as we were able to let go of our schedules and join him in each journey, we too became more open to the world and its everyday magic.

Whitey Morange

head of the Art Department, Belmont Hill School



I remember a night at sea. John and I were sailing in the North Atlantic off the coast of Scotland. It was blowing a gale - rough and wild - and getting ready to go on watch, I was wondering - as others sometimes do, "**What are we doing out here?**"

Well, up on deck there was John, solid and confident, the compass light shining on that big ruddy face. He gave me one of those wise and wry smiles through the driving rain and shouted, "Fine night, sir!"

And whenever you were with John, it always was fine - on land or at sea. Wherever he was - in whatever situation - his overflowing good will seemed to change the light and the air around you.

Well, after that Atlantic gale, and many other times, we found our way into a good harbor. John set the anchor and announced, as he usually did, "I believe, sir, that we are firmly affixed to the real estate".

I love to think about John - his natural thoughtfulness that was so refreshing because it went beyond just a gentleman's good manners - and his unique, creative and witty way of talking - like the way he pronounced "boat" - and of course, his superb seamanship.

There was another of John's qualities at sea that I should add. He was "deliberate" - and on the days it was his turn to fix dinner, maddeningly deliberate. But John would put "something in a glass" for Liz and me and we'd talk, mostly about our families, his students and Barbie - Barbie who let him be - who helped him be that wonderful man - Liz's and my Best Man - and probably the most loved man we have ever known.

For you, Barbie, for those who share the love, and for John, I'd like to add a few familiar words that I think he would have liked:

"Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

Bob Hart

longtime friend

Elegy for John

When a sailor stops breathing -
a different dream begins.

Elysium's a stream to him -
a river - a lake - the sea.

We're also bodies of water -
those who love the sailor.

He becomes our dream -
our capillaries, new tributaries
to sail - they lead him
somewhere larger - our hearts.

Where does a sailor go
when he sails away?
He drops his anchor here - in us -
hauls in his sails - and stays.

Lesley Dauer

John and Barbara's niece

SEA-FEVER

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's
 shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide.
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls
 crying.

I must go down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like
 a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover, And
quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

John Masefield



Obituary

John Herbert Ross, 77, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, died at home of lung disease on Monday, December 16, 2002.

He was a teacher for over forty years. Born in Boston, the son of Thorvald S. Ross and Edith Parker Ross, he lived most of his life in Cambridge. He graduated from The Shady Hill School, Milton Academy, Harvard College '48, and Northeastern School of Law. He practiced law for two years before earning an Ed.M. at the Harvard School of Education, launching a lifelong teaching career. He taught at The Shore Country Day School, Beverly MA; Town School for Boys, San Francisco, CA; Belmont Day School, Belmont, MA; The Fayerweather Street School, Cambridge, MA; and Concord Academy, MA.

He interrupted his teaching to take the Fine Furniture Making course at the North Bennet Street School, Boston. He spent the next decade teaching at the Belmont Hill School where a graduation requirement was the hand-carving of a mahogany wall panel. Philosophy of life and a wry wit were part of his teaching style. He was known for this incident: a Senior, "Mr. Ross, can I make my panel with a chainsaw?" Mr. Ross, "Well, you could.... but I wouldn't."

On Saturdays he taught adults to use nineteenth century hand tools at The Old Schwamb Mill, Arlington, MA; at the Peabody Museum, Salem, MA; and, until his death, at the Andover Historical Society. His beautiful furniture has been exhibited in the Boston area and featured in Back to Basics, a Reader's Digest book, and in the magazine, "Home Furniture."

He was a mountain climber and former President of the Harvard Mountaineering Club. He climbed in British Columbia, Alaska, the Rockies and the Alps. He had a propensity for cold climates and spent two summers working on the Grenfell Mission in Labrador and in later years he traveled to Antarctica, The Northwest Passage and around Baffin Island.

During World War II, he served in the Navy and saw active duty as a lieutenant in the far Pacific. He was a passionate sailor, cruising for over 60 years along the Maine, California and Canadian coasts. When asked why he kept sailing Down East, he replied, "There's a lot still to learn about these waters." He and his wife spent part of many summers in the Colorado mountains, up the Frying Pan River, where he managed to sail on Lake Ruedi, a reservoir.

In the early 60's he purchased a three-masted schooner, WAWONA, from a rancher in Montana and used it to administer a Save our Ships program in Seattle. He completed The Munson Institute of Maritime History course, Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, and there, ran the Mariner Training Program.

He was a member of The American Alpine Club, The Cruising Club of America, the Harvard Travellers Club (a member for fifty years and past president), the Delphic Club, The St. Botolph Club, the Economy Club, and the Early American Industries Association.

He leaves his wife, Barbara O'Neil Ross; a daughter, Edith Ross Parker of Los Angeles, CA; a son, Caleb Denman Ross of Sacramento, CA; a brother, Thorvald S. Ross, Jr. of Scarborough, ME; a sister, Patricia Ross Pratt of Cambridge, MA; and three grandchildren.

Donations in Mr. Ross's memory may be made to the John H. Ross Woodworking Scholarship Fund, The North Bennet Street School, 39 North Bennet Street, Boston, MA 02113 or to Hospice of Cambridge, 186 Alewife Brook Parkway, Suite 300, Cambridge, MA 02138.



*As though
they had wings,
may the sorrows
in our hearts
be gently lifted.*

Memorial Service at Christ Church, Cambridge
Saturday, February 1, 2003

Calligraphic design: "Prevailing Winds" by Lee Anderson, 1941