



It's no secret... **CLEM SOMMERS HAS DONATED A LIFETIME OF SERVICE TO HIS COUNTRY, COUNTY, COMMUNITY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY HIS FAMILY.**

And this year... Oceanport Honors Clem Sommers



Clem Sommers was generous enough to donate his lifetime to bettering a community and is a role model for future generations. Clem served as instructor and treasurer of the First Aid Squad and was recognized in 1973 as first aider of the year. He joined the Hook & ladder where he served as 2nd Lieutenant, Captain, and President of the Hook. Clem then served as 1st assistant and Chief of the Oceanport Fire Department. For over 50 years he has served as Treasurer of the Oceanport Fireman's Relief Association. There was a period of time where Clem belonged to the Oceanport Lions' Club as well...

There were 2 major events in 1960. Clem began his first term as Oceanport borough councilman and he was married to his lovely and talented wife Lois Westbrook.

Clem and Lois have been married for over 50 years. They have a daughter, Linda, who blessed them with 3 beautiful grandchildren.

Clem spent almost a quarter of a century as an Oceanport Councilman, Mayor and Monmouth County Freeholder. His accomplishments included removing "downtown" and replacing it with Old Wharf Park, developing a Boro-wide Park system, construction of the Senior Citizens building, Port-Au-Peck chemical hose company fire house and the Borough hall.

As a Freeholder-Clem oversaw construction of the library headquarters, police academy, vocational school career center, and major additions to the jail. Mr. Sommers has been a member of the Monmouth County Vocational Board of Education for over 30 years. In 2010, students at MAST inducted Clem as an Honorary Member of the school's Chapter of the national Honor Society.

If you are relatively new in town and chose to live in Oceanport for its unique qualities, the Oceanport Lions' Club wants you to know that Clem Sommers has contributed greatly to the quality of life that you now enjoy. If you happen to see Clem shake his hand and say...

Thank you!



"Thank you Clem Sommers"

Mayor Michael J. Mahon's comments on Clem...

"As a former Mayor of Oceanport, Clem has always been there to offer advice when I needed it. Quite often, he answered a question with a question gently nudging me to approach the problem from another angle and see the solution for myself."

"When his own home suffered significant damage due to SS Sandy, Clem didn't dwell on it long. His conversations with me focused on what the town needed first."



Judge Cavanagh, John Bennett, Mayor Mahon and Clem Sommers

Oceanport residents that have served the community as Fire Chiefs.

Front Row: Marty Connelly, Ralph Marra, Al DeSantis, Charles Van Brackle.

Back Row: Clem Sommers, Ed Clayton, Vic Terwilliger, Bobby Rosen, Jimmy Finn, John Hanser, Danny Sapp, Willie Rielly, Ed Ryan Sr.



1970 Fire Chiefs

A message from Linda Opaleski, Clem's Daughter

It is a blessing to have a father after whom one can model her life. My father's years of service, relentless hard work, and positive outlook on life have always been an inspiration to me. He always made sure I had the strength and courage to meet whatever life would bring me. He and my mother instilled a moral character in me that would uphold our family name and that I would pass down to my own children. I'll never forget his campaign motto "Keep it Going" as it applies to so many situations in life. But perhaps his everlasting motto "Keep Smiling" is even more enlightening. It describes who my dad is and what he has instilled in me. It says be positive, expect to work hard and don't forget to make your world a better place.



Ed, Linda - Jessie, Kristy, Nate - Lois, Clem

Despite all of Clem's many hours of service, he made sure he had quality time to spend with his family.

OCEANPORT HONORS CLEM SOMMERS



Clem made many lasting impressions on people but nothing quite like this...

Oceanport residents share fond memories of the elephant appearing at the Summers End Festival... thanks to Clem ANYTHING is possible!

was an ardent advocate for the town and was part of the reason for the success of the application. I continue to count him as a friend and look forward to spending some time with him each year in October at the Port-au-peck firehouse on old timers' night. His recognition by the Oceanport Lions Club at the Strawberry Festival, is a well-deserved honor, and I join with his many friends in congratulating him on a successful and productive career.

A message from Judge Cavanagh about Clem's role in the town of Oceanport

When I moved to Oceanport during the 1970s, Clem Sommers was the sitting Mayor. I had the privilege of joining the Oceanport governing body in 1981 as a Councilman and served with him for two years. In 1983, we ran against each other for the mayoralty, in what was a competitive but never contentious campaign. In fact, the high point of the campaign was Clem's presentation of a live elephant at the Summer's End festival, which I am sure marked the first time that event ever occurred. After the election, he was gracious enough to sit with me and review the many items of responsibility that came with the job. Clem continued to play an active role in Oceanport affairs after he completed his term as Mayor. During the 1980s when the Borough sought assistance from the County to create the Wolf Hill Farm Recreation area, he

Ralph Mara's comments on Clem (Sonny) Sommers... the inside story:

I have been a friend of Clem Sommers for nearly 60 years. I first met Clem when I joined the Oceanport Hook and Ladder Fire Company at age 18. Clem was Assistant Fire Chief at the time. Eventually he became Fire Chief and also served as Captain of the First Aid Squad. Over the years we grew to be good friends and we did our share of damage as single guys. We were regulars at places like Mrs. Jay's in Asbury Park and the Parrot Club in Seaside Heights. In fact, Clem has the distinction of buying me my first legal drink. We later met our respective spouses (who both worked at EAI in West Long Branch) and we were both married within a year. Clem soon became an Oceanport Councilman and continued his devotion to community service. When Clem moved on the Mayoral post, he asked me to take his seat on the Council in 1976. Clem eventually became a County Freeholder while still holding his position as mayor of Oceanport. I cannot begin to list the benefits Oceanport received from Clem's involvement and strong position in the county. I spent over 10 years on the Council with Clem and was always in awe of his never ending energy and devotion to our community. He got things done for Oceanport that we almost considered impossible. But somehow he pulled the right strings or made the right calls and got it done. And he did it without fanfare or notoriety and always "under the radar". The residents of Oceanport will never know how much impact this one man had on what Oceanport looks like today. He will never tell you, because that's the kind of man he is. Memories are sometimes short-lived but we must never forget Clem Sommers and what he did for our great community. It is my honor and privilege to be his friend and I thank him for his friendship. My best to him and Lois for a long and healthy life together.

CLEM SOMMERS- “MR. OCEANPORT”



A message from Tom Gagliano about Clem’s devotion to our community.

Clem Sommers was one of the first persons I met when we moved to Oceanport back in 1960. To me, Clem was then and still is *Mr. Oceanport*. Clem has dedicated his life to his town and to the Monmouth County we all love. His dedication runs deep, as a councilman, fire chief, county school board member, husband, father and success in business is an inspiration to all. It is my great pleasure to join with the good people of Oceanport in expressing honor and thanks to a really true gentleman and great guy.

Kind words about Clem from Timothy M. McCorkell

& the Monmouth County School District

Clem Sommers has been a member of the Board of Education for the Vocational Schools in the County of Monmouth from 1978 to present. Clem currently serves as president of the Board. Clem Sommers has played an integral role in the success of the district and the services it provides to the residents of Monmouth County. MCVSD currently serves over 1,500 full-time students, 1,200 shared time students and hundreds of adult learners. Clem is quick to deflect praise to others, but this district would not be where it is today without the guidance and commitment of Clem Sommers. His contributions to the residents of Oceanport are significant. His contributions of the residents of Monmouth County are remarkable.

From John & Barbara Bonforte:

Clem, 50 years ago at age 23 I moved to Oceanport, married and looking forward to raising a family. A thought that rings clearly in my mind is the friendly manner in which you welcomed us. As time passes, we all cherish dearly the memories of our life experiences. My memories of you are special. I wish you and Lois the best of health. As Lions, our main focus is the preservation of sight. Helen Keller is quoted as saying “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched- they must be felt with the heart.” Clem, you have shared not only your talents but your heart with countless thousands of people. God Bless both you and Lois.-John and Barbara



*For more information and detailed stories about Clem please visit
www.oceanportlionsclub.com*