

# Ocean County Loses Three Icons

Ocean County lost three icons of the cultural and heritage community this fall:

**Engle H. Sprague (1922-2013)** of Waretown, **Charles Waterhouse (1924-2013)** of Toms River and **Robert O'Brien (1934-2013)** of Bay Head.

Photo credit: Sprague Family



Engle Sprague lived in Waretown since 1950 and served on the township committee for 24 years including 9 years as mayor. He served as chairman of the Waretown Cemetery Association and helped establish the Waretown Historical Society. Among many accomplishments, he is responsible for saving the 1888 diary of Paul W. Warren providing a window into the world of late 19th century Barnegat Bay through the writings of a 14 year old growing up in Waretown (two installments have been printed in this publication).

Painting by Colonel Charles Waterhouse.  
Photo credit: Commission Collection



Colonel Charles Waterhouse was a national respected artist who was an Ocean County resident and had established his non-profit art museum in Toms River in 1999. Colonel Waterhouse was the official USMC Artist in Residence, the first and only person to earn such recognition. When the Colonel Charles Waterhouse Museum closed its doors in Toms River, the majority of Waterhouse's body of work was gifted to the United States Marine Corps and many of his works are on prominent display at the National Museum of the Marine Corps located in Triangle, Virginia near MCB Quantico.

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Replica of the Dutch *Onrust*.  
Photo credit: Linda Bobar, The Onrust Project.



Robert “Bob” O’Brien was a long time summer resident and from 1994 onward a full time resident of Bay Head. In addition to serving as the president of the New Jersey Historical Society, he co-founded the New Jersey Museum of Boating in Point Pleasant and the Toms River Seaport. He was active in promoting the heritage of sailing on Barnegat Bay. A dynamic lecturer, he enriched the cultural fabric of Ocean County, including through his work on the book *400 Years of Boating on Barnegat Bay*. He is responsible for the Sandy recovery of the New Jersey Museum of Boating. At the time of his death, he was working to get the replica Dutch ship, *Onrust*, to visit Barnegat Bay in 2014 to celebrate the European mapping of our local waters in 1614. Mr. O’Brien hoped that this presence would help focus attention on preserving his beloved Barnegat Bay.

