

HURLEY CONKLIN AWARDEES

1986 Sam Hunt

1987 Pete Wilbur

1988 Turney Smith

1989 Randall Cranmer, Ray Kennedy,
Hayes Parker, Roger West, Carl Hewitt

1990 Jack Cervetto, Elmer Mott, Ed
Hazelton Sr., John Petzak, George
Heinrichs, Joe Reid, Joe Smith

1991 Weldon Parker, Charles E.
Hankins, Fred Kalm, Bob Rutter Sr.,
Bob Rutter, Rocky Wyckoff, Bob Leek,
Eppie Falkenburg, Ed Heinrichs, Bert
Courtney, Fred Bahr

1992 Melvin Parker, Joe Sprague, Paul
Steinhauer, Capt. Percy Giddes, Emil
Parker, Somers Headley, Capt. Chet
Holman, Tom Nickerson, Capt. Owen
Ridgeway, Joe Inman, Dick
McKandless, Capt. Ken Wilson Sr.,
Milton Cranmer, Capt. Steve "Sparky"
Dickerson, Otto Froriep Sr., Nathaniel
Boone Driscoll, Allen Tonneson

1993 Capt. Lew Broome, Peter Oliver
Bahr, Bert Cranmer, Bill Cranmer,
Capt. Dick Clineman, Paul Lafferty,
Lachlan Beaton, Capt. Calvin Wilson,
Martin Bob Chadwick, Elliott Giles,
Ernie Cranmer, Perry Inman, Charlie
Richards

1994 Capt. Dellwin Sooy, Robert D.
Conti, Lorna Chadwick Shinn, Dave
"Cricket" Winton, Winston Newman,
Carolyn Chadwick, Capt. Ken Allen,
Ed Brown, Enoch Jablonski, Walt
Ludlow, Cliff Lashley, Capt. Herb
Schoenberg

1995 Phil Hart, Gurney Hart, Walter
"Shorty" Hart, Paul D. "Pete" McLain,
Cliff Frazee, Gladys Eayre, Herschel
Abbott, Eldora Abbott, Leah "Sis"
Horner Marr, Russell Bowen, John
Cavileer

1996 Horace Cavileer, Milt Heinzer,
Major Leek, Don Maxwell,
Jack Parsons, Mason Price, Maurice
"Merce" Ridgeway, Edward J. Smith,
Arthur "Oppie" Speck, Stella S. Wegst

1997 Reeves O. "Slim" Hornby,
Norman Dupont, Joe Forsyth,
Capt. Paul Bonnell, Herlan "Blue"
Cornelius, Florence Cavileer,
Marion Speck, Stanley Conklin,
John Marvin Inman

1998 Bill de Freitas III, Harry de
Freitas, Alston Allen, William Jenks,
Charles Paul, Kenneth Holman

1999 Bob Gaskill, Gus Heinrichs,
Harry Shourds, Edna Marshall,
Herb Bell, Jack Scheimreif, Harry
Rogers

2000 Ken Maxwell, Edward Ahearn,
Janice Sherwood, John Lafferty,
Sam Leifried, Elwood Harvey

2001 Steven Potter, Benny Allen,
Enoch Pharo, John Chadwick,
Dave Paul, Sr., Bob Wilson

2002 Bub Johnson, Gary Giberson,
Ross Wilson, Jim Hutchinson

2003 Ronald M. Bozarth, Nelson
Holloway, Richard Crema, Richard
Beckley

2004 Ray Nyman, Edwin P. Thompson

2005 Capt. John Larson, Henry
Althouse, William Shoemaker,
William Godfrey

2006 Richard W. Matthews, John "Jack"
Vanaman

2007 Alvin Shourds, John Scott
Rutherford

2008 Capt. Bob Fricke

2009 Jim Leek, Malcolm Robinson,
Captain Phil Anderson

2010 John R. Holloway,
George Mathis Sr., Carl Tarnow

2011 Albert Gabriel, Capt. Michael
"Mickey" King, Halvor "Sonny" Skie,
Capt. George Svelling

2012 Anthony A. Schairer, Capt. John
"Jack Jr." Kennell

2013 John M. Chadwick, Don Cramer,
George Mikuletzky, Dale Parsons,
Wanda Parsons

2014 Ron "Poss" Hammell, Ray Huber Jr.,
John Joseph Maxwell

2015 Fred Lesser, George Mathis, Jr.,
Newt Sterling, Joe "Spike" Mott

2016 Captain Joel E. Mick,
Steve C. Frazee

2017 John Passuth, Ed McCay

2018 J.P. Hand, Dave Rhodes,
Arthur J. Birdsall

2019 Dick Jessen, Joe Rizzo,
Bill Simonsen

2020 Lewis "Spike" Wells,
Raymond Huber, III

2021 Kris Anderson, Clarence Fennimore

2022 Will Russell Hammerstrom,
William Skeie

2023 Thomas R. Beaton, Robert Beloff,
Paul N. Smith, William de Rouville, Sr.

2024 Gary Driscoll,
W. Fred Reitmeyer, Jr.

2025 Mark Ford, George Strunk

2026 Herb Heinrichs, Anthony Hillman,
Terry McNulty, Joan Seibert

Jim & Joan Seibert

2026 Heritage Awardee & Conklin Awardee

By Pat Johnson

Trees and flowering shrubs almost hide the home that Jim and Joan Seibert built in Dennisville, New Jersey. Forty acres surround the rustic house; twenty of them are salt marsh, a selling point for her husband, said Joan, since he was an avid duck hunter.

The couple spent fifty years together carving decorative birds and producing hunting decoys for the sportsmen market. Sadly, Jim passed away in 2012. Since then, Joan did not feel she could take the Conklin Award without Jim being honored as well. Both deserving of the honor, the Decoy Show Committee selected Joan Seibert for the Conklin Award and Jim Seibert with the new, posthumous Harry M. Shourds Heritage Award.

“We were one entity - always identified as Jim and Joan Seibert at the shows. We always worked together,” said Joan.

Jim and Joan met while attending college. “We were the first art majors graduating from Glassboro—(now Rowan University.)” The couple taught art education in public schools. Joan and Jim taught for 11 years before they decided to start their decoy business and move back to where Jim grew up.

“When we lived in North Jersey we had some friends who invited us to go to Long Island to our first decoy show and Jim met Al McCormick—he was called ‘Mr. Decoy’.



Photos Courtesy: Joan Seibert.

He would teach guys to make cork decoys. So they would be down in the basement rasping cork decoys and it created static electricity and he'd be covered in dark brown cork. But that's how he started. This was in 1970.”

Jim carved mainly Delaware and Barnegat style decoys. While Jim carved full sized birds, Joan carved miniatures. “This is how I started carving miniatures: he had blocks of wood—he cut out the pattern and what was leftover were the corners. That's why I do that size. Honest to God that's how I started.”

The couple bought the Delaware Decoy Company from decoy carver Terry McNulty and worked it for 15 years. The machine-made decoys were rough carved on a type of router from a set pattern and could turn out 12 at a time. From there, the Seiberts did fine carving, sanding, and painting to finish the birds. “We really turned out a lot of birds. And we invented the jingle birds—(a decorative song bird with a bell attached). “We made and sold a lot of them.”

The Delaware Decoy Company sold wholesale to hunters. “We had a huge machine in the barn. We would



Photo Credit: Pat Johnson.

be up to our knees in sawdust. I did all the sanding and he did all the carving. At first we did all the painting but then we had to hire people to help.”

Besides the hunting decoys, the couple worked on their own designs. “We never worked together on a bird but we advised each other,” said Joan. “Jim was great with color. We worked together every day, daytime in the barn and nighttime decorative carving. We had a life!”

Because of his art background, Jim was very creative, said Joan. He made a model carousel with birds instead of horses. He made Noah’s Arks with Joan’s miniatures on the deck. His showstoppers included a life-size flying osprey and a diorama of a German shorthair puppy flushing three quail. “He made a lot of woodcock –hunters loved woodcocks –you can always sell a woodcock,” said Joan.

“We used basswood for decorative birds –it’s soft and the grain doesn’t get in the way. Basswood is good for burning details like feathers. For working decoys we used cedar or pine.”

The Seiberts started the Wings and Water Festival in Stone Harbor that ran for 30 years and was held the weekend before the Old Time Barnegat Bay Decoy and Gunning show in Tuckerton. They also started the Cape May show on the Boardwalk that is no longer. Both served as contest judges at shows. For ten years Jim was the resident decoy carver at Wheaton Village.

The life of a decoy carver means meeting lots of other decoy carvers and collectors at shows and the couple had many lifelong friends.

“We were very friendly with Hurley (Conklin) and Harry V. Shourds. Hurley was a regular guy but what I remember most is he had twinkling eyes. Everyone in the county carves with Jamie Hand—he, Tony Hillman, and myself are the last ‘men’ standing.”

When Jim got sick, the couple sold the Jingle Bird franchise to the Bird House in Cape May and sold the Delaware Decoy Company to ‘a couple of guys’ in Nebraska.

They also sold their extensive collection of decoys to pay hospital bills. Joan is 84 and after her husband died she stopped carving and doing shows. Then a year ago, a collector of Joan’s work, Jim Hudgins, a retiree from Fish and Wildlife Service, persuaded her to pick up her tools again. At 84, she is carving and painting again and enjoying it.

Looking back, “I think I had a wonderful life!” she said.



Anthony Hillman

2026 Hurley Conklin Awardee

By Pat Johnson

As an outdoorsman, a painter, decoy carver, and author, Anthony “Tony” Hillman is a perfect candidate for the Conklin Award and as the artist of this year’s show print.

Born in Atlantic City in 1948 and raised in North Wildwood, he remembers a different, quieter shore than today. “I could go outside and play and I wandered all over. The beach and the marsh were my playgrounds. I spent a lot

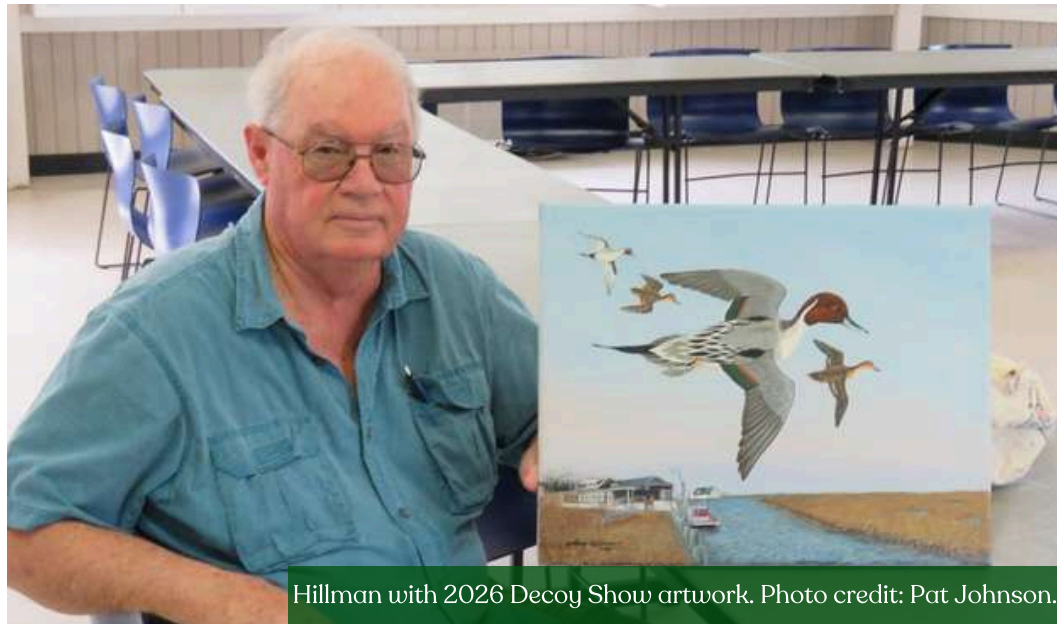
of time fishing and crabbing at Tony’s Marina and the owners would feed me lunch. On the road to the marina there was an osprey nest on every pole.”

His father was a WWII veteran and worked as a TV repairman and his mom was a housewife who knew how to cook the ducks his brothers would bring home. His father also worked occasionally with famous decoy carver Harry Mitchell Shourds painting houses.

He had four brothers and was the next to the youngest in the pecking order. When his two older brothers hunted, it was Tony’s job to skin the birds. “I took a correspondence course in taxidermy but it didn’t take.”

Looking back into his extensive genealogy, Hillman recounted there is a Lt. Col. Josiah Hillman who fought in the Revolutionary War with George Washington and had oversight of a fort on the Delaware. There was also a John Hillman who was a house painter and carver in the 1700s. “Maybe the carving genes came from him,” Hillman speculated.

“I always drew birds. As a kid I drew on the end papers of the Book of Knowledge (Encyclopedia).”



Hillman with 2026 Decoy Show artwork. Photo credit: Pat Johnson.

When Hillman graduated from High School in 1966 he went to the Hussian School of Art in Philadelphia for six months. The war in Vietnam was heating up and he joined the Marines before being drafted. He was enrolled in the anti-tank division at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. He thought he might be sent to Vietnam but he wound up going to sea school. He was on a destroyer that held 40 marines and 1,200 sailors. “We were in the Mediterranean and I was always looking at the birds that would alight on the rigging during their migration. I was on the ship a year and a day.”

Back at Camp Lejeune he drew military weapons from manuals for slides used for training purposes. It was his first experience with commercial art skills.

After his service he returned to Philly, married, and had a daughter. He got jobs with prestigious commercial and advertising firms but he missed the shore. “I was getting an ulcer and I hated living in the city.” So he took his bride and daughter to a small house on the bay in Brigantine. “My brother said I should go clamming. Well, we had a dock and there was an old garvey in the

yard half full of water and I bailed it out and started scratch raking hard clams. I averaged 800 to 1,200 clams on a tide. I'd take them to Pleasantville and sell them. I loved clamming, the birds would follow you around as you stirred up the mud." He also hunted and made his own decoys. His young daughter helped him paint snow geese flatties.

All through his life he kept on painting and drawing—watercolors of marsh scenes and ducks. He went to Stockton University and got a degree in painting. He still had connections in Philadelphia and did illustrations for Gray and Rodgers Advertising Agency, spot illustrations for the Fish and Wildlife Service and other clients. When his family moved to Seaville, he met Harry V. Shourds and they traveled to decoy shows together. Since Hillman knew commercial art he decided to do a shorebird pattern book with Shourds. "We did full size profiles and top views, we ring-bound it and printed 500 copies." "Harry and I did three books together and I later did the (decoy) painting books. I've published seven or eight books and sold over 100,000 copies." The books made his name in decoys. "You can't buy better advertising," he said.

His own style of decoy carving is self-taught by watching others carve.

"I used to visit Hurley Conklin. From him I learned to stretch the bodies out for more visibility. Hurley had talent to take a pattern and reduce it to its essentials."

"I was friends with Sam Hunt. I made him a couple of nice black ducks. Sam built me a sneakbox. He taught me a lot about wood."

Because of his friendship with Hunt, Hillman was invited to attend the 1983 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in Washington D.C.

"They said Sammy wouldn't go without me," said Hillman. "The Smithsonian sent a big truck to Sam's house in Waretown and took an 18-foot garvey and a 12-foot sneakbox. Sam threw a bunch of shoes in a gunnysack and we went to the festival."

The festival that year was highlighting New Jersey folk artists and French/American music and dance.

"It was two weeks in the summer and we had a great time. We were in a tent next to a bunch of Cajun musicians. Not everyone knows that Sam was a terrific dancer. He danced all day with Alice Ridgeway.

"Our tent was all decoys. Arthur Pelligrin was in his 80s. He carved in tupolo wood. Charlie Hankins and his helper set up a steam box and built a sea skiff.

"I had some black ducks that I sold and I met people from all over the world. A guy from Germany ordered a bird from me."

Hillman is known not only for his decoys and his books but for his miniatures. Ever the salesman, he notes that, "Everybody has room for miniatures."

He was chosen this year to paint the cover illustration for the Old Time Barnegat Bay Decoy and Gunning Show, a real honor.

His pattern and painting books of ducks, shorebirds, fish decoys and miniatures have inspired countless craftsmen and hobbyists and are still found on eBay and other outlets. And although he still carves for clients, "I'm as busy as I want to be, I had lots of work pressure when I was doing commercial art and I never said no but when it comes to decoys, I don't want to be rushed."



2026 Hillman Rudy Duck.
Photo Credit: Mike Mangum.

Herb Heinrichs

2026 Conklin Awardee

By Pat Johnson

Decoy carver and artist Herb Heinrichs is part of a large family in Tuckerton that has included many talented tradesmen. His uncle was boat builder Gus Heinrichs. His Great Uncle was Captain Edward “Sock” Heinrichs, the owner of the Heinrichs boat shop and marine railway on Tuckerton Creek (current site of the Tuckerton Seaport). His grandmother Elsie had a dairy farm on Wood Street in Tuckerton and his grandfather Ed ran the tugboat and truck for the Fish Factory on Crab Island off Brigantine Road (also known as Great Bay Boulevard or Seven Bridges Road). His father was one of eight children: five sisters, Berta, Peggy, Reds (Elsie), Sis and Judy and two brothers, Alvie and Russell. His Dad was also Herb and was a builder. Herb Jr. grew up on Wood Street with sister Diane and brother Mark.

Tuckerton was very different then—it was a town that was 50 years behind the times. Hunting was a regular pastime for most of the boys. “We went duck hunting every chance we had. Back then it was food for the table. Since my grandfather ran the truck for the fish factory we were able to get permission to sink boxes in the meadows and hunt from them. Yes, we had decoys. Some of them were probably Horners, Shourdses, McAnnys – but I lost them all- some were stolen right out of the boat- but it is what it is,” said Heinrichs.

Hunting was so common that boys were able to take their guns to school and leave them in their lockers. “It was nothing to see a kid with a shotgun. One night after school, I shot two rabbits on Mrs. Richmond’s lawn on Cedar Street and she didn’t say anything. If you’d do that today—you’d get locked up.”

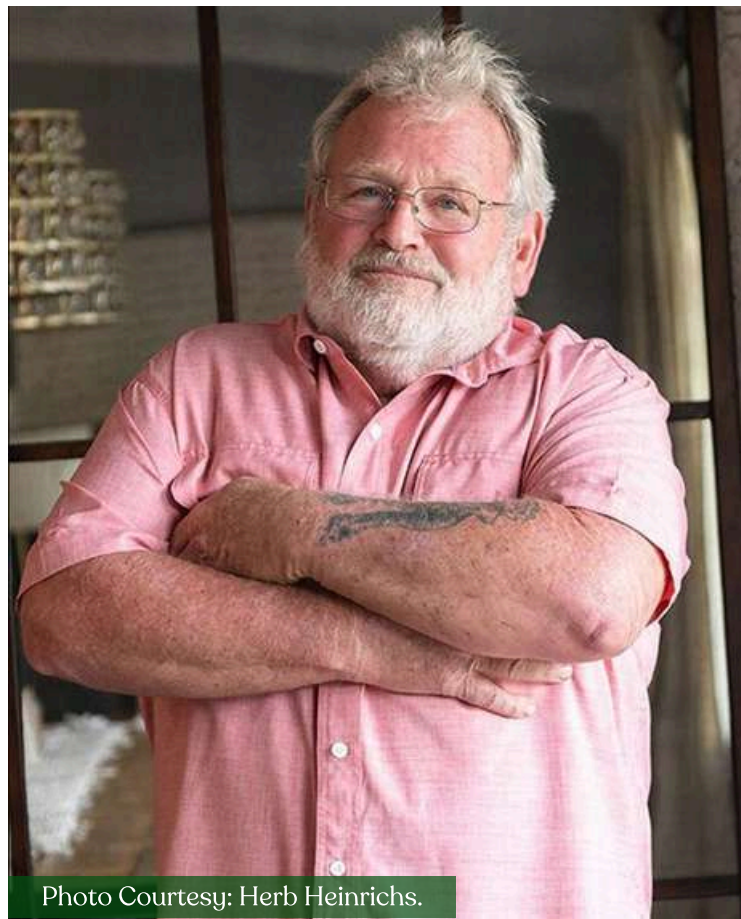


Photo Courtesy: Herb Heinrichs.

Like other boys in the area, Heinrichs went clamming in the bay. “My first boat was a 14’ sneakbox my father bought from Parkertown. I was ten or eleven. I went out with three buddies: Davy Miller, Johnny Godfry and Louie Driscoll. For our age we caught 200 or 300 a day tredding, later it was thousands. I clammed up until 1999. I had 19 acres of clam beds in the bay. I would plant the seed and 18 months later I would have small clams. I loved it. I wish I could still do it.”

Another pastime was garvey racing and Heinrichs had a T-101 souped-up garvey. “Me and Billy Mott had The Miss Town Tavern. Races were held every weekend in Tuckerton, West Creek, Barnegat or Pleasantville. I’ll tell you how it started: Pat and Joe Heinrichs, Eddie and George were coming back from clamming and decided to race their boats. It could have been others: Rocky Wycoff and some. And from there it took off—boats got bigger and fancier. This was in the early ‘60s.”

When racing, Heinrichs met Brenda, his wife of 56 years, in a tavern in North Jersey. “I had blown an engine in my boat and I took the engine out of her car and put it in my boat. That seemed like a proposal.”

Heinrichs started decoy carving in 1978 when he and Brenda moved to Louisiana. “That’s where I accepted Jesus, the most important thing in my life.” When visiting Tuckerton, “I saw Tommy Ryder carving decoys and that’s when I got serious. I thought I’d run with it. I started going to shows and selling stuff.”

When the couple moved back to Tuckerton ten years later, Heinrichs attended the decoy shows and taught decoy carving at Pinelands High School adult classes. “I loved doing that because when you are teaching, you are also teaching yourself.” He also judged decoy contests for many years, as did his son Keith.

Heinrichs was one of the founders of the Barnegat Bay Decoy and Baymen’s Museum (Tuckerton Seaport), serving as the President for the first year. “A handful of us were hanging out at Tips Hardware (in West Creek) and talking. We formed an association and it took off. It started as a way of doing something for kids. That was what was in my heart—to save Tuckerton’s heritage.”

The Museum was on Main Street at the entrance to Tip Seaman County Park. It was later moved across the street to the current site of the Tuckerton Seaport, and that original building now serves as the Hunting Shanty - a space for programs, community meetings, and exhibits.

The Museum was built with volunteer labor. “While we were building it I got sick and so I stepped down as president. I’m better now.”

While in Tuckerton, he took a few oil painting classes with local artist Joyce Lawrence. “I used to hate to draw but in 2016, I picked up a pencil. Then one Sunday in church, a guy I know said I should try pastel and I absolutely love it! This is all God’s work.”



Painting by Herb Heinrichs.



Below: Heinrichs, 2026.
Photo credit: Heinrichs family.

Above: Heinrichs, 1996
Decoy Show.
Photo credit: Mike Mangum

Heinrichs now lives in Green Cove Springs on Florida’s East Coast surrounded by 50 acres of woods. “I love the woods. I have a sawmill and a workshop and I can make noise. But I love Tuckerton. My son lives in New Greta and rebuilds boats. He has an oyster farm with 150 floating boxes. When we visit we stay in his houseboat.”

Heinrichs has won many awards for his decoys including Best in Show for a brant in the working decoy contest. Heinrichs was also the artist for the 2001 Decoy Show Print depicting Heinrichs Boatworks and the bird of the year, Ruddy Ducks. The Hurley Conklin Award for living the baymen’s way of life is richly deserved by Heinrichs who gives all the credit to his Savior.



Terry McNulty: 2026 Conklin Awardee

By Pat Johnson

At age 85, Terry McNulty is still an avid duck hunter though this coming season he will have a friend with him rather than conquer the elements alone. McNulty has recently found a retriever that he is training and almost every day he takes his dog to Peck's Bay. He has two workshops in his Egg Harbor home—a carving shop in the garage where he also stores his duck boat and an office for painting his decorative and hunting decoys. His wife of 64 years, Peggy, has always been supportive of his work. "Every day I still go down to the river. When I come home for coffee, she asks, 'Well, is it still there?'"

McNulty was raised in Riverside, New Jersey and no one in his immediate family hunted or were outdoorsman, he said. But as a boy he was always outside, mucking about on the Delaware River and Rancocas Creek. He learned to hunt ducks with his boyhood friends. "When I was 15 I had to learn to hunt. My first gun was an Ithaca pump (shotgun) and I remember my first duck, a drake mallard and I stood there with my mouth open, watching it fall.

"I started carving because I needed a decoy rig. I gathered a bunch of old decoys and started fixing them up—painting them and repairing necks and bills. Eventually I went to the next level. I started carving cork

decoys in the 1960s—a half dozen at a time, mostly black ducks. By the 70s I figured it was time to go to wood. I carve hollow decoys in traditional Barnegat Bay and Delaware River styles, ones you can actually hunt over."

McNulty was one of the last Delaware River "scullers." He liked to scull close to the riverbank using his long-handled traditional scull oar and "push-poles" to literally push or propel the boat forward. And he never goes hunting in winter without his long-handled ice hook.

He no longer has the scull but he treasures his Barnegat Bay, feathered-edge sneakbox that is over 50 years old. "My parents took a picture of me when I was five or six years old standing on a sailing sneakbox on Long Beach Island. There must have been something in that boat that went all through my system."

The fact that he has hunted all his life has contributed to the lifelike quality of his carvings. McNulty has won numerous awards for his decoys starting with the Ward Foundation Show in Maryland, Ohio Decoy Carvers and Collectors Show, US Nationals Long Island Show and the Clayton, New Jersey Decoy show.

Above: McNulty at his workshop. Photo Credit: Pat Johnson.

He entered his first show at the Ward Foundation in Salisbury, Maryland and won a third place in the decorative category. “I thought, ‘Wow but I can do better.’”

“Two years later I entered a hen mallard. Out of 15 in the tank I came in 7th and had my heart broken. I asked the judge—Paul Verdet what I might do better. He said I did a great job on the eyes and then he proceeded to ‘take an ax and chopped it up in little pieces.’ I thought I would never enter another contest until I know what I’m doing.”

“Then in 1976 I felt more comfortable and went to the U.S. Nationals on Long Island and won Best in Show for my pintail. That was the beginning when I started making decorative decoys and started competing. I went back to Maryland and won Best Puddle Duck in Decorative. And in 1985 I won Best in World Hunting Decoy. I got more and more involved in decorative but I get more enjoyment making hunting decoys. A fancy bird is nice but it just sits on a shelf.”



McNulty Swan. Photo Credit: Pat Johnson.

For years he entered in shows all over the country—and won Best in Show in north and south California, in Clayton, New York and the Ward Foundation among others.

“My tendency is to try and recreate a real duck. That’s what I love and I’m told to do what you love.”

When he hunted in Brigantine, he used to sell his decoys right out of his boat to other hunters.

He started teaching others to carve from a shop in his trucking company in Riverside. “Two fellows got really good- Caleb Mater and Horace Jennings,” said McNulty.

McNulty also volunteered at the Tuckerton Seaport and did carving demonstrations in the Jay Parker carving shop. He enjoyed demonstrating for the public and one year he carved a life-size swan that kept folks coming back to watch his progress.

McNulty declared, “I love everything about duck hunting, the decoys, the boats, the guns.. I hunt over hand-carved decoys and I collect some. I put them on a shelf and on days I can’t get out, I sit in my lounge chair and pick a decoy or two and think about that duck bouncing on the bay or river.”



McNulty Pintails. Photo Credit: Pat Johnson.