

# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT FOR TOURISM: COMMISSIONER JOSEPH H. VICARI

By Sandra Lazzaro

Commissioner Joseph H. Vicari was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for Tourism at the *Salute to Ocean County* in April. Commissioner Joseph H. Vicari has been a solid fixture in Ocean County for nearly five decades.

He was elected to the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders (now the Ocean County Board of Commissioners) in 1981. He is the longest serving Freeholder/Commissioner in the state of New Jersey.

He is a lifelong educator. He helped transform Ocean County College and the Ocean County Vocational-Technical Schools into best-in-their-class institutions. With his education experience, he has encouraged students locally to seek employment in Ocean County. He also helped bring a new Performing Arts Academy to Ocean County College.

Commissioner Vicari has been a solid supporter of the McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Joint Base, he worked successfully to remove the vital base from the federal base closing list in the 1990's. Today the facility remains vital to national defence and it is a huge contributor to the local economy.

Commissioner Vicari has been a staunch advocate for our natural resources that are the heart of tourism by continuously working with local environmental groups to protect the 42 miles of the Barnegat Bay, preserve open space, and protect our 44 miles of beaches. He truly understands how vitally important this is for the people who live and visit Ocean County. He has always supported agritourism.

His seasonal "buy in Ocean County" effort to promote local businesses become a year-round success and helped funnel customers to locally owned small shops and restaurants.

He has always believed in, championed, and committed himself to the tourism industry. He has played an important role to bring tourism to its all time new heights in Ocean County. Under his direction, tourism now pumps \$7 billion annually into the local economy.



Commissioner Joseph H. Vicari and his wife Joyce Vicari accept the Tourism Award.  
Photo courtesy: Ocean County.

These are only a few highlights of Commissioner Vicari's local government career. Most of all, his passion is for serving the people of Ocean County. His legacy will continue and we will always think of Joseph H. Vicari and his love of tourism in Ocean County!