

Mr. John Henry, Sr. is being recognized by the Ocean City Juneteenth Organization with the Athletic Achievement Award during the Inaugural Juneteenth Celebration & Brunch, June 17, 2017. Mr. Henry's athletic accomplishments are what folklores are made of. His athletic feats tread between fact and fiction creating a superhero tradition. His generosity and kindness runs parallel with his prowess on the track and football field. He is still the bar by which many Ocean City greats are measured.

Mr. Henry was born January 22, 1949 to Vivian Thompson-Henry and Daniel C. Henry, Sr. in Somers Point, NJ. He attended Ocean City schools and graduated from Ocean City High School in 1967. During his time at OCHS, Mr. Henry had a remarkable athletic career, excelling in football and track and field, and later being inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame. Despite his mother's fear of him being injured and being one of the smallest on the field, Mr. Henry had an outstanding football career, which he says was his favorite sport. He ran the ball often and was rarely ever caught on the field by opponents and teammates alike. Practices were often drawn out late into the evening and car headlights used to light the field as the coaches would not dismiss the team until someone could stop him. Mr. Henry's unmatched speed was highlighted even more on the track. Running the 100m, 220m, 4x100m relay, and 4x200m relay, he had an extraordinary career, and ran the 100m in 9.9 seconds, earning him the nickname "UFO." As the fastest man in the area, and maybe the state during those times, he only ever lost one race, to Peanut Gains. His love for running has continued throughout his life and he still is likely to beat most young people in a foot race. After high school, Mr. Henry attended Carpenter School for a time at the Cape May County Vocational Technical School, later working for the cities of Ocean City and Pleasantville driving sanitation trucks. He is a man of many talents, raising Birmingham Roller pigeons for years that many in the community remember watching doing rolls and swoops in the air. He is also an avid fisherman and can often be found on the jetties and marshes of Ocean City catching fish and crabs that he shares with his loved ones. His generosity is also shown through his love of gardening, as he helps many family and friends with planting every spring and summer. Mr. Henry still lives in Ocean City in his family's homestead on West Avenue. He is the father to three sons and one daughter, the grandfather to several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the surrogate father and grandfather to many, and a friend to all.