



## **PHOTO NEWS RELEASE:**

July 14, 2016

### ***A MEMORIAL WAS HELD ON SEA ISLE CITY'S 43<sup>rd</sup> STREET BEACH IN HONOR OF PROFESSIONAL LIFEGUARDS JOE AND HUGHIE BOWEN***

**SEA ISLE CITY, NJ** – On the morning of July 11, nearly 200 people gathered on Sea Isle City's 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Beach to honor the memory of two brothers who served as lifelong professional lifeguards: Joe and Hughie Bowen.

The Bowen Brothers were originally from Philadelphia, where they graduated from LaSalle High School prior to becoming year-round lifeguards. During their impressive career, the pair guarded beaches in Sea Isle City during the summer months and in Hollywood, Florida, during the winter.

While protecting Sea Isle City's beaches, the Bowens earned well-deserved reputations for being extremely devoted lifeguards.

Joe, who served as Sea Isle City Beach Patrol (SICBP) Captain during the 1960's, was the organization's first Mascot Swim Champion and a five-time City Swim Champion. While Captain, Joe oversaw the largest protected beach expansion in Sea Isle's history. In 2001, he was the first guard ever inducted into the SICBP Alumni Association's Hall of Fame.

As fate would have it, Joe passed away on July 11, 2015 – the anniversary of the founding of the SICBP, which took place July 11, 1919 on Sea Isle's 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Beach.

Hughie, the younger of the two Bowen brothers, was well-known in South Jersey as an impressive contender during lifeguard competitions. His list of accomplishments includes being a six-time Doubles Rowing Champion, five-time Tri-City Champion, South Jersey Rowing Champion and Margate Memorial Champion. Hughie earned the rank of lieutenant with the SICBP and was ultimately inducted into the SICBP's Alumni Association Hall of Fame in 2005.

During the July 11 memorial service, which was hosted by the SICBP Alumni Association, words of praise were offered for the Bowen brothers from numerous admirers, including event emcee and local author Joe LaRosa, Jr., who is also a former SICBP lifeguard Alumni Hall of Fame inductee. City Council President Bill Kehner, SICBP Alumni Association President John McCann, Upper Township

Beach Patrol Captain William Handley, and former SICBP Alumni Association President Jack Gibson also spoke fondly of the Bowen brothers – as did Brian Bowen, Joe Bowen’s son.

Following the speeches, as bagpipers filled the morning air with Irish music, former SICBP lifeguards Thomas Feaster, Thomas McCann, Murray Wolfe and Dale Bonsall rowed two boats beyond the breakers to set flowers adrift at sea in honor of the Bowens. Accompanying them were rowboats representing the Sea Isle City, Wildwood, Avalon and Upper Township Beach Patrols – as well as numerous surfers, who added to the event’s fleet of participants. Afterwards, friends and family members gathered for group photos prior to attending a celebration at VFW Post 1963, hosted by the Bowen family.

According to SICBP Alumni Association President John McCann, the Bowen brothers were exceptional lifeguards.

“Joe and Hugh were both great athletes and fine competitors, but above all they were committed to excellence and they cared greatly about public safety,” said Mr. McCann. “They wanted everyone who came to the beach to be able to leave the beach safely.”

“Through the years, the Bowens, along with other members of the Sea Isle City Beach Patrol, set a very high standard that has lasted for nearly a century,” added the Alumni Association President. “The Bowen’s commitment to safety extended to other beach patrols in our area and all the way to Florida too. We are all fortunate to have worked under Joe and Hughie because they were passionate about lifeguarding and they raised the bar for us all.”

The SICBP Alumni Association will continue to honor past lifeguards by hosting their annual “Hall of Fame Induction Dinner” on Saturday, August 13, at the Lobster Loft Restaurant in Sea Isle City’s historic Fish Alley. To learn more about the SICBP or their Alumni Association, visit [www.sicbp.com](http://www.sicbp.com).

## **PHOTOS & CAPTIONS:**

**(Image: City Council President)** City Council President Bill Kehner (front) and Sea Isle City Beach Patrol alumni Joe LaRosa were among those who shared words of praise for the Bowen brothers on July 11.



**(Image: Alumni President)** Sea Isle City Beach Patrol Alumni Association President John McCann welcomed guests to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Beach on July 11 during the memorial service.



**(Image: Jack Gibson)** During the Bowen brother's memorial service on July 11, City Councilman Jack Gibson, a 2003 Sea Isle City Beach Patrol Alumni Hall of Fame Inductee, reminded the audience that "old lifeguards never die."



**(Image: Audience)** Upper Township Beach Patrol Captain William Handley (far right) is shown speaking on Sea Isle's 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Beach at the start of the Bowen brother's memorial service.



**(Image: McHale Gallagher)** Former Sea Isle City Beach Patrol Captains Mike McHale (at left) and Bill Gallagher are shown manning a rowboat during the memorial service for Joe and Hughie Bowen on July 11, when a small fleet of lifeguard boats representing four Cape May County beach patrols and numerous surfers paddled beyond the breakers to set flowers adrift at sea.



**(Image: Upper Township)** On July 11, Beach Patrol representatives from Sea Isle City, Wildwood, Avalon and Upper Township gathered with nearly 200 people on Sea Isle's 43<sup>rd</sup> Street to honor career lifeguards Joe and Hughie Bowen. Shown rowing past the breakers during the Memorial Service are Lt. Joe LaRosa, Jr. and Rookie Guard Brooke Handley, of Upper Township Beach Patrol.



**(Image: Bagpipes)** On July 11, bagpipers performed on Sea Isle City's 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Beach as rowers and surfers paddled beyond the breakers in honor of Joe and Hughie Bowen.



**(Image: Fleet)** A small fleet of rowboats and surfboards honored career lifeguards Joe and Hughie Bowen on July 11 in Sea Isle City.



**(Image: Onlookers)** Nearly 200 friends and family members gathered on Sea Isle City's 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Beach on July 11 to honor the Bowen brothers.



**(Image: Florida Connection)** Joe and Hughie Bowen were well-respected lifeguards in Sea Isle City and Hollywood, Florida. Shown on July 11 with Joe's wife, Alma Bowen (second from left) and their son, Brian Bowen (far right), is Brian O'Shea and his wife, Donna, of Linwood, NJ. O'Shea, a former Sea Isle City resident, worked as a lifeguard under Joe Bowen in Florida from 1981-1988.



**(Image: Bowen Family)** Members of the Bowen Family are shown on Sea Isle City's 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Beach following a memorial service for Joe and Hughie Bowen – among them are Joe's wife, Alma Bowen (standing, center, holding flower), and her son, Brian Bowen (standing, far left).



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Mike McHale was BP Captain 1980's  
Bill Gallagher was captain during the 1970's

Upper Township rowers: Lt. Joe LaRosa (his father emceed the event) and Rookie