



HOTEL • MOTEL • RESTAURANT • ASSOCIATION • INC.

# *Ocean City Over The Years*

Cheers to 150 Years of Hospitality!



# OC's 1<sup>st</sup> Hotel

Colonel Lemuel Showell III, a member of a prominent Worcester County family, spearheaded a group of fellow investors to form the **Atlantic Hotel** Company in **1868**, which opened the hotel on July 4, 1875. Fifteen years later, it was purchased by the Sinepuxent Beach Company, and in 1923, by Dr. Charles W. Purnell, whose family still owns and operates it today.

The hotel contained 112 small bedrooms ranging in size from 8ft x 17ft to 16ft x 17ft, with no electricity or indoor plumbing. Chamber pots and outdoor privies were the only “bathroom” accommodations available for guests.







### *Conner Family*

George & Willye Conner pictured with their sons (L/R) George B. Conner Jr., John William Conner, & in his mother's lap, Milton L. Conner.

## *OC's 1<sup>st</sup> Restaurant*

This circa 1915 photo is of the George Conner family, pioneers in Ocean City's hotel and restaurant industry. George Conner (1874-1916) opened Ocean City's first restaurant, **Conner's Restaurant**, on the Boardwalk at S. Division Street in **1892**. His wife, Willye Jones Conner (1886-1971) – known to later generations as Willye Conner Ludlam – purchased the Hastings Hotel in 1922, and later on she built the Santa Maria Motel on 15<sup>th</sup> Street in 1956.



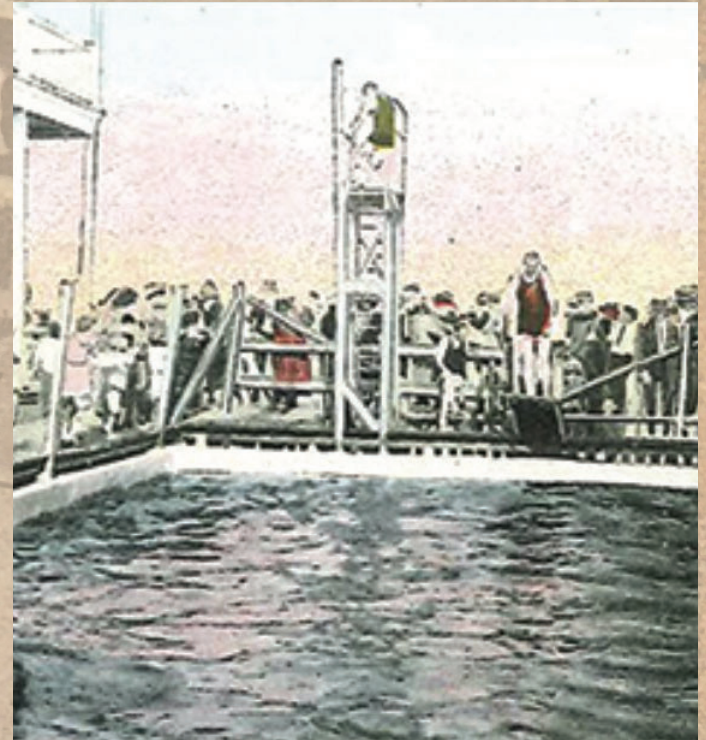
# OC's 1<sup>st</sup> Swimming Pool

## **John Dale Showell Jr.**

built Ocean City's 1<sup>st</sup> swimming pool in **1917**. Located on the Boardwalk between N. Division and Caroline Streets, it was a saltwater pool with water pumped in from the ocean.

Showell charged 25 cents to swim in the pool and cleaned it once a week, re-filling it at night. The Showell Bathhouse offered bathing suits and locker rentals for 25 cents a day

*Ocean City, Md.*





# OC's 1<sup>st</sup> Attraction



**Daniel and Margaret Trimmer**, German immigrants, originally ran the Silver Dollar Bar in Baltimore. A visit to Ocean City in 1890 captivated them so much that they sold their bar and relocated to the beach.

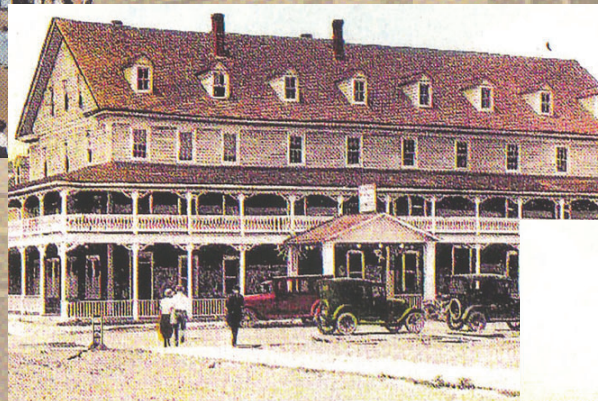
In **1893** they brought the first amusement ride to town, which was a small hand-cranked carousel. Within a few years, they changed the boardwalk forever with more and bigger rides.



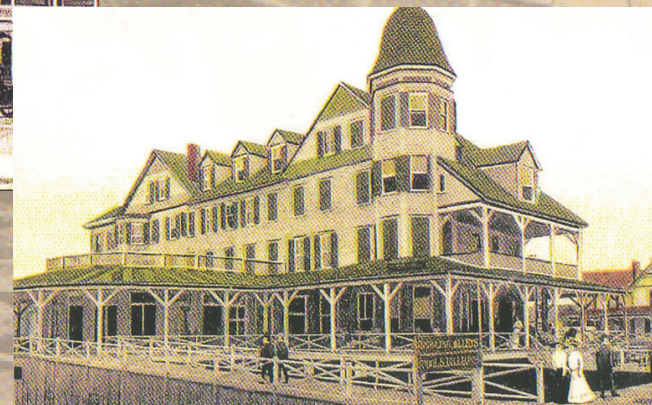
# Hotels of World War 1



**The Atlantic** was Ocean City's first hotel, opening on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1875. Located on the Boardwalk between Wicomico and Somerset Streets, the original building (pictured here) burned to the ground in The Great Fire of 1925. It was rebuilt the following year in a different style and continues to serve guests today.



**The Seaside Hotel** was located on the corner of Wicomico Street and Baltimore Avenue. Built in 1876, the Seaside was Ocean City's 2<sup>nd</sup> hotel. Also a victim of The Great Fire of 1925, it was never rebuilt.



**The Plimhimmon** was Ocean City's "grand hotel" in the WWI era. Built in 1894 by Rosalie Tilghman Shreve, it took up half the oceanfront block between N. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets. The Plimhimmon was lost in a fire on November 21, 1962.



**The Nordica** was a frame Victorian style hotel built circa 1905. It was located on the Boardwalk between Dorchester and Talbot Street. The Nordica was another victim of the “Boardwalk Arson Bug” in January 1973.



**The Hamilton**, built in 1901 on the north corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, drew an upscale WWI-era clientele and stood alongside the Atlantic and the Plimhimmon as one of OC's top hotels. It burned down in December 1969.



**The Colonial Hotel**, built in 1897, shared the oceanfront block between N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street with the Plimhimmon for over 65 years. The Colonial was the first victim of the “Boardwalk Arson Bug” and burned to the ground on December 15, 1962.





**The Breakers** was one of Ocean City's most northern hotels during the WWI era. Located on the Boardwalk and the south corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, it served summer visitors until 2003 when the original Breakers was demolished to build a modern hotel of the same name.



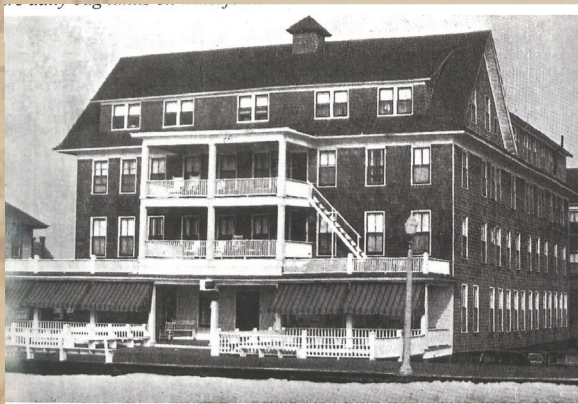
**The Belmont** was located on the North side of Dorchester Street just off the Boardwalk. It served Ocean City's visitors for nearly 100 years before being demolished in 2004. The Belmont Towers was built on the site in 2006.

**The New Avalon** had been pieced together by combining large cottages on either side of owner Josephine Hasting's boarding house. Located between N. Division Street and N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street on Baltimore Avenue, in later years it was known as the Delmarva Hotel. Demolished in 2008, it is now the site of the Sleep Inn.





## Notable 1<sup>st</sup>'s



**The Shoreham Hotel** on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and the Boardwalk was built in 1922. At the time, it was the tallest building in Ocean City at 55' tall until surpassed by the George Washington hotel in 1931.



**The Commander** was built by the Lynch family in 1930 and was the northernmost hotel on the Boardwalk. The hotel boasted 62 rooms and the first elevator in Ocean City. Clambakes and the Boardwalk Cabaret were popular here.



**The Alamo Court** was Worcester County's first-ever motel, located in West OC. The construction supervisor, Ridge Harman Sr., saw the future of lodging and built his own motel on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street in 1948, named Miami Court, which resembled the Alamo





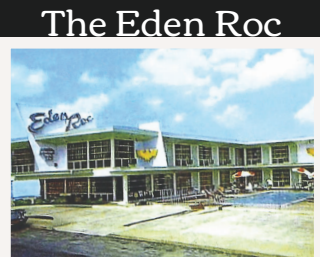
The Fountain Court  
(Now Cabana Motel)



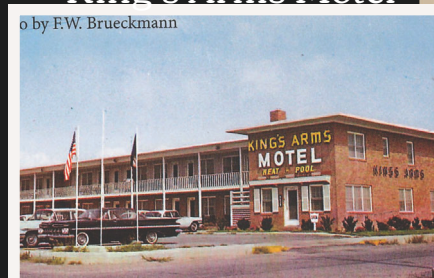
Santa Maria  
(Now Courtyard by Marriott)



Sea Scape Motel  
(Now Hyatt Place)



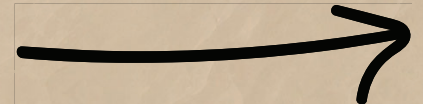
The Eden Roc



King's Arms Motel

# Motel Row

Motel Row developed in the mid-1950s and early 60's because of the post-WWII baby boom, a strong economy, and the opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge made beach travel easier. Young families' desire for less expensive and more casual lodging spurred the development between 15<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Streets.







Flamingo Motel



Quality Inn Boardwalk



The Diplomat  
(Now Flagship Hotel)

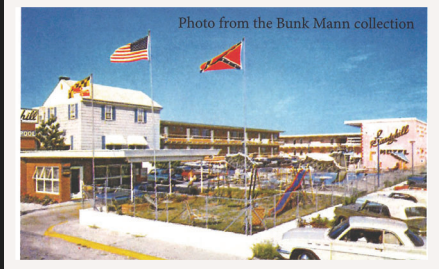


Ocean Park Motel



The Stardust Motel  
(Now Hilton Suites)

Sandyhill Motel



Ocean Park & Sandy Hill  
are now  
Holiday Inn Suites 17<sup>th</sup> St.



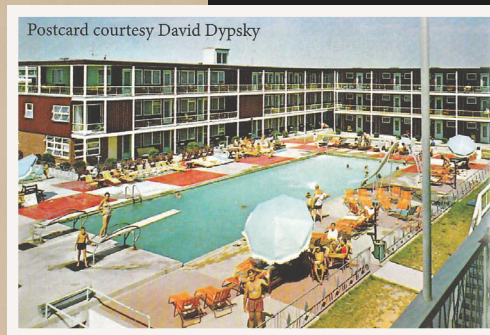
Suf and Sands Motel  
(Now Days Inn)



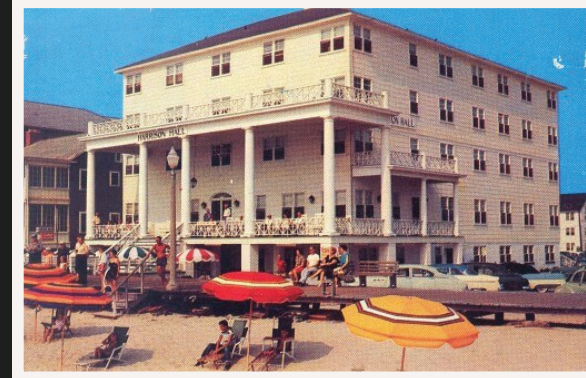




**Harrington Arms**  
(Now Quality Inn Beachfront)



**The Stowaway**  
(Now Grand Hotel)



**Harrison Hall**



**Yankee Clipper Motel**  
(Now La Quinta Hotel & Suites)

**The Satellite Motel**  
(Now Howard Johnson Inn)



*The Satellite Motel*



**Ocean Mecca Motel**  
(Now Fish Tales Boardwalk Inn)



# Landmark of the 60's



The **Plim Plaza**, as it appeared in 1963, was site of the Plimhimmon Hotel. The original Plimhimmon, one of Ocean City's early Victorian style hotels, was destroyed by fire on November 21, 1962.



The **China Seas Motel** was located on the oceanfront at 51<sup>st</sup> Street, and when built in 1963, was one of the first motels north of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. Designed to resemble a Chinese "junk" (a fishing boat seen on the rivers of China), it attracted much attention on Coastal Highway.

The **Maryland Inn** was owned and managed by the Hagan family for over forty years. Located on the Boardwalk at Caroline Street, it was torn down in 1979. The Fun City Arcade occupies the site today.



**The Rideau** shared the Boardwalk between N. Division and 1st Street with the Roosevelt Hotel. A fire which began in the Rossevelt on March 11, 1970 spread to and consumed the Rideau. It was one of the largest fires ever fought by the OC Volunteer Fire Department.



**Castle in the Sand Hotel** was opened by the Showell family in 1960 and was considered to be "way up the beach". It was a new concept for it provided kitchens in the rooms and balconies to sit out on and view the ocean. The hotel is still operated by the family.



**The George Washington Hotel** was the tallest building in Ocean City for nearly 40 years and was a landmark for boats on the ocean. The hotel opened up in 1931 and boasted a ballroom on the top floor. Demolished in 1990, the site is now occupied by the Americana Hotel.



# Landmark of the 60's Cont.



The **Delmarva Hotel** was located on Baltimore Ave. between N. Division and 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The hotel had been pieced together by combining cottages on either side of Josephine Hasting's boarding house in the 1900's. The Delmarva was torn down in 2008 and is now the site of the Sleep Inn.



The **Hastings-Miramar** was a fixture on the Boardwalk between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets for over 50 years. In this 1963 photo, The Hastings is in the center, the Miramar on the right, and the Westchester Apartments on the left. The Park Place Hotel occupies this site today.

The **Majestic Hotel** is located on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and boasts one of the few remaining shady porches on the Boardwalk. The Majestic was constructed in 1926 and originally called The Liberty Farms Hotel. It has changed little in appearance since this 1961 photo.



The **Nassau Motel** was owned by Euince and Herman Sorin and located on 60<sup>th</sup> Street. It was one of the first motels built following the January 26, 1965 annexation of North Ocean City from 41<sup>st</sup> Street to DE line. It was demolished in 2005, and the Meridian Condo occupies the site today.



The **Royalton Hotel** was built by Ethel Griffin Kelley and was well known for its dining room and her famous sticky buns. The Royalton was rebuilt as the Monte Carlo Boardwalk without the dining room, but with a rooftop pool and deck.



The **La Grande Hotel** was the northern section of the old Catholic Home and the site of Bob Ching's Chinese Restaurant in the 1950's. The La Grande was a victim of the March Storm of 1962. The former site is now part of the 13<sup>th</sup> St (Beach Plaza Hotel) parking lot.



# The Carousel



Bobby Baker's **Carousel** opened on **July 22, 1962** after the original opening had been delayed due to damage from the famous March storm of that same year. At the time of its construction, it was far north of the existing city limits and stood virtually alone with only sand dunes.

The Carousel was a major point of interest in the Summer of 1962. It had a reputation for luxury and the publicity from its grand opening - Vice President and Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and several busloads of Washington, DC insiders and political figures attended.

Baker envisioned constructing the Carousel into one of the grandest hotels of its time in North Ocean City. However, his plans were cut short when he was charged with tax evasion and fraud leading to imprisonment. The hotel made a comeback and now features the Next Ice Age ice skating shows.



# Well-Known Local Restaurants



The growth of "Motel Row" helped make **The Lagoon**, on 24<sup>th</sup> St, a popular restaurant and cocktail lounge in the late 1950s. It became the site of Sam and Irv Taustin's famous **Embers Restaurant** with the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation now running the entertainment complex.



**The English Diner**, opened in 1939, moved to 21<sup>st</sup> Street in the late 1950s. It became a popular family spot and was known as "Little City Hall" for political breakfasts. The building was torn down, and **Mariner's Watch Condos** now occupies the site.

**The Ship Café Restaurant and Marina**, originally built as the OC Yacht Club in the late 1930s, was as a landmark for over 30 years. Famous for its deep harbor and brief stint with a small airstrip, it was destroyed by fire on May 9, 1977. Now the area has **Harbor Island & Reel Inn**.

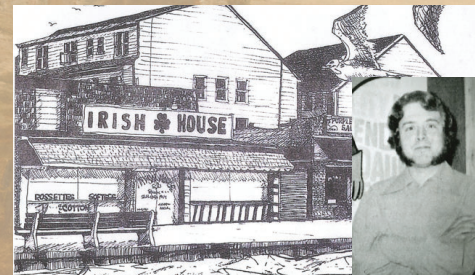


**English's Chicken House** opened in 1963 on the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Philadelphia Avenue and would serve some of the best fried chicken ever served on the Eastern Shore of Maryland for over 50 years. This site is now **Papi's Tacos**.



Photo courtesy Ver...

**The Samoa and Mario's** were two of OC's most popular restaurants in the late 1960s. The Samoa, once between 22nd and 23rd Street, moved north in 1969 and is now the site of Sunsations. Mario's, beloved for steaks and Italian food for over 50 years, closed in 2005 and is now a parking lot.



**The Irish House**, the original Purple Moose Saloon, and (in the background) John Fager, pictured here was one of the original owners of the **Purple Moose Saloon**. The bar continues to operate under different ownership today.



# Well-Known Local Restaurants Cont.



**The Wharf** was one of the new restaurants that opened as OC grew northward in the 1970s. The Wharf specialized in seafood and featured live entertainment in the cocktail lounge. The building still exists but today is the site of the **Higgins Crab House North**.

**The Hobbit Restaurant**, an OC favorite since 1977, began as a cozy beach house on 82<sup>nd</sup> Street. In 1983, it moved to a larger building on 81<sup>st</sup> Street. In 2008, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition opened in The Rivendell Condo Complex at the same location, remaining under the same family ownership.



## **The Paddock**

Built in 1953 by Gabby Mancini Sr. at 18<sup>th</sup> Street and popular for 60 years. Known for its live entertainment, its legendary Saturday afternoon jam sessions drew crowds to what was then considered “way up the beach.”



**The Pirate's Den**, a popular local's bar for over 40 years, met the wrecking ball in September 2013. Located in the Ocean Voyager Motel (formerly the Yankee Clipper) at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and Baltimore Avenue, the building was demolished and replaced by the five story **La Quinta Inn** in 2014.

**Seacrets** first opened its doors in 1988 as a private, members-only tiki bar following the sale of Moore's family's Ocean Club. With room for 60 guests. A “Passport” was needed to enter which read “for locals only...and for those who wish they were.”



**The Dough Roller** opened in 1980 at the Breakers Hotel's porch, offering pizza and pancakes. Still family-run, it now has three locations: 3<sup>rd</sup> St, 41<sup>st</sup> St, and a boardwalk spot at South Division Street serving Dayton's Famous Fried Chicken.





## *The Phillips Family*

Brice and Shirley Phillips

# *Phillips Crab House*

**Phillips Crab House** began in **1956** when Brice and Shirley Phillips opened a small carryout shop near 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Philadelphia Avenue. The Dorchester County natives thought it was a way to sell surplus crabs from the family processing plant on Hoopers Island. By 1960 it had turned into one of Ocean City's most popular restaurants with customers lined up around the block.

For many years Brice and Shirley lived above the restaurant with their sons Steve and Jeffrey. In the summer, several rooms in their living quarters would be turned into dining areas to accommodate the growing crowds.

In the 1980's the Phillips expanded to the Baltimore Inner Harbor and BWI Airport and opened their popular Phillips-by-the-Sea at the Beach Plaza Hotel on the Boardwalk. For many summer visitors, a trip to Ocean City was not complete without a visit to Phillips Crab House or Phillips-by-the-Sea.

From humble beginnings, the Phillips family has become a powerful force in the global seafood market.



# Notable Names



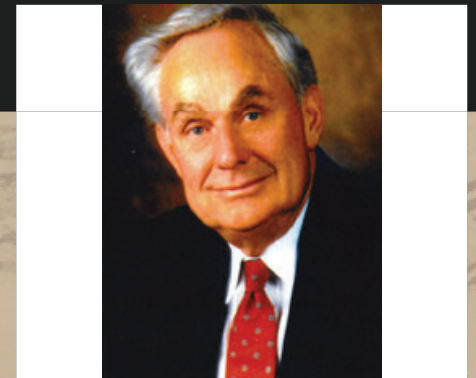
**Hugh Wilde, Sr.**

In 1962, he began building motels starting with the Flamingo Motel, the Dunes in '63, the Sahara in '64, the Thunderbird in '67, the Beachmark in '70, the Executive in '71, the Tides in '72, the Tides Annex in '74, and the Sahara West in '81. A **philanthropist**, he founded the Wilde Charitable Foundation.



**George Purnell**

A **construction icon**, Mr. Purnell built many of OC's motels, churches, stores, and restaurants, plus foundations for Trimper's Tidal Wave, Harrison's Harbor Watch, The Talbot Inn, and thousands of condos. He also built the Ashore Conference Center, Holiday Inn at 67th, Ocean Hideaway, and owned the Spinnaker on 18<sup>th</sup> Street.



**Irvin Bainum**

A leading pioneer of the industry, building the Fountain Court, Ocean Park, Quality Inns, and the Stardust. He also donated land for the Atlantic General Hospital. The Bainum family was an integral part of the founding of **Choice Hotels**, one of the largest global franchisors.



# OC Bar Masters



Steve Pappas - The **Original Greene Turtle** & Tommy Dickerson - **Greene Turtle West**

In 1976, college buddies Pappas and Dickerson brought an English-style pub, The Greene Turtle, to Ocean City. By 1986, the sports bar had expanded to Fells Point, in 1990 to Laurel, 1999 in West OC. Soon 30 locations were in the mid-Atlantic. In 2010, the Greene Turtle was recognized by Entrepreneur Magazine as the fastest-growing sports bar franchise in the nation



Greg Shockley - **Shenanigan's Irish Pub & Grille**

Over 35 Years of Shenanigans! Greg Shockley opened Shenanigan's Irish Pub in 1988. Serving Irish favorites like fish and chips, their famous burger, the house drink Shillelagh, and perfectly poured pints of Guinness. He is a founding member of the Boardwalk Development Assoc., a Past President of OCHMRA, Past Chair AGH Board of Trustees & led the MD Tourism Development Board.



Billy & Maddy Carder - **BJ's on the Water**

Owners Billy and Maddy Carder opened BJ's on the Water in 1979. The restaurant began as a small saloon with 39 seats plus the bar area. Over the years, the restaurant expanded with outdoor & indoor decks, a bayfront dining room, going from 50 to 300+ seats. After operating for 41 years, BJ's closed in 2021. The Carders continue their passion for music with Teenage Rust band.



# OC Bar Masters Cont.



## John Fager - **Fager's Island**

Fager's Island was the first bar and restaurant on the bayside in what was then the growing midtown area of Ocean City in 1975. John changed the look of the typical local bar scene by adding large glass windows, a magnificent view of the Bay at sunset. He combined good music and fine food with a relaxed Key West-style atmosphere and the rest was history. Fager's celebrates 50 years!



## *Seacrets*

### Leighton Moore - **Seacrets**

Seacrets began in 1988 as a private 60-person tiki bar and grew into a 5,000-guest Jamaican-themed entertainment complex. Leighton expanded his own home into one of the East Coast's most distinctive destinations, now featuring 17 uniquely themed bars, a Distillery, a Beverage Center & Event Venue and a beachfront refined dining spot, The Hideaway. He continues to work daily.



## Shawn Harman - **Fish Tales Bar & Grill**

Following his mother, Kathleen's and father Bill's fiery passion for creating a desirable destination, Shawn has expanded 21<sup>st</sup> street on the bay into a sprawling, yet very relaxed spot for adults and kids by offering fishing charters, boat rentals, great food & drink, and a large playground. Home of the Poor Girls Open, Shawn is known for giving back to the community.



# OC Bar Masters Cont.



## Steve Hoffman & Mike Horsey - **Pit & Pub**

Owners Steve Hoffman and Mike Horsey are veterans of the Ocean City food scene. With more than 30 years of experience—from dishwashing to management—they bring a hands-on passion to every plate at Pit & Pub. What began as one location 15 years ago has since expanded into a five-restaurant BBQ empire, with the Ocean City spots at its core.



## Chris Wall & Lloyd Whitehead - **Harborside Bar & Grill**

In 1993, Wall and Whitehead opened Harborside Bar & Grill. At the time, both were working at Phillips Seafood Restaurant. But when a space became available along the harbor, the pair jumped at the opportunity. Inventing the popular Orange Crush cocktail in 1995. The drink was created by bartenders experimenting with vodka on a slow winter night and is now the official MD state cocktail.



## Doug Buxbalm - **Buxy's Salty Dog Saloon**

Buxy worked his way up from cook to bartender, spending winters in Florida and summers in OC. After searching for a place of his own, he took over the original Salty Dog at 28<sup>th</sup> Street, opening Buxy's Salty Dog in April 1999. What began as a simple hangout has grown into a full-service bar /restaurant with live music, plenty of TVs, and a loyal mix of locals and visitors.



# Legendary Leaders - Buddy Jenkins

## **Mr. Charles “Buddy” Jenkins**

At 29, he created the Arnold Palmer Putting Course & Driving Range, the seed of today's Jolly Roger Amusement Park. In 1974, he added the historic Ocean City Pier with new rides and attractions, and acquired Thrasher's French Fries, preserving its 1929 recipe and Boardwalk tradition. His focus on guest feedback, adaptability, and valuing staff has built a cross-generational legacy. Now 90, he still comes to work every day.





# Legendary Leaders - The Harrison Group



Sons, Hale & John Harrison



Lois & G. Hale Harrison



G. Hale Harrison, son of Hale  
Ashley Harrison, son of John

## **Harrison Group**

The Harrison Group is a 3rd generation family business that has been owned and operated in Ocean City, Maryland, since 1951. Lois and George Harrison built and opened their first property, Harrison Hall Hotel, on 15<sup>th</sup> Street & the Boardwalk. It now includes nineteen hotels and motels in Ocean City, MD, Virginia Beach, VA, Corolla, NC, and Jacksonville, FL, thirteen restaurants, and a number of other various properties.



# Legendary Leaders - Dr. Berger

## **Dr. Leonard P. Berger**

Formerly a medical doctor who helped take Caltech Cable Vision public in the 1980s, Lenny went on to own nursing homes and a racquet club before bringing his entrepreneurial drive to OC.

He owned the Gateway Hotel & Ocean Club, the Clarion Resort Fontainebleau, and Marigot Beach Suites. He also established the OC Governor's Economic Development Committee and guided the area's tourism efforts for decades.





# STEEL



**Lois Harrison**  
Harrison Hall Hotel



**Ann Showell**  
Castle in the Sand



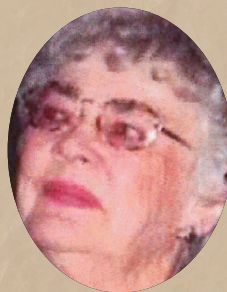
**Thelma Conner**  
Dunes Manor



**Dorothy Taylor**  
Empress & Misty  
Harbor Motel



**Kathleen Harman**  
Ocean Mecca Motel &  
Miami Court



**Eleanor Kelly**  
Kitti Wake



**Susan Cropper**  
Misty Harbor, King's  
Arms, & Empress



**Eunice Sorin**  
Nassau Motel



**Rose Brous**  
Flamingo Motel



**Kate Bunting**  
The Belmont



**Carol Alfonsi**  
The Chalet



**Betty Frame**  
Lankford Hotel

At the heart of OC, are the ladies who welcomed guests into their homes. These tough-minded, determined women were the birth of hospitality. Pioneers continued, and OCHMRA named them the "Steel Magnolias" with celebrations in 1997 and 2007.



# *From Sunrise to Sunset, Here's To The Next Chapter!*



HOTEL • MOTEL • RESTAURANT • ASSOCIATION • INC.



Thanks to Vanishing OC for the content