

Mr. Johnny Brown is being recognized by the Ocean City Juneteenth Organization with the Legacy Award during the Inaugural Juneteenth Celebration & Brunch, June 17, 2017. Mr. Brown reflects the character Ocean City is made of. His athleticism has been captured in oral traditions passed down through generations. His smile was contagious, and his legendary sayings, songs, and dances epitomize the rich culture of the Ocean City African-American Community.

Johnny Brown was born on May 19, 1928 in Coco Beach, Fl. He attended the public school system and later relocated to South Carolina where he met and married the love of his life, Vernilla Brown. Through this union, eight children were born. The family relocated to Ocean City, NJ in the 1950's and became members of Shiloh Baptist Church. Mr. Brown was said to have received his nickname, Johnny Red, when he pitched on a professional baseball team and for his "red" complexion. He often boasted of his athletic abilities, his fashion sense, and dancing skills. He was larger than life and had a very unique personality to say the least. To know him was to love him. Mr. Brown was a great fisherman and hunter. He'd stop by the neighborhood homes with crabs, fish, raccoon, or venison. Not only would the family be blessed with food, but they'd also be blessed with laughter. He may demonstrate how expensive his watch was, bust out a break dancing routine without dropping his can, or he'd simply pose, smile, and inform you that you'll never meet a finer man. He was a family man and strict disciplinarian. He taught his children the value of hard work. He demonstrated to his sons and every young Black boy in Ocean City that you could be the "baddest" man in town with respect to looks, swag, and class but it was also important to be that type of man in your own household. Mr. Brown built a solid foundation for his family that has enabled them to thrive and produce some of the best athletes Ocean City has ever seen.