

The Coaster
SPORTS

Statue, Complex Unveiled in Honor of Neptune's Dr. Sheehan

By CHRIS CHRISTOPHER

Dr. George Sheehan, a former Neptune resident, has received two major honors from Christian Brothers Academy.

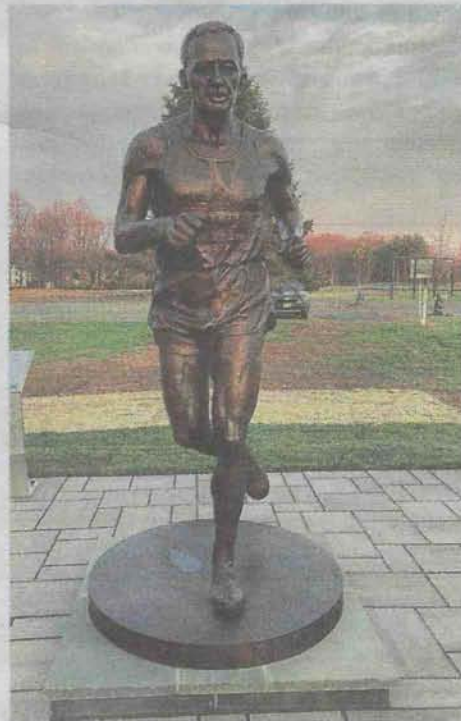
One of the school's three original founders, Sheehan was honored with a larger-than-life bronze statue, which was unveiled at the base of the road leading to the brand-new Sheehan Track & Field Complex.

Track and field was the first sport at the Middletown school. Sheehan, a cardiologist known as The Running Doc because of his love of distance events, launched the sport. Sheehan died Nov. 1, 1993, at the age of 74 at his Ocean Grove home. He succumbed to prostate cancer. He contracted the illness in 1986. Sheehan enjoyed running on the Ocean Grove, Asbury Park, Avon and Belmar boardwalks and enjoyed various aspects of the Asbury Park 10K Classic.

When he learned he had cancer, he ran between radiation treatments and frequently in pain. He seemed concerned mostly that the illness would interfere with his speaking, writing and running. At one stage, he stopped hormone treatment because it had caused him to run slower.

For a while, he cut down on speaking, but when he became restless with his new sedentary life, he resumed training and racing because, he said, "There's a healthy way to be ill." Sheehan gave up his medical practice in 1984 to devote full time to speaking, writing and running.

One of 14 children, Sheehan was born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y. He starred in the mile at Manhattan College. The recipient of a congratulatory letter from then-President Clinton, Sheehan was a member of the President's Council on Physical Fitness.



A statue honoring the late Dr. George Sheehan was unveiled at Christian Brothers Academy in front of at least 150 persons, including many family members, old friends and members of the running community, according to event spokesman Phil Hinck, a former CBA athlete. Hinck said a full track dedication is planned for early next May. Photo credit: Phil Hinck