LTV Host Henry Haney Of East Hampton Dies At 88

When Henry Haney wasn’t bringing up important local issues at East Hampton Town Board meetings, or serving as the deacon at the Calvary Baptist Church, he could be found shooting pool at Bailey’s Billiards, next to One Stop Market on Springs-Fireplace Road, his daughter, Connie Wallace-Mabry said, with a chuckle, over the phone on Monday evening.

Mr. Haney was a prominent member of the East Hampton community. Almost everyone knew Mr. Haney. For decades, he hosted two TV shows on LTV, “Tell It to Henry” and “Henry on Location,” and volunteered with numerous committees and organizations across town.

On Tuesday, October 29, Mr. Haney died at Stony Brook Southampton Hospital at the age of 88. His family said he died of natural causes.

In the 1930s, Mr. Haney grew up in the Mississippi Delta, mostly working in cotton fields, his 85-year-old sister, Inez Haney Portee, said while sitting in Mr. Haney’s home with Mr. Haney’s wife, Louise, and Ms. Wallace-Mabry. They each took turns sharing stories about their beloved father, brother and husband.

Mr. Haney was one of 10 children. His parents, Otha and Inez Haney, raised their kids in a very religious home, his younger sister said. They valued and encouraged education — although, by his own choice, Mr. Haney chose not to attend high school and instead went to work on local farms.

While Mr. Haney was in his early 20s, back in the 1950s, he migrated to Florida and the Carolinas for migrant farm work, his sister remembered. He then settled in East Hampton and planted his roots working for the Talmage family on a potato farm.

“He decided to just go. He was free to do that. It was his choice, to follow his dreams,” his sister remembered of Mr. Haney moving away from Mississippi. “The family was always behind what he wanted.”

His sister remembered playing baseball and riding bikes with her older brother as kids.
“I didn’t like the girl bikes, so I’d chase him down for his,” Ms. Portee said, laughing.

He really loved shooting pool, she added. All of the siblings would play together. She remembered sometimes he’d take their father’s car out after their 8 p.m. curfew and sneak back into the house.

“We had a big family. We were happy and cozy, always getting along,” Ms. Portee said.

By 1954, he had settled permanently in the East Hampton area. Mr. Haney later found work at the Bistrian Gravel Corporation, becoming fast friends with Ben Krupinski, the prominent builder and philanthropist, and later built his own landscaping company, “Henry Haney Maintenance,” when he was in his late 30s.

His sister said Mr. Haney was a self-educated man, attending only through grade school. She said he taught himself daily. Any new word he’d learn, he wrote down, and would make sure he knew the meaning.

After he left to work on farms in Florida and along the East Coast, he kept in contact with his family. Ms. Portee said he’d write and call to say he was on a farm. “He’d say, ‘I’m working, and I’m doing just fine.’”

From Mr. Haney’s first marriage to Mathalda Wallace, he had three daughters, Ms. Wallace-Mabry, Sheena, and Stephanie.

From Mr. Haney’s second marriage to Louise Haney, he had two children, Anthony and Mona.

Ms. Wallace-Mabry remembered as a kid her father taking her down to Maidstone Beach in Springs trying to get her to learn how to swim. He loved to swim. He said to her that Maidstone was like a giant open ocean. She said he loved the outdoors and nature.

Ms. Wallace-Mabry said her father was on the East Hampton Town Police minority relations committee, assisted with the East Hampton senior center, serving on the town’s senior center committee, and many other volunteer committees within the town and village.

“He really enjoyed helping people, whether they were his blood or not,” Ms. Wallace-Mabry said. “He was that type of person.”

For years, he spearheaded and was the chairman of the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Committee at the Calvary Baptist Church, offering college scholarships to local high schoolers.

He was a deacon at the church, and was the chairman of the deacon board until his death.

The NAACP recognized him for his service in the African American community. He received an appreciation plaque from the East Hampton Town Police Department from former Police Chief Tom Scott. Mr. Haney was good friends with Tom Twomey, former chairman of the East Hampton Library’s board of managers, Mr. Krupinski, and East Hampton Village Mayor Paul F. Rickenbach Jr.

Ms. Wallace-Mabry said his real fun was being on location with his LTV show. “He went everywhere with that camera. He loved doing that, he really did,” she recalled.

For over 25 years on his shows, he interviewed all of the town supervisors, village and town board members, trustees, local musicians, actors, and business owners. All of the well-known figures in East Hampton were interviewed by the one and only Mr. Haney, either on a coach or chair in the LTV studio, or on the street where he’d take a microphone and camera.

Larry Cantwell, former East Hampton town supervisor, said he knew Mr. Haney well, and, in fact, he was on his talk show numerous times. Mr. Haney would often come to his office to speak about issues in the community and speak at town board meetings.
Mr. Cantwell laughed on the phone as he recalled one time, when he was set to go on “Tell It to Henry,” but instead, Mr. Cantwell turned the tables, took the microphone, and interviewed Mr. Haney instead.

“I said, ‘We’re going to switch places and I’m going to interview you.’ That’s when I really got to learn a lot about him. It was a lot of fun,” Mr. Cantwell reminisced.

Mr. Cantwell said Mr. Haney talked to everyone in town. He always had a broad perspective, and bridged the gap between people of different religions, ethnicities, races, and backgrounds.

“He always had a good perspective on what people in the community thought about issues,” he said. “He was always welcomed anytime. Whenever he came to your office, you were always glad to see him.”

He was especially involved in talking to Town Board members and Village Board members, bringing problems that other people in the community were having to the forefront.

“I am deeply saddened, and reminded of all the good Henry brought to our world, community, and to me personally so many times,” Mr. Cantwell said. “May God rest his soul.”

A service will be held for Mr. Haney at the Calvary Baptist Church in East Hampton on Friday, November 8, and a funeral service will be at the church on November 9. Burial will take place at the Cedar Lawn Cemetery in East Hampton.

He is survived by his five children, his wife, and 10 grandchildren.

“He left some big shoes to be filled,” Ms. Wallace-Mabry said.