



Carole Hicks Wactor 1997

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I was born and grew up in High Point, North Carolina, and did not learn the basic shag steps until I was sixteen, but I did know how to do the Sugarfoot. The place to go then during the week was the High Point City Lake. I started going there when I was sixteen. I did have other influences - my brother, cousins and their friends, who were all older, and tolerated me.

My first love was the music long before I knew there was a dance that went with it. At seven or eight, there were a few stations that played the really good music like the Clovers, Midnighters, Sarah Vaughn, Dinah Washington and others. One station, WMFR, which still exists today, had a nightly program with the "Little Man" who was black. One station gave free movie passes every morning at 7:25 if you could name the song. I went to the movies for free many times. As I got into high school, my favorite station was WAAA in Winston-Salem, which is still operating today, and was all R&B and Soul. The music always brings back memories of past good times.

I did not have any adventures at the beach during my high school years, because my mother would not let me go. I did not go to the beach without my mother until I had been married, had a child, and divorced. The only time I went to the Pad was in 1966; somebody had been cut and the place was full of tear gas. I went to Sonny's and the Continental Club which Johnny Barringer's father owned. I thought that was so cool because they would serve me liquor and I wasn't old enough. During all of this there were a couple of places I loved - The Rathskeller in High Point (couldn't dance), but they had a wonderful jukebox and The Castaways in Greensboro - where we would go on Thursday and Sunday. Both of these were owned by Bill Griffin from Greensboro.

In 1966, I married again, had a baby boy, settled into raising my children, but always missed the dancing. If we went out and anybody danced, I would grab them and make them dance with me. In 1980 I became single again and once again, Bill Griffin had a place for me to go - The Bushes - I went to The Bushes the first time on December 31, 1980 and it was like stepping back in time. I was dancing and faking a pivot really badly. I knew Connie Smith long before I ever met Jack and one night I went in for a drink and Jack was there. I asked him if he would teach me the pivot, he did and I still teach it fairly close to the way Jack taught me. He would say - stick your boobs out and tuck your butt in. I tell them that too.

The best thing about shagging is the people you meet and the friends you make. My very best friends are within this group - both male and female. I don't think we have ever been in a club, in any of the many places we go to, that we did not know somebody.

Thanks to Susie Beaver and Shaggers Ltd. parties, I met Rufus. We met in November, 1985 and got married at the next Shaggers Limited party in November, 1986. He has been my best find so far. My favorite song is Green Eyes by the Ravens and I had made a vow to myself that I would marry the first man who owned an original copy of Green Eyes. Rufus owns two - It was a done deal. Rufus and I together have been teaching for seven years and again, I meet so many wonderful people and teach them to dance a little. Rufus and I have been married 11 years and have four wonderful children, Sandy Cook Chappell, Ronnie Mitchell, Matt and Clay Wactor. I feel really blessed, with my life, my friends and my children.