



Pam Wood Bennett 2003

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My childhood, teens, and young adult years were spent in my hometown of Charlotte, N.C. I started dancing at the ripe age of 2 1/2, not shagging, but tap, toe, and ballet lessons at Henderson's School of Dance. I had a cohort and fellow Hall of Fame member, Judy Tucker, who took lessons with me, and we remain friends today. Our dreams and goals back then were to become Rockettes and to open our own dance studio. I still attribute my love of music and dance to these formative years and my parent's giving me my first boost. I was very lucky that my parents took me to Myrtle Beach as a young child and continued our trips, as I became a teenager. I developed a special place in my heart for the beach and knew that's where I wanted to end up one day. The dancing is enthralling, but the serenity of the ocean and the peacefulness it instills in me is an ongoing contributing factor for my love of the beach. Those memories of standing on the sidelines of the pavilion, watching in awe, as the older dancers strutted their stuff stuck in my memory. I knew then, there had to be a way to learn this dance. As I grew into an older teen, the years of prior dancing took a different turn into what we now call the "shag". It was time to hang up the tap, toe and ballet shoes for the dance I so desperately wanted to learn. Back then, we called it "fast dancing", and would frequent our favorite joints such as B & G, Cellar, Pour House, Park Center, Groucho's and many more classic haunts. College years and hopefully same maturity came into the picture, as I became a young adult. We could now drive ourselves to the beach and we graduated to the new joints at O.D. such as Sonny's at Cherry Grove, The Pad, Barrel, Beachclub, the old Spanish Galleon, Donnie Christenbury's place, The Forks, and the Brookgreen Room at the Ocean Forest Hotel. We spent many a carefree night, and sometimes until early morning, dancing to our favorite tunes. These were the good "ole" days, but we got older, most of us had families of our own and were raising our children. Our priorities had changed and most of the old dance hangouts had closed. It was quite refreshing when S.O.S. began in the late seventies and people started coming out of the woodwork again. It was a time for renewing old friendships, seeing folks you hadn't seen in years, forming new friendships, and of course, dancing.

My life has had many changes over the years including the twelve years I lived in Fayetteville, N.C. New friendships were formed including Hall of Fame member O.B. Knowles and Eddie and Kathryn Monsour. I still treasure friendships made there, but then moved on down the road to the beach and have lived here for 20 some years. In retrospect, we learn from all our experiences, both good and bad, and grow from them, hopefully for the better.

Living here I can continue to see friends from all walks of life, all locations, and all ages to renew old memories and start new ones. Words cannot describe how elated I am to become a member of the Shaggers Hall of Fame. This is, indeed, an honor to me to be included with those I hold in high regard. There is a comradery among dancers that's felt, not explained, and I am deeply honored to be part of this group. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.