



Kathy Peedin Gurley 2004

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I grew up on a farm in eastern North Carolina near Princeton, which is between Goldsboro and Clayton, where I now live. Growing up on a farm meant work, and my summers were spent working in tobacco, as were most everyone's in our area. This left little time for doing much else, especially going anywhere to dance. My older brother, M.A. Peedin, began dancing and he even danced on television several times on Top Ten Dance Party in Durham. I was so proud of him and that kind of spurred my interest in dancing.

After high school, I attended Hardbarger Business College in Raleigh and then started working with the State Board of Health. As a young person, I never thought that my job with public health would become a career and I would retire 30 years later.

I had gone with friends to a few clubs in Raleigh and had danced a little. One night at the Embers Club a friend named Josh Tomlinson, the father of Embers drummer Bobby Tomlinson, introduced me to Charles Gurley and asked us to dance in their weekly contest. Charles had lived in Richmond, Virginia for many years and said he hadn't danced in 19 years, but he would "give it a try". We won the contest that night and that began our lifelong love and companionship.

Charles and I started going to Elliot's Nest in Raleigh where I met Betty and Charles Jernigan. They were very good dancers. Betty helped me learn to dance better with Charles as my partner and we had lots of fun together. As we began to travel around to various clubs and contests I came to love this dance and music and admired many of the wonderful dancers I met like Jeannie Pack, Betty Kennedy, and Babs McIntosh. I loved the way they carried themselves on the floor and the fun they seemed to have while dancing.

We started going to a lot of shag contests and then began dancing in them. It seemed for several years we went to a club every weekend, and we met so many wonderful dancers and made many great friends along the way. Our very closest friends were met through the dance and its music and they have been an important part of our lives. We have shared many happy and laughing times and they have been a great comfort and strength in our recent difficult times.

One aspect of the dance really appealed to me, and that was when junior dancers came on the scene. Charles and I spent a lot of time with the junior dancers as our daughter, Carol, began to compete. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with and being around all the terrific kids who were dancing then and who now are great dancers and wonderful young people that make us proud to have hopefully been a small part of their development.

It means a great deal to me to be part of this dancing community and I am truly honored to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. I am so humbled by this recognition and I will cherish this honor for the rest of my life.

I will do my utmost to uphold the confidence placed in me by the Hall of Fame Committee and I will strive to make whatever contribution I can to perpetuate this wonderful organization, the dance, and the music that we love so much.