



# Charles Jernigan 2004

## CHARLES JERNIGAN

I grew up in Wilson, North Carolina and my introduction to dancing was through my cousin, Louie Johnson. He taught me the kick basic. When I was about fourteen, I started going with him when he would go out dancing and watched him having so much fun. I noticed all the girls were around the dancers and knew this was for me. I loved the music they were dancing to, and just being around all those people that seemed to enjoy it so much.

When I was old enough, I started going to a few local clubs close to home such as The Melody Park and Maurices in Wilson and the Hay Loft and Rex Center in Rocky Mount. Eventually I got to go to the beach and went to what I thought was the best of all, the Ocean Plaza in Carolina Beach. At that point I was so crazy about it I would go anywhere they were listening to music and dancing. During these travels I met a guy named Steve Rouse from Snow Hill, who at that time was the best I had ever seen. I watched Steve dance a bunch. I loved his boogie walk, and worked at it until I could do it almost like he did. Armed with that, we began going to the granddaddy of dance places in Eastern North Carolina, Williams Lake, and the Faison dances.

Some of the guys began going to Raleigh to Jim Thorntons Dance Club and a place called the Scrambled Dog. One Friday night at Jim Thorntons I met a red head named Betty Jean and she loved to dance as much as I did. That began a life-long love and friendship that has lasted 43 years. We had two children, Debbie and Danny, and stayed home to raise our family until they were sixteen. I had met Norfleet Jones during our times in Raleigh and he kept asking us to come out. In 1978 we went to his club, Elliot's Nest in underground Cameron Village, and fell in love with the dance all over again. We met dancers like John and Pee Wee Teel, Cecil and Linda Squires, Bob and Carol Myrick, and many others there that made us feel like teenagers once more.

When shag contests became popular in the late 70's we would go all over North and South Carolina dancing and competing. During this time we met Shad and Brenda Alberty, who became close friends. Through them we met Sam and Babs McIntosh and Jack and Connie Smith, just to name a few of the fantastic dancers that we hung around. This became a grand time in our lives and I have many memories of all the good music, the many clubs, and the many great people we have met through the dance.

We still love the music and dance and go at every opportunity to see old friends and hopefully meet new ones that love the dance as much as Betty and I. It has been a grand time in my life. To be inducted into the Shaggers Hall of Fame is an honor and privilege that I will always cherish and I am very pleased by this recognition.