



# Ronnie Duggins 2004

## RONNIE DUGGINS

My first memory of dancing was age eight. My fourth grade teacher at Waughtown Elementary would take the class to the basement and attempt to teach us to dance. I remember her showing us how to hold our arms bent at the elbow and to dance forward and back. Looking back, she must have been a shagger.

Then there was the kiddie show at the Carolina Theater in 1957 on Saturday morning before the movie. There was the RC dance party in Greensboro and we were on TV. Of course there was the Dick Bennett Hi Fi dance. I remember one Hi Fi dance when the band didn't show and Eddie Page sang 39-21-40 shape. Yes, that's right, I grew up with the likes of Eddie Page, Jet Jackson, Glenn Doub and Henry Moody in Winston-Salem.

At the age of fourteen, Crystal Lake was the place to be. My first time there, I went in Style; I was with Steve Hailey in his 1954 white ford convertible. There I watched Harold Burton, Tilley Seymore, Steve Hailey, Janet Harold, Judy Cook, Betty Moore and of course Ed, Jet and Glenn dance. I was hooked.

High Point Lake also had its share of talent. Where I watched Danny Bean, Sara Coleman, Linda Smith (who taught me the boogie walk), Shad & Brenda Alberty and Spider Kirkman. I would go home and practice, practice and practice some more to Speedo by the Cadillacs.

Then there was the Castaways in Greensboro where I remember Jack Smith, Sharon Phillips and Shirley Peeden. And, of course, there were always trips to the beach. The Pad, Forks Drive Inn, Sonny's, The Barrell and the Pavilion are places where I would watch Mike Osborne, Cindy Mangum, Ronnie Joyce, Tommy White, Buzz Sawyer, and Roslyn and Shirley Reynolds.

So many of these people who influenced my dancing are now in the Hall of Fame. Boy did I know who to pay attention to!!

Anyone, who ever went to "The Bushes" in Greensboro, knows that everyone from everywhere was there at some time or another. This was where I first started competing in contests. Some I won, some I placed and some I just showed!

Then in 1986 Sharon Phillips called and said she was working with a female student who needed a partner to practice with. Little did I know how that would change life as I knew it. Leaving Sharon's house, after that first practice, I knew I had met the girl I wanted to spend my life with. The rest is history. Donna and I were married. As an added bonus, I gained a dance partner!

Some of my other favorite female partners through the years have been Susan Neal and Glenda Johnson, with whom I won a lot of contests, Sharon Phillips, Vee Page, Linda Carol Flynn and Lila Munn. You know those events in your life when you can remember exactly where you were? One of mine was my first dance with Lila. It was the old Pad in 1987.

These friends I've made all these years ago are still my friends. That is what is so unique about shaggers. Friendships are forever. I guess we'll all grow old together.