



M. Kristye McDonald 2009

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Born in 1953, I was raised in Lillington, N.C., a small town on the Cape Fear River smack dab between Raleigh and Fayetteville. With luck on my side, I have a brother 9 years older than me and our mother would often make him take me in order to get the family car for the evening. She figured he would behave with me in tow. NOT! Little did she know that within minutes of leaving the house, I'd be squeezed into the backseat between several of his high school buddies, running the roads from joint to joint. It didn't take them long to use me as a "chick magnet", by teaching me to fas' dance and wind me up on the dance floor. I was so little, they could flip me over their shoulders and through their legs and make it look like a piece of cake!. Thus began my love for fas' dancing. I was bitten and am even more in love with it now.

Gene Driver was a friend and golfing buddy of my dad's and Gene's younger brother was Harry Driver. Harry was instrumental in dances being held for us younger ones at Chicora Country Club outside of Dunn. He would get us the best music and we would be hypnotized when he and Dottie hit the floor. I have to give credit to Harry for introducing me to "black jump music"...the kind that gets into your bones and won't come out til you've danced it out.

Williams Lake was my favorite "dance place" and I cherish many memories from the time I was way too young to be legal until it's demise. Our crowd would pile up and hit White Lake, The Embers Club & Elliott's Nest in Raleigh on the week-ends, while vacations were spent sneaking from Holden's Beach to OD to watch the dancers at the Pavilion and the Pad. And I mean watch....you couldn't have paid me to get on the floor with the likes of Sandra Schwartz, JoJo Putnam & Donnie Christenbury to name just a few of the greats. Dancing for me was reserved for practicing what I had seen once we returned to the cottage at Holden Beach.

My style is what I call "street dancing". I danced in competition for quite a few years hating every contest..it took the fun out of dancing, making it work. I hated to count out steps and learn routines, but this came in handy when I was raising 2 sons on my own and got a part-time job with the Lee County Parks and Recreation teaching shag lessons. Thanks to shag and my being able to teach it, I was able to get a little place in OD and spend my weekends here while my boys were growing up. I spent the days on or in the water with them and my nights at The Spanish Galleon, Fat Jack's, Harold's at the Pad & Ducks. Without the help and support of my "shag family", this wouldn't have been possible. Dewey Kennedy showed up at our trailer almost every Sunday morning and presented me with coupons people had won in the weekend dance contests for free breakfasts, free lunches, free rides for the kids...the list was endless. Connie Platt Campbell also always had a handful of something to give me to keep my boys entertained. Everywhere I went, there was someone to help me... Walt Graves even paid my water bill a couple of times. My wonderful friends and "shag family" taught me to try to "pay it forward". I strive to be of service to any of our crowd that is in need. I have always taught kids to dance at no charge. The kids are our future. I'm lucky to be able to share the love for this dance with one of my sons, Zackary. My heart is filled with joy whenever I'm on the dance floor with him. My other son, Joshua, doesn't share this love for the dance, but has always supported me, watched and laughed when his Mama hit the floor to do this "crazy dance".

I love this crazy dance....and I love the people who do it. Our shag family gets bigger and bigger and OUR children grow up and find the same love for the dance and music that we have. *It has come to be one great big circle, full of love, caring.....and fas' dancing of course!*