



# Sumter Brawley

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I grew up in Durham, NC not too far from where Chicken and Bobby Hicks were growing up and not too far from where Larry Blake would eventually grow up.

Before I was a year old and every year after that through my teen years my parents took me to one beach or another. We went to Virginia, Carolina, Wrightsville, Atlantic, Cherry Grove, Ocean Drive, Crescent, Myrtle and Miami Beaches. I had salt water in my blood and sand in my shoes at a very early age.

When I was a pre-teener, my good friend Charlie Andrews' sister, Sarah Lou, played 78 recordings of Tommy Dorsey's "Boogie Woogie", Nellie Lutcher's "Fine Brown Frame", Freddy Slack's "House of Blue Lights" and others. The music turned me on. My first record was a 45 recording of "Boogie Blues" by Gene Krupa and Anita O'Day. I realized I was different. All my schoolmates listened to Country Boy on the radio and I listened to Doctor Jive and The Night Hawk. They played R&B plus bebop and jazz.

Each summer at the beach I watched people dance to rhythm and blues recordings at places such as Duck's Burger Palace at Atlantic Beach, NC, the Myrtle Beach Pavilion, Spivey's and the Ocean Drive Pavilion. I was stoked, but it would be a long time before I would ever learn to do it.

I came home from The Citadel one Christmas and went over to Nancy Carpenter's house. There in Nancy's living room Larry Blake had them all lined up doing the basic step. I fell right in.

Everything was in place. We discovered Ocean Drive and I could get out on the dance floor. The first time I got out there was with a girl named Betty Ann Stanley, I believe, that Larry introduced me to. It was nervous city; I was shaking like a leaf. Those were good years though. That's when I met all the great South Carolina people.

I returned from the Air Force and worked at The Pad the summers of 1961 and 1962. I got my BSEE from NC State in 1963 and headed for the west coast. I worked around Los Angeles as a sales engineer and lived on both Manhattan and Hermosa beaches for about four years. When I returned from California, I spent lots of time scuba diving in the Florida Keys with Captains Jack and Hannah Hawes, but that's a whole nother story.

Jean and I were married at the Ocean Drive Presbyterian Church by the Reverend Kenneth Littlejohn Hamilton while my best man, Vernon Suitt, played jazz on the church organ.

In my travels, I learned that what we have in common with California people and Keys people is the beach. Beach people are the same no matter where you go. If you're beach people, you can fall right in. Our dividend is the dance.