



John Chenault 2013

JOHN CHENAULT

I was born in Fayetteville, NC but spent my early years in Maryland. My parents loved dancing to Big Band music of the '40s, so there was always music and dance in my life. On Saturday night, dances were held upstairs at the local fire station and at the Silver Springs Armory. I went to these dances, but mostly I watched, because I was too young to dance with the girls. However, I knew dancing was something I just had to learn to do.

I moved back to Fayetteville, in 1958. I soon discovered Bessie's Dance Hall near Fort Bragg, where I met Lee and Gail Huggins, Charlie Boone, OB Knowles and other well know local dancers. I was captured by the rhythm and blues music and smooth dancing. I started going to any place I could dance, and around Fayetteville there were plenty of them. I almost completely forgot about my school work and put a lot of miles on my car! One of my favorite places was the Legion Hut in Maxton where BS Player, a New Orleans style band performed. You could find me at Faison, Williams's Lake, White Lake, The Ocean Plaza at Carolina Beach, Lakewood, Scramble Dog, or the Pad at OD. Anywhere there were dancers and girls to dance with...that's where I wanted to be, dancing to almost every dance. Ocean Drive was, and will always be, one of my favorite places.

On one of my trips to the Pad, I "fell into a job" at the OD Pavilion calling Bingo for the summer. I "snapped up" first class accommodations on the porch over the Pad for \$10 a week. This fit right into my \$50.00 weekly paycheck and budget. My closet was my car. This is when I met Mike Osborne, who greatly influenced my dancing, as did Spider Kirkman.

In college I rented a farmhouse and lived with several guys including Sam McIntosh. Every Wednesday we piled into our cars and went to James Rogers, a beer and dance joint in Bennettsville, SC and the Coachman and Four Club.

I met my wife Lois at an Armory dance in Laurinburg, NC. We were married in 1967 and lived in Atlanta for a year and danced at "The Scene", (owned by Chick Hedrick), which was the only place we could find that played danceable music.

A new job brought us to Washington, NC in 1970. After a while we discovered Louie's Lounge in Greenville, NC where we made some great friends and met some terrific dancers like Mike Pace, Charlie Womble, Jackie McGee, Don Bunn, Judy Eastwood to name a few. I danced in many SPA contest during the 80's and also did some judging. I still love going back to Ocean Drive where the good times continue.

Dancing has been one of the most important activities in my life and through dance I have met the best people in the world. I am honored to be inducted into the Shaggers Hall of Fame 2013.