



Jimmy Reaves - 2021

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I was born in the small town of Mt.Olive NC, better known as the 'Pickle Capital'. I was taught to dance the "bop" by my teenage girl cousins when I was too young to refuse them. As I stood beside them, the girls taught me the basic step. Thus, I learned to dance, but on the girl's foot. I had no idea that for all those years during high school and college, I was actually dancing on the girl's foot. In the mid-fifties on Saturday nights we had a dance at the old scout hut in Mt.Olive, this is where I first met Dennie Wheeler, Jimmy "Spider" Kennedy, and a young Charles Gurley. Later years of high school we would go to the dance in Faison. I was always intrigued seeing these three young girls (Terry and Randy Kennedy and Betty Wells) dancing in the corner. After attending college in VA on a football scholarship and later the Air Force, neither of which had bopping going on, I returned to college in 1968 where I met and fell in love with Betty Wells. In 1970 after graduating college, Betty and I got married. I was offered the head football coaching job in my hometown. Here I enjoyed 8 years of coaching some of the finest football players and teams.

After getting out of coaching, with too much time and energy on my hands, we went to a club in Raleigh. Little did we know there was a shag contest going on. I remember seeing Shad, Doug, Mike, the Teels, the Jernigans, the Squires, and Danny Bean. On the way home I told Betty that I could "bop" and she looked at me and said 'I can too'. We ended up taking shag lessons from Percy Thorton. When he told me to show him my basic, I broke out into a basic and was so proud. After seeing my basic, he came over, put his arm around my neck and said "sugar that's pretty, but it's on the girl's foot." Percy signed us up to dance a novice contest in Rocky Mount and believe it or not, we won! Two weeks later we danced in Raleigh and won! Now we were really in over our heads because we had to dance in the pro division! During this time in our lives we were blessed to meet some of the best lifelong friends. We would meet in Goldsboro, get on the 'Shag Wagon' owned by Bobby and Billie Faye, and travel to a contest every weekend. Charlie, Jackie, Mike Rackley, Milton Nowell, Terry Bryan, Judy Bazemore, Betty and myself, off we went!

1985 I got a job opportunity that moved us to NMB. Here we enjoyed SOS, many more events, and clubs such as Fat Jacks, Fat Harolds, Ducks, and the Pub. It was here that we got involved in the first Shag Ball. These balls were to recognize dancers of past and future and to raise money for charity. So many great memories of shagging!

Thanks from the bottom of my heart to the ones that voted me into the Hall of Fame. One of the greatest moments of my life!