



# Dennis Anthony Beam, Jr 1989

## DENNIS ANTHONY BEAM, JR.

It was the early years during World War II when my family and I arrived from Shelby, North Carolina. At Crescent Beach, South Carolina, I remember pulling down black shades in the cottage during the "no light" curfew. Our family doctor had recommended my mother spend each summer at the beach. What wonderful medicine -- for me!!

1945 was the first job I remember. Setting up bowling pins at the Crescent Beach Pavilion (C.B.P.). Tips, usually 10¢ to 25¢, thrown down the bowling alley was the wage. Around 13 or 14, I became the "grill man" at the C.B.P.

Other than my sister, Betty, my jitterbug partner was Mary Ruth (Pless) Wagner. She lived just across the street from the C.B.P. Every night after the grill closed we would shuffle for hours. "Tourists" at times would throw coins for the entertainment. Every week or so, the big treat! -- go to the OD Pavilion and dance with the "pros", learning lots of new steps including the split.

1954 was a sad year for all the beach people. Hurricane Hazel completely destroyed Robert's Pavilion at OD. The new OD pavilion had terrible cement dance floors. We wanted wood floors, so Billy Moffatt, Larry Blake, and I walked across the street to an old house on the corner which simply served beer to local fishermen. We explained to the management if they would build us a 10 x 12 wood dance floor and put a juke box in, we would bring them all the business they could handle -- the "Pad" was born.

One year I went into business on the Strand -- pushed a Snow Ball cart from OD to Cherry Grove, back to OD, then down to Crescent Beach. Mr. Roy Harrellson, owner of the OD Pavilion, felt I was taking Snow Ball business away from him. Next thing I know the OD Health Department informed me that in order to sell Snow Balls on the Strand I would have to add a bathroom with hot and cold running water on the cart -- thus ended my Snow Ball enterprise. Politics, maybe?

My last beach job was a life guard for Walter Beaver's Beach Service. My stand was at Dick Manor Lodge.

Due to limited space, I have not been able to mention many of the wonderful friends I made over so many years. Every now and then I am asked who I think the best male and female dancers are. I answer, "there are so many fantastic dancers," but if I can only choose one couple it is Harry Driver and Jean "Allen" Ferguson.

Born May 15, 1936, Shelby, North Carolina. Graduated UNC-CH 1958. N.C. Air National Guard tour of duty. President of D.A. Beam Enterprises. Still call Shelby home.

Married 27 years to a wonderful Shelby girl named Harriette. She has given me three wonderful children, Dennis, Laura and Drew.

Words cannot express how happy my beach days were. Life was enriched by the magic of friendships -- I loved them all.