



# Clarice Reavis 1983

## CLARICE REAVIS

They call her the queen of rock and roll, and sometimes, she says, it embarrasses her. But regardless, the lady is a legend.

"There's the Ocean Drive Pub, and Fat Jack's, and Harold's Across the Street," she said. "They'll be packed in like a bunch of worms there. I walk in, and somebody will shout, "Clarice," I don't know them. But they know me."

Clarice, she's older now, over 60, but she's still the same dancing fool who used to do the big apple, the jitterbug, the Mexican hat dance, and who won all those Charleston contests.

"They call it (the jitterbug) the Shag now," said Clarice, "but it's the same stuff. I still dance to it. I haven't changed a lick, except orange shoes used to be my trademark, and now, it's leopard."

Her full name is Clarice Reavis. She lives in Fayetteville, NC, but Myrtle Beach is her dancing home, has been for decades.

The places used to be Robert's Pavilion, Spivey's Pavilion, McSpadden and Spear Pavilion and Turks and Bill's Beanery. Kids of the forties and fifties would descend on them from all over the Carolinas. Beach bums, you might call them, who slept anywhere they could find a floor, worked the bingo games or as lifeguards to make a buck or two and survived on beans and beer.

And always, there was the dancing. Dewey Ivey was one of the good ones. I remember Rubber Legs, and Chicken Hicks, Harry Driver, Nelson Burton and Swink Laughter even though he didn't dance, he was a lifeguard.

Clarice, she was a star. Everybody wanted to dance with her, because they remembered her, or had heard of her. She started going to OD in 1937. She was always one of the 15 couples who danced all afternoon and all night.

Born in Clinton, Clarice got her dancing start at White Lake, NC, but wherever she went, her dancing feet went with her, even to Flora MacDonald College, an all-girl school that didn't allow dancing.

After the war, there was White Lake and Carolina Beach and the hot music of Jimmy Cavallo. He was playing upstairs in the "loft," and turned Carolina Beach upside down. Good dancers came from everywhere. I met Marilyn Hodges from Dunn. We became best friends in five minutes. She was the best female dancer I ever saw. We danced every minute of every day and night, changing clothes about twice in the afternoon and twice at night, we got so wet.

That was a long time ago, but in a sense, nothing has changed for Clarice. She dances at Myrtle Beach and in Fayetteville night clubs. But her heart will forever be at Ocean Drive.