



# Al Cain 1997

AL CAIN

It was 1948. The place was the southeast corner of the Pavilion at Myrtle Beach. Teenagers dancing on a concrete floor in front of a jukebox. That was my introduction to the dance that is known today as the "Shag." Back then it was "fast dancing" or the "basic." This was vacation time for my parents. I spent the day playing on the beach; the afternoons on the miniature golf course. The nights were spent watching the kids dance. Then my father discovered Ocean Drive for fishing. I discovered Robert's Pavilion. I'd watch the older kids dance, then duck around the corner to practice the steps. Some of the older girls realized what I was doing and would drag me onto the floor. There were always more girls than guys. From then on I was hooked. In those days the emphasis was on smoothness and when you said smooth, you said Harry Driver. I never tried to copy his style or steps but I sure worked on his method.

On the local scene it was Lakewood, William's Lake or White Lake. Of course O.D. was always first choice and I hitched many a ride with Lee Huggins or David Wright. Hurricane Hazel took Robert's Pavilion in 1954 and the Pad became "the place." 1956 and 1957 were my lifeguard days at O.D. Names like Larry Blake, Tommy ElRamey, Billy Moffat, Jack Taylor, George Hall, the Beaver Boys, KMA and many, many others still ring up a lot of memories.

1960 brought marriage to M.G., military service and later, two sons, Jac and Shannon. Dancing took a back seat in the 60's and early 70's. Then there came a resurgence of the dance now known as the "shag." Gene Laughter called for a "beach reunion," S.O.S. in 1980 and it was "let the good times roll" once again. Beach clubs and shag competition sprang up across North and South Carolina. Shagging was taught and still is in virtually every beach club from Virginia to Florida. I even had a short fling on the dance circuit with partner Mackie Weeks. Then Mackie and I spent about a year and a half teaching the shag at "Tally Who" before happily turning the reins over to Don Bunn and Beverly Lewis.

Triple bypass surgery in 1986 prompted M.G. and me to move ahead with our plans to buy a home at the beach, which we did in June of 1987. We have spent virtually every weekend at O.D. since then, fulfilling some of the dreams of our teenage years. New friends, new places. But the old friends, old times will never be forgotten.

My thanks to the Shaggers Hall of Fame for helping perpetuate the dance and the music and the honor of my election to the Hall of Fame.