



# Phyllis K. Tiller 2004

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My love for South Carolina's State Dance, The Shag, is illustrated through the sheer joy, excitement, and pleasure it has brought me over the years.

It has been a challenge to find the words to sum up a life of "Shagging on the Boards" and sharing this common interest with a family of fellow Shaggers who are a constant mainstay and with my personal family, who have understood and supported me.

I was born in Columbia, South Carolina. One of the most important and happiest milestones along the bumpy road of my life began at the age of fourteen when my dearest friend to this day, Rick Shackelford, took on the perilous task of teaching me to Shag. Following numerous afternoons and evenings of practicing the basic step with Rick and the doorknob, with apprehension, he began to teach me the pivot, belly roll, and boogie walk. The next summer Rick took me to the beach-going to The Pad and Sonny's Pavilion meant long hours of sitting and observing Frances Nichols, Joe Putnam, Sonny Small, "Sleepy" Timmerman, Domer Reeves, Freddie Onley, Boney Moore, Tom Barrineau, Jimmy Mills, Anne Huddle, and Buddy Kennedy. Rick Shackelford has been the steadfast rock throughout my life. His wonderful wife, Dale, has been a treasured friend since they began dating and continues to hold a special place in my heart.

In the late 50's, I met Don Bryant-who was a student at USC- at a college hangout called The Opus. Don demonstrated a true love and a gift for creating and executing dance steps- unselfishly and with patience, he taught me numerous steps that are called mirror steps today. Throughout the years these steps have remained popular and continue to be performed by young and old Shaggers. It was not uncommon during these practice sessions to be critiqued by his fraternity brothers who included: Rufus Wactor, Tommy White, Roger Burris, and Mack Windham. Don and his wife, Sandra, have touched my life deeply through their tender, caring manner.

My family of fellow Shaggers is an extension of my personal life: I am blessed with a son, James Harmon, a daughter, Ashley Lyndon, and have four grandchildren: Jamie and Krista Harmon; and Lexi and Ayden Lyndon.

Around 1982, my daughter, Ashley, was motivated by JoJo Putnam and Vickie Carter to become one of the first members of the Junior Shaggers Association. JoJo, Vickie, Shelia Bodie, Wanda Holliday, Carroll Yongue, Julie Trent, and I met weekly to assist these young dancers just as others had taken their time and patiently passed on the dance to me. Ashley danced in exhibition with JoJo for several years.

May the "Keepers of the Dance", the instructors teaching "The State Dance", and our young "Shaggers of the Future" continue to be the voice and legs of our dance The Shag for generations to come.