



# John Lewis 2012

## JOHN LEWIS

I have danced my entire life. From buck dancing as a six-year-old in Brooksville, Florida, to jitterbugging as a teenager, to being voted Best Dancer at Central High School in Charlotte, North Carolina in the mid-1940s. I have always loved to dance.

Like many of us, military service, careers, and the demands of rearing families limited dancing for many years. However, in 1980 I discovered the Shag, was completely mesmerized by the dance, and wanted to learn all the moves. Shad Alberty tried valiantly to teach me steps that I promptly forgot; I heard “No, no, no, Lewis!” too many times. I finally took my friend Richard Abney’s advice and just did what I felt. From then on, I literally “danced with joy”.

I spent many happy hours at Groucho’s Harold’s on the Beach, The Pad, Ducks, and the Ocean Drive Pavilion, as well as any shag club party I could find, especially the great Columbia Shag Club parties. I even met my wife, Jan, at Duck’s.

Over the years, I have realized that, as wonderful as the dance is and as much as I have loved it, the friendships I have formed are even more important to me. Just as everyone has a different interpretation of the dance, a different favorite song, and a different favorite partner, we all bring a vast variety of life experiences, attitudes, and memories into our dance community. These diverse backgrounds miraculously come together and enrich us because of this dance, the Shag. The camaraderie and its music is unlike any other, and I am fortunate to be a part of it.

Thank You to the Hall of Fame for the tremendous work that you do in keeping our dance and our music alive. I am honored to be a member of the Hall of Fame.