



Lois Hollowell Chenault 2013

LOIS HOLLOWELL CHENAULT

I began dancing at the age of six, twirling around the house and dancing on my toes. This prompted my parents to enroll me in a dancing school in my hometown of Wake Forest, NC. My dance teacher was a former Rockette, and in my eyes a star. She taught me ballet and tap and an appreciation for the beauty and graceful movements of a true dancer.

I first learned the “bop” in junior high at the Community Center Teen-Age Club, and every afternoon after school I rushed home to watch American Bandstand. In high school we danced at “sock hops” and discovered places to dance at lake pavilions which had great music on their jukeboxes. Family vacations to beaches introduced me to “dance places” at Carolina Beach (The REC and Ocean Plaza) and White Lake Pavilion. But, my favorite place to spend vacation was always Ocean Drive. I spent afternoons at Sonny’s Pavilion and other times at The Pad, The Old Beach Club, and The Forks. I was greatly influenced by the smoothness and togetherness of the dancers and the music. Many of those dancers I watched so intently long ago are Hall of Famers. I still love to watch them on the dance floor “doing their thing”.

While a student at Methodist University in Fayetteville, NC I met my husband of 47 years, John. On a weekend visit to my roommate’s hometown, we decided to go to a dance at the Laurinburg Armory. John asked me to dance, and we have been together ever since. Dance and the music was something we both loved. We won our first dance contest in 1964 at the White Lake Pavilion. Every weekend we were dancing at places like Faison, William’s Lake, Coach and Four and the Ember’s Club.

We were married in 1967 and moved to Atlanta. During that era people were dancing disco, but we continued to stay true to our dance roots. We learned a few disco turns but kept the footwork of what is today called shag. We found a small club on Peachtree called “The Scene” which we really liked. Years later we discovered that Chick Hedrick was the owner.

We returned to North Carolina in 1970 and moved to Washington, NC. It didn’t take very long to find large communities of dancers close by in Greenville, NC. We discovered a club called Peaches where we met Judy Eastwood, Charlie and Jackie, Danny Lanier, Mike Pace and Don Bunn and realized we had found some great dancers in our own backyard. There were great clubs in the area: Louie’s, Chapter X, The Ramada, Papa Cat’s, Beau’s, Garry’s, Oar House and Ocean Drive North. We danced in Kinston, Atlantic Beach, New Bern, Rocky Mount and Wilson. Atlantic Beach was close by and we enjoyed dancing at The Jolly Knave, Mary-Lou’s, Polo Club, and Courtney’s. John and I competed and judged in the SPA pro-division for six years during the 1980s. We enjoyed dancing in all the different clubs throughout North and South Carolina. We shared many good times with the other competitors who became dear friends. We joined the Eastern NC Shag Club and that led us to our first SOS, Mid-Winter, DJ Weekend, and Shag Attack. Those many trips to North Myrtle Beach for shag events are some of my most special memories. You could always find me on the dance floor at Duck’s having a very large time! The many fantastic DJs who played the best music (and still do) a big thanks for keeping us on the dance floor with great rhythm and blues.

I consider myself fortunate to have met so many special people from so many places through dance. Dance has enriched my life, and for that I am thankful.

I am honored to have been chosen for the Shaggers Hall of Fame 2013.