



# Vicki Reynolds Carter 1997

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Being a low country native of South Carolina, born in Dillon, there was a good chance I would eventually be exposed to the dance so many of us grew up with - the Shag. The name "shag" however, was not how we referred to the way we moved our feet on the dance floor. The music being played determined whether we danced slow or fast danced ( a.k.a. - "fasdans"). The Shag was formally identified for me in the early 1960s. There was music in our home all the time; from Glenn Miller and the Dorsey Brothers to the Ink Spots and Flatt and Scruggs - and oh yes, there was gospel. My dad felt the way Duke Ellington did about music - there were only two kinds, good and bad and he preferred good! So do I.

In 1950 my first dance partner was born - my sister Patsy. Somebody had to lead and since I was much taller I learned to dance on the opposite foot. By the time we were in junior high school, we knew that since what was playing on American Bandstand looked close to what we were doing at home, it had to be what was happening. For a while, until the guys figured out it was "O.K." to dance, girls had to dance with each other. Patsy moved on to a much, more promising and handsome partner named Terry and I was about the business of just dancing. We had several places to go: Teen Haven, Teen Canteen, Johnny Batson's Hi-Fi Hop and Textile Hall. An outstanding place in my memory was Little Creek near Furman University. I can still hear the strains of Julius Cobb's band in a smoky park pavilion that was filled with all the madras shirts, Bass Weejuns, khaki pants and alpaca sweaters you could stand. The Four Winds, Club Jamarta, Cecil Corbett's Beach Club, Fat Jack's Beach Party, Park Center and the Cellar completed the dance triangle from Greenville to Charlotte to the Beach and back.

Some of my early mentors as dancers were Billy Reynolds from Greenville and Sylvia Pittman from Woodruff, SC. They gave me the best of the basics and I captured what I liked from other dancers that ultimately became my own style. In more recent years, I have been taken with the styles of so many wonderful dancers — they are too numerous to mention and I would not want to leave someone out, but I will have to say those Charleston and Columbia girls always have my attention on the floor.

When teaching the dance to some former juniors, I would strive to impress one point; after they had mastered the basics of the shag workshop, then it was time to put their signature on the bottom line, so to speak. Also, that it was a dance of individual interpretation and body language which cultivated so many beautiful styles. The thrill of the dance would be enough, but I have been extremely fortunate to have shared the "shag" with the next generation whether it was a step, enthusiasm and encouragement. I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for the joy they brought me as they learned the dance, made the dance their own and became adults I am proud to say I know and love. Most of these former Juniors utilized their talents as Shaggers to raise thousands upon thousands of dollars for the children of Camp Kemo and some of them were honored guests for this reason at Governor and Mrs. Richard Riley's 'Beach Party on The Lawn' in Columbia. I could not have been more proud if they were all my own.

From Dillon to Greenville and Charlotte to Ocean Drive there have been so many wonderful times I will carry in my heart forever. Shagging is so much more than how you move on the dance floor — it is a life-style and state of mind. Whether it was in the inner sanctum of the Bushes, the Sand Flea Fanny's, Duck's or Harold's or the Governor's private chambers for the signing of the Shag Bill, nothing could be finer than to be from Carolina and be a part of this arena, to be counted among the ranks of the Shaggers Hall of Fame is very special. As my dear friend, Elliott Schwartz, once said, "Induction into the Shaggers' Hall of Fame is something one hopes for but should not expect." My hopes have been realized.