



Elaine Small Wilson 1998

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I was born and raised in Greenville, SC. Dancing and music have always been a big part of my life. My shag days started when I was 13 at places like the Teen Hut, Pine Grove or parties at other friend's homes. There, we would practice, learn new moves and dance till curfew. We couldn't wait for the next weekend to do it all over again. In high school, a popular spot was the American Legion Hut, where a local band called The Confederates would play beach music and people from miles around would come to dance the night away. Other places included The Amvets, Curry's Lake and a neat little place across from Parker High School, called Betty's. On our trips to Myrtle Beach (chaperoned, of course), we would dance at the Myrtle Beach Pavilion during the day and at night we would go to The Pad or Sonny's in Cherry grove.

My young adulthood became involved with having two wonderful children and the activities that motherhood involved. In the late 70's, I heard about a place being opened in Greenville called Tramp's. I started going on Saturday nights, then Wednesday or any night DJ Jim Davis was spinning his records. The crowds grew larger, old friendships were renewed and many new friendships were made that are still special. I was introduced at this time to a classic style of dancing. Shag contests were being held and Tramps decided to have a contest and to open the competition to out of town dancers. I witnessed some of the best shagging and made some long lasting friendships with shaggers from all over North and South Carolina. I also participated in the newly formed SPA competitive dancers association, danced in some contests and judged many of these, including the Nationals at Myrtle Beach.

In the early 80's, I was fortunate to be the first President of the newly formed Carolina Shag Club and to be involved when it became a charter member of the Association of Carolina Shag Clubs. This enabled me to make a lot of new shagging friends from Columbia, Rock Hill, Charleston, Atlanta and Charlotte. Tramp's had closed, but shagging continued at the Club Savoy and the famous "Sand Flea Beach Club". Many of these new association friends would travel to the Sand Flea for Friday or Saturday night dancing. The annual "Sand Flea Reunion" still brings many of these friends together and is always a highlight of the year.

My passion for the dance and the music, and my desire to perpetuate it led me to start teaching the dance. Bill Waldrep and I started teaching at Tramp's and continued for many years at The Club Savoy, The Sand Flea and other locations in North and South Carolina. I still continue to work with the junior shaggers and teach private shag lessons. We're now in the year 1998. I'm still married, a grandmother of two and once again President of our shag club. I'm still shagging and enjoying it as much or more than I ever have. Shagging will always be a part of my life. I will continue to do everything I can to preserve our beautiful dance. The Shaggers Hall of Fame is certainly a wonderful honor. I have so much admiration and respect for the great dancers that I have met over the years as I watched their different styles and techniques. I never thought for a moment, that I would become a part of this. I am very honored to be part of The Hall of Fame. Being a member of The Hall of Fame is, and always will be, a shagger's dream come true.