



OB Knowles 2000

**OB KNOWLES
FAYETTEVILLE, NC**

I was born in Fayetteville, NC and have lived there all my life except for my college years, which were many. I have heard people say "I went to college with him at NC State." Someone else would say, "no he went to Campbell College." Another person would say, "well, he was at East Carolina when I was there." Yes, they were all correct. After a brief stay at NC State I attended Campbell College for 2 years and met a lot of great people. We had as good a time as we could at Buies Creek, NC. Then when I went to Greenville, NC and attended East Carolina College (as it was called at that time), I knew I was at the last college for me. I absolutely loved going to school at EC. We had a great time during those years. My college roommate, Eddie Dawkins, and I lived off campus in an 8 wide mobile home. We still discuss those days at EC. They were something else. Enough said about college.

The first time I can remember seeing people shag or jitterbug, whatever they called it in 1952, was at Ocean Drive. When I was 12 years old I would walk to the pavilion at night and watch the older guys dance. I didn't know who they were. I assume it was Eddie Monsour, Chick Hedrick, Harry Driver, Jojo Putnam, and guys like that. Anyway, I noticed all the dancers had the pretty girls around them. I would return to the rented cottage, look in the mirror and say, "OB Knowles, you are a skinny, little guy and not very good looking. You had better learn how to do this shag dance and quickly if you ever expect to get a date." I immediately tried to do the steps they were doing at the pavilion.

Back in Fayetteville we would have dances at Honeycuff Recreation Center and private parties. None of us were very good, but we enjoyed what we were doing. When I was 16 I met Dickie Bass. She took me in like a little brother and worked with me on the proper basic steps to the dance. We spent many hours dancing together at Williams Lake and Carolina Beach. By the time I was 19 years old I felt comfortable and confident with my dancing and have been doing it ever since.

From 1959-1963, a typical weekend was Friday night at Williams Lake and Saturday night at the Pickle Plant in Faison, NC, dancing to Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. Sundays were spent at White Lake Pavilion. If we could get to the beach, OD was the place. OD was the hottest place for dancing. We danced at the Pad and Sonny's Pavilion at Cherry Grove. At East Carolina we danced at night on the sidewalk at the college bookstore and weekends at the pavilion at Atlantic Beach, NC. Of course, I cannot omit Carolina Beach, the Ocean Plaza and all those Azalea Festival parties.

I was married in 1965 to Judy Brinkley. We had one daughter, Nicollee, who I taught to shag when she was 10 years old. She still shags but can't do the "bellyroll". She said I never taught her, and I tell her I had good reasons for that!

I could go on and on about this dance called the shag, but to sum it up, the shag dance has been the center of my social life. I have met many fine people I could have never met any other way. I owe this dance a lot. It has been a very important part of my life.

Let me say thanks to the people who voted me into the Hall of Fame. I understand I had a lot of lovely ladies votes. Thanks girls! In closing let me thank people like Eddie Monsour, Chick Hedrick, Wanda Holliday and many others, too many to count, who have given so much of their time to keep the shag dance going on for all of our enjoyment.