



# "Mack" Dave McInnis 2003

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My first recollection of seeing the vast Atlantic Ocean was at Wrightsville Beach, N.C. I was 7 or 8 years old and lived in Wilmington, N.C. for two years. Went to Wrightsville Beach on weekends for two summers. Remember seeing Gene Krupa and his band at the Old Lumina. I was sold on fast music from that time on. Started going to Crescent Beach with various family members about 1944. The ocean and beach were number one on my things “to do”, but old Roberts Pavilion was number two. Not for shagging, girls, fights, or beer, of course, but for the few archaic rides and games at that site. I remember playing bingo at Roberts. In any event, I had “sand in my shoes” at an early age. Having moved back to Sumter, S.C., I was smitten by the beauty and brains (not to mention the body) of Barbara Bruce (later Barbara McInnis). During my junior year of high school, I realized that I must learn to shag if I was to compete with various beach cats for Barbara’s attention. I got her to teach me the dance at the Sumter Elks Club swimming pool and have been shagging since. Barbara’s family had a place at Cherry Grove, so if I wanted to see her in the summer I had to go to the beach. My A.A.U. swimming and diving accomplishments stood me well with finding part-time work as a lifeguard at O.D. and Myrtle Beach. If any of the lifeguards had to leave their job early or take some time off, someone would get the word to me that a job was available. My heroes at that time were Dennis Beam and Larry Blake who were, and still are, lifetime friends. Many a night I have watched them dance at Roberts (take the floor) and marveled at their skill. I could never match them on the dance floor- but enjoyed trying. At the beach everyone seemed to have a nickname- Swink, One Lung, Greenback, Smokey Joe, Turk, Doodle, Wormy, P-Nut and Sleepy. It was a wonderful time to be at the beach and I hope the recent development of the O.D. area will never cause my memories of that bygone era to fade. Those that shared those wonderful years at O.D. between the end of WWII and Hurricane Hazel in 1954 share a unique and unexplainable bond. I’m proud to be a member of that group of men and women.