



# John Hamilton McGarity, Jr "Ham" 2008

## JOHN HAMILTON MCGARITY, JR "HAM"

I started listening to Rock & Roll and Blues music in 1953, when I was six years old, so it was only natural to get *Happy Feet!* When I turned twelve, Mon and Dad let me have my first boy/girl party. Johnny Geanes, one of my good friends, came early and showed me a dance called *The Basic*. Fun! Fun! Fun!

I met my wife Shelia when she was fifteen and I was sixteen. We loved to do the Shag and living in Charlotte, N.C. gave us plenty of opportunity to dance. Park Center had bands almost every weekend. Kids came from high schools all over town to listen and dance to The Clovers, The Drifters, The Tams, The Olympics, Little Anthony and the Imperials and many more. As we got older, we danced at the clubs including the B&G Trading Post (discovered by Chips Macrae and Ronnie Joyce), The Box, The Cellar, The Poor House, Papa Docks, Johnny Dollars, and Grouchos.

When school was out, we spent our summers at the beach in The Pad, Sonny's Pavilion, the O.D. Pavilion, The Beach Club and The Barrel. I was lucky enough to have worked at The Box, The Poor House and Sonny's Pavilion. I made hundreds of friends, listened to great music, picked up new steps and got paid for it. Those were "*The Good Ole Days!*"

All these joints were packed with the best Shaggers in the Carolinas. Shelia and I loved being with them and learning from them. Dancers like Cindy "Slim" Mangum, Judy Kilpatrick Tucker, Pam Hinson Bennett, Glenda Johnson, Debbie Strong Houston, Buzz Sawyer, Ronnie Joyce, Richard Abney, Kim Maynard, H. Lee Brown, Mike Osborne, Larry Lupo and Chip Brantley are still great dancers and friends.

Thanks to club managers like Don Reid, Harold Bessent, Tom Wicker, Norfleet Jones, Donnie Christenbury, Randy Rowland and Pam and H. Lee Brown, the Shag has prospered and continues to bring back old memories and make new ones.

Shelia and I have been married forty two years now and have two children, Shane and Trip, along with five grandchildren. We still love the beach and the Shag. There is no other group of people in the work that has more friends nor has more fun than the Shaggers. We are all blessed to have been a part of this dance.

I was honored in 2004 to be inducted into the "O.D. Shagging Legends" and in 2006 into "The Charlotte Area Shaggers Hall of Fame". The Shag has been and always will be a big part of my life.

I am truly humbled to be inducted into "The Shaggers Hall of Fame".

THANK YOU!