



Carl Randle Taylor - 2018

CARL RANDLE TAYLOR

I was born Carl Randle Taylor, May 24, 1935, in Columbia, South Carolina, the oldest of eight children to very devout Christian parents. I graduated from Brookland-Cayce High School and continued my education at the University of South Carolina.

At the age of 19, I was given the opportunity to lease and manage an Esso Standard Oil Company Service Station, located at the corner of Knox Abbott and Axtel Drive in West Columbia, SC. My father was co-owner of Rogers/Taylor Oil Company and owner of several SavMor Service Stations in the Greater Columbia area so this new opportunity allowed me to follow in my father's life-long career path.

My parents' association with the Southern Baptist faith meant they were very strict, so attending movies and dances was not allowed. It wasn't until I opened the service station that I began going to the clubs with friends who frequently stopped by the station. My first night at the Skyline club convinced me that I had to learn to dance. Like so many others have shared, I would hold onto a doorknob or bed post and practice the steps I could remember seeing others do until I felt confident enough to ask someone to dance.

Around this time, I became acquainted with a young lady who invited me to her senior prom. Being a few years older than she was, I was hesitant about accepting the invitation but finally agreed to be her date. It was at the prom that I first saw Ellen Duncan in her yellow evening gown and I knew she was someone I had to get to know.

I learned that she and her friends spent their weekends at Park Woods which was the summer hangout for teens in Winnsboro, SC. The swimming pool was closed nights but the outdoor jukebox was open for dancing. One Saturday night I drove to Park Woods hoping she would be there. Being from outside the community, I wasn't sure how all of this would end up, but I wasn't going to leave without at least one dance. Our first dance was a slow song to the Platters singing "Only You". It has been only her from that moment until now.

Ellen moved to Columbia fall of 1957 to attend Columbia Business College so we continued to date and frequented the local clubs to shag. We attended several concerts at the Township Auditorium in Columbia that featured artists such as Laverne Baker, Ray Charles, Roy Hamilton and many others. The most memorable was a Jackie Wilson concert. He was down on one knee singing "To Be Loved" and it was the perfect moment for me to propose to Ellen. Fifty-nine years later, with only a short break to raise a family, we continue to enjoy the music and spending time with our friends at shag events. Our love of the dance and our love for our shag family have only grown stronger over the many years.

Many thanks to the members of the selection committee of the Beach Shaggers National Hall of Fame for this recognition. I am honored to be included in this great circle of shaggers and friends.