



BILL FARIS (1994) & MARCIA (PEARSON) FARIS (2004)

Bill Faris was born in 1943 in Portsmouth VA, while Marcia was born in 1952 in Norfolk VA. Bill's interest in "fast dancing" started in high school through his appreciation of R&B music, switching the radio stations when left alone in his Dad's car to listen to the Black stations playing "his" favorite music. Bill went on to dance at Moore's Lake and various clubs in the Richmond area. Prior to Marcia's introduction to the Shag through the Richmond Shag Club (RSC) in 1990, her dancing was limited to "free-style", sometimes sneaking into the Peppermint Lounge, Rogues' Gallery, and Peabody's in Va. Beach; and the Jolly Roger in Kill Devil Hills, NC.

Bill and Marcia met on the dance floor at DJ's Lounge (Richmond, VA) where the RSC first started its' weekly dances. Bill was a charter member of RSC, an early convert from the BOP culture of the time. Marcia went to DJ's with a co-worker, Beverly Keesler, to do line dances and meet some people. Marcia and Bev became permanent fixtures as RSC line dance instructors and Marcia took her first Shag lesson from Bill Faris (and his girlfriend at the time, Penny Williams) upon joining the RSC in 1990.

Bill taught shag classes of all levels for the RSC, served in numerous RSC board positions, represented the RSC in team dance competitions and worked with Juniors to promote continuation of the dance. His face was recognizable at many shag events up and down the east coast, from Northern Virginia all the way to Tampa, FL. Being a great lead made Bill a desired dance partner with all the ladies. Marcia began her involvement with the Shag community teaching line dances on RSC club nights at DJ's. Her past experience as high school and college cheerleader, made her comfortable with choreographed routines and she was able to pick up on the new dances easily. Pairing her cheerleading background with her degree in Health and Physical education, Marcia was a natural dance instructor. She and Bill were most remembered for their large repertoire of "together" steps. They taught many of these to the RSC members as shag instructors for all levels. Many were their own creations, but others were "snaked" from the Pro's competition tapes. They would wear a tape out re-running segments until they could copy every detail.

Bill was not crazy about competition, falling victim to "stage fright" and nerves. After forcing himself to go through with a team competition, staying up all night and worrying about remembering the various steps, his comment after winning "... that wasn't so bad". But he chose not to compete again. Marcia, like Bill, found (after her one time representing RSC at the Red's team competition) that dance competition was not her "cup of tea" either. However, she passed her love for the dance on to her son, Jac, who (with his girlfriend and wife, Erin) competed in the National Shag Dance Championships - NonPro Division, winning first place twice, competed for 2 years as part of the National Shag Dance Team and were among the earliest couples in Virginia to make the Pro Division with the Competitive Shaggers Association (CSA).

Many first impressions of Bill were that he was a quiet, conservative, reserved man. However, once he got comfortable with you, a wild, playful personality emerged. The shag club family brought out that side of Bill and he made many lasting friendships there. This was never so apparent as from the significant attendance of RSC members at celebrations of Bill's life in Richmond and North Myrtle Beach. When she moved as a single mother with one son to the unfamiliar Richmond area, she initially met with new co-workers and a few neighbors. But RSC members welcomed her with open arms and always made her feel wanted and valued. Without the love and support of this extended family, life in Richmond would have been very different. Connections in the Shag club also led Bill and Marcia to take up Golf, which in their later years became another favorite activity.

Bill's first interaction with Jr. Shaggers was coaching Jac and his partner Heather for their first national shag competition. He was always willing to show them a new step, fill in as a dance partner, and cheer them on. When Marcia joined the RSC, Jac instantly wanted to dance as well. Anything his mother wanted to do, he wanted to do. She says this was truly an instance where the student quickly became the teacher. Jac picked up things so quickly and he absolutely loved the attention that came along with the dance. Later, when Jac's interest turned into a partnership with Erin, the challenge was to turn this graceful trained ballerina into a shagger. They never realized how tough it would be to get her toes turned in...but she was a fast learner and their partnership thrived.

Bill loved sharing dance experiences with Jac and Erin. He tried to get his other sons involved with the Shag, but the same interest just was not there. Jac, on the other hand, would challenge Bill to try new things and continued his love of dancing. Marcia was the ultimate proud Mom for all her son's accomplishments, recognizing how very hard Jac and Erin worked to accomplish their wins and gain respect in the shag community. They have been guest instructors at many shag club annual parties (including the RSC), and they always love seeing the people that supported them along the way. Life and family take precedence for Marcia now, but the opportunity to be with these people and share their love of shag is everlasting.

Bill and Marcia moved from Richmond to N. Myrtle Beach, SC in 2014, attracted by the opportunities to dance, play golf and enjoy a community of friends (many having also relocated from the Richmond area). Bill passed in 2021 after a freak accident in his home. For Marcia, the extended family relationship that the shag community provides has endured and continues to be a comfort in her life. While Marcia doesn't dance much anymore, she still loves the memories of dancing with Bill, her soul mate, and her many shag friends. She holds out hope of dusting off her shag shoes and hitting the floor again, maybe sometime when Jac and Erin will go with her to the local shag venues.