



CAROLYN AND JOHNNY JOHNSON (1997)

Carolyn grew up in Roanoke, VA and Johnny in Danville, VA. Carolyn learned to shag in 1964 while attending college in Danville where she and Johnny met. Carolyn learned to Shag from a college roommate from NC. Carolyn taught Johnny to Shag, so Johnny learned to dance “on the wrong foot” (a problem he later corrected). They married soon after college and lived in the Roanoke VA area where they were among the



founding members of the Roanoke Valley Shag Club (RVSC).

They were enthusiastic and active RVSC members, attending local events to perform shag demonstrations and recruit new RVSC members. They organized the first RVSC annual party weekend, the “Pig Roast Party”, with Carolyn taking the lead on party planning and administration while Johnny was in charge of roasting and serving the pig. This partnership continued for several years until Carolyn wrote an organizational plan for the party so that others could take over her role. In recognition and appreciation for his contributions to the Club and its Pig Roast, the RVSC named Johnny a “lifetime RVSC member”.

Carolyn and Johnny taught RVSC Shag classes for several years. While attending one of the early Beach Bash parties (which used to draw over 700 party-goers from all over) hosted by the Virginia Beach Shag Club (VBSC), they met a lady swing dancer from Memphis, TN. This led to an invitation to come to Memphis to perform a Shag demonstration at a big Memphis swing dance party. This, in turn, led to invitations to come to many other major swing dance parties (e.g. Jacksonville FL, Phoenix AZ, and Dallas TX) to do more Shag demonstrations.

Traveling to these major parties, they met lots of other “swing” dancers curious about the Shag. They attended the first USA Grand Nationals Dance Championships (GNDC) in Atlanta, GA hosted by Charlie Womble and Jackie McGee. At GNDC, they re-connected with many of their friends in the swing dance community, but the only shaggers in attendance the first year were the competitive shag dancers. As this event grew, more shaggers attended (including Carolyn and Johnny) and more friends were made in the Shag world as well.

Following their 1997 VSHOF induction, Carolyn and Johnny were inducted together into the National Living Legends of Dance (NLLD) in 1999. When asked by another NLLD member how they “qualified” to get inducted to the NLLD without a competitive dance background or record of dance contest placements, they answered “...well, we were asked to come to lots of parties to demonstrate the Shag, and made lots of friends in both the swing and shag dance world along the way. Maybe our love of the dance, some dance ability, and efforts for our own and other dance clubs counts for something”! Yes, indeed, it does!

Johnny passed away in 2017 while Carolyn still lives in their long-time home in the Roanoke VA area.