



## CHARLES HARWARD (2019)

During my freshman, sophomore and junior years of high school, I lived thirty miles "north" of North Myrtle Beach, SC. You would think that I would have learned to Shag at an early age, but you would be wrong. My father kept me so busy working on our farm, I had little free time to do any kind of recreation. I did not learn about the Shag dance until 1991 when I took a ballroom class at the fitness center next to Visions. The instructor, Miss Peggy, told me about the Richmond Shag Club and their free beginner and intermediate dance lessons.

I took those lessons from Vicky and Ralph Tedesco (VSHOF, 2007). I really did not do much dancing that year due to my first wife's illness with colon cancer and her subsequent death in Spring, 1992. In the summer of 1992, I retook the beginner and intermediate Shag lessons from Larry and Shirley Jones. In September 1992, I met my current wife. She had taken the beginner lessons at RSC classes held in Innsbrook and came into the Shag Club for the first time. Later that month I went to my first SOS in NMB. I had the best time of my life. All those good dancers and they would dance and share their "dance" steps with me. I've never forgotten that and continue to try to share what I know about the Shag. I have continued to go to SOS since my first time and go to almost all of them each year. You meet friends there that you only see there and others you see at numerous other places.

Ron Bessent (VSHOF, 2016) asked my wife, Mary (his classmate from high school) and I to help him teach Shag at our Crewe VA community center circa 2009. We started the unofficial "Southside Shag Club". This group continued meeting after Mary and I moved to Richmond and I would drive 60 miles down and "teach" new steps. During the time of my involvement with the Southside Shaggers, I served as one of the club's directors, instructor, assistant instructor, and general "go-fer" for our parties. Over the existence of this unofficial club, we introduced more than a hundred dancers to the Shag Dance. We made a lot of new friends through the dance that have remained friends through the years.

I have enjoyed "helping" out with the teaching of the Shag at the Richmond Shag Club. My wife says that the "Shag" comes before her, but that is not true. I am glad that she understands about my love of the dance and the joy it gives me. Over the years I have had the privilege to take lessons from a number of great dancers, including:

- Larry and Shirley Jones
- Vicki and Ralph Tedesco
- Marsha and Joe Tedesco
- Bill and Marcia Faris
- Earl and Beverly Robinson
- Linda Strawderman
- Jane Ringer and Sid Strawderman
- Barbara White and Dinky Slaughter
- Joan and Kevin Byrnes
- Charlotte and Alan Batchelor
- Janis Grimes and Steve Booth
- Ron Bessent
- Diane Jesse and Phillip Mitchell
- Stephanie and Kendall Hockaday
- Sam West
- Jackie McGee and Charlie Womble
- Ellen Taylor
- Nancy and Gene Pope

These lessons occurred at different shag clubs' events, SOS, the RSC's regular monthly lessons or at their "Shag Jam" dance workshops. Whenever I take a lesson that includes a mirror step or male lead combination. I try to include that into my dancing which means I have to teach the step to other dancers so that they know the step. That is another fun part of the Shag Dance for me as well as dancing to almost every song.

### Awards:

- 1992: RSC's Most Improved Male Dancer Award
- 2009-2013: Served as a Director of the unofficial Southside Shag Club
- 2008-2013: SOS Rookies Revenge Shag Contest, placing 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place
- 2013: RSC's Spring Rookies Revenge Shag Contest, 2<sup>nd</sup> place
- 2016: RSC's Spirit of Shag Award