



MARSHA RUTH (2001)

Marsha began dancing at eight years of age. Her first experience of dancing with a partner started in her living room dancing to old records with her older sister's dates. When Marsha became old enough to have her own dates, she danced at popular teen dance spots such as the Ambassador's Club, Top Hat, Peppermint Beach Club, Ebb Tide, Jolly Roger and the Golden Garter. In July 1991, Marsha joined the Boogie on the Bay (BOTB) Shag Club in Portsmouth. A year later, she was asked to teach shag lessons for free, which she continues to do. The classes began in members' homes and later moved to the Holiday Inn in Portsmouth. Her classes averaged approximately 50-60 students per week for 6 weeks at a time for both Beginners and Intermediates. She coordinated a graduation dance at the Holiday Inn after each lesson series so students could become more comfortable with their new learned skills. Sometimes people came into the Holiday Inn just to unwind after work and became interested while watching. They try a few steps and they are "hooked"!

From 1992 to 2001, Marsha (with her teaching partners Bubba Merrill (VSHF & NLLD 2001), Keith Abernathy and Tom Edwards (VSHF 2009 & NLLD 2019)) estimates they taught over 800 people to shag. She has also taught at several Virginia Beach Shag Club's Wednesday night "Mix and Mingles". in the advanced class and taught at their Sunday evening "Socials" as well. At all BOTB functions, Marsha is always willing to dance with anyone who asks, from the timid beginner stumbling over his feet to the experienced Shagger. She is never too busy or too tired to help any student, or anyone else with a dance problem during class breaks, after class, at "Sunday Socials", or even at general and special occasion dances.

Marsha and Bubba Merrell danced along with several other couples from the BOTB and VBSC in the shag presentation in Portsmouth at the 2001 OPSAIL event. This presentation greatly benefited the promotion of shag dancing and music in our area as several hundred people attended. Marsha also participated in the "Beach Music Bop & Shag Blast" at Nauticus in October 2001. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Marsha held the office of BOTB Special Events Chairperson from 1995 to 1998. In this position, she planned many events for BOTB members and guests as well members and guests from other shag clubs, including general dances, special occasion dances, charity dances, and special functions. She promoted the Shag in our community by planning Shag-A-Thons with donations going to the Salvation Army. Shoppers watched shaggers dance and also enjoyed watching the intricate steps of line dancing in front of various community stores when Marsha planned for the BOTB club to ring Christmas bells for the Salvation Army. Many people stopped and wanted to know where they could come to learn this dance. Some old timers stopped, tapping their feet, remembering their dancing days, and a few of them have joined us at various functions.

Marsha has attended SOS since 1992. She attended many workshops, taking basic and intermediate lessons to learn new steps for herself and her students. Marsha works constantly to expand and refine her dancing technique and knowledge, which she always shares with the BOTB, her students, or anyone who asks. Line dancing is another of Marsh's favorites. She choreographed four new line dances and taught them at BOTB Bashes throughout the years. Marsha also volunteers her time on Sunday nights from 6:00 to 7:00 pm at the Portsmouth Holiday Inn to teach free line dancing lessons to anyone who would like to learn. Marsha loves to dance and she enjoys sharing what knowledge she has of the dance with anyone interested.

Dance and love of music runs in her family. Her husband, Don, is a member of the Association of Beach and Shag Club DJ's and the National Assn. of R&B DJ's. Both were inducted into the National Boppers Hall of Fame (2001). She taught her daughter to shag at 19. Her granddaughter showed early signs of rhythm and asked to begin learning shag around age 5.

Marsha worked as a licensed practical nurse and maybe that explains why she enjoys helping others. All of Marsha's students as well as anyone having a dance problem will agree that she always extends that special TLC to all.

Marsha was honored to be inducted into the National Living Legends of Dance (2013).