



RALPH MAZZA (2004)

Ralph has danced and done it well all his life. Born and raised in Norfolk, Va. Ralph took tap dancing from the Holland School of Dance. Inasmuch as his mother was a co-host on a local radio & TV variety show, Ralph danced and performed from the tender age of 9.

During his high school years, Ralph was well known as both an outstanding athlete and as a terrific dancer. He won many dance contests throughout the Tidewater area and the State of Virginia. Ralph danced at the Y-Teen Club, Moose Lodge, Ebb Tide Inn, Jolly Roger, Peppermint Beach Club, and at many of the high schools in Tidewater, Richmond, and Roanoke. He was in good company with local legends such as Bobby Starnes, Phil Watson, Bill Presley, Billy Taylor, Bobby Kellam, and Jimmy Faison.

He joined the Air Force in 1961 and returned to Tidewater in 1968. At that time, he took up where he left off, dancing at local spots such as the Fifth National Banque, Oscar's, Adams, Heartbreak Cafe, Round Room, Fat Rogers, Larkins, Madeline's and Steppin' Out.

When Fran Bingley started the Tidewater Shag Club, Ralph was one of the first to join. Ralph has supported many shag club functions and Charity events. He attended SOS at Myrtle Beach, Jacksonville's party, Boogie on the Bay parties, and Virginia Beach Shag Club parties.

To put it in Ralph's own words, "In all my travels I have found a bond between all areas of the country. People enjoying the beat of music and dancing to that beat. Whether it be called Shag, Boogie, Bop, Disco, Swing, or as I refer to it, the Jitterbug. It's all fast dancing. It's been around for a long time and will be around for an even longer time as long as all the dancers will keep doing it, and teaching those who like and want to learn how to do it.

I just hope to do my part for as long as I can to keep the dance alive, well and flourishing; because it has meant and been an integral part of my life and relationships that I've had or will have in my lifetime. It is a legacy. I have lived with and lived by, and would like to be thought of, while I am alive to enjoy it and to be remembered for when I can or when I may no longer be able to do it, or as they say in marriage, 'til death do us part.'"