



Donnie Christenbury 1999

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During the 1960's, guys would watch with respect as he danced and girls would think they had died and gone to heaven if he asked them to dance. Who, you ask, could command such awe and envy. Why, Donnie Christenbury of Charlotte, NC, of course.

He was introduced to the dance by a bevy of Charlotte girls at the Windy Hill Pavilion in the summer of 1957. They were just fooling around, but Donnie learned the basic. The next year, he spent practicing the kick until he realized that the shuffle was the step for him to do.

Over the next few years, he danced from Charlotte to O.D. Winters at the B&G and the Cellar. Summer days working for Buck Garrison's Beach Service, summer nights dancing at the Pad, Sonny's and the Forks. The crowd came from Charlotte, Whiteville and Fairmont. Doug Perry, John Breeden, Mike Osborne, Tommy White, Buzz Sawyer, Ronnie Joyce, John Chenault, Ernest Burris and Go-Boy were friends. They would dance with Donalene, Redheaded Pat, Judy Duke, Penny McNeill, Amazon and Becky Williamson.

Donnie's favorite dance partner was Diane Thrasher. They would dance four hours a night, seven days a week. They worked on their dancing and it was certainly a challenge since all the other lifeguards kept inventing new steps--the Flyback, the Kickback and the Drop-spin. All these steps needed to be learned and practiced to perfection. It was during this period that Donnie began doing his "side-step".

In 1967, Donnie began managing the Pad for Mr. C. W. Blankenship. The jukebox was loaded with songs that have become beach classics. Jim Jayroe and Donnie drove Corvettes and dressed in Weejuns, khakis, button-down shirts and alpaca sweaters. Rosalyn Reynolds was his dance partner of choice during this time. After the Pad, he opened Donnie's to provide a place for friends to meet and dance.

Today, Donnie still lives at the beach and goes out to Duck's, where he loves to dance with his dear friend, Cindy Murphy Campbell. Cindy and her husband, Mike, together with a multitude of friends, still get together to do the dance they have loved for over 40 years.

Donnie is greatly honored by his nomination and subsequent induction into the Hall of Fame. He is proud of the entire "beach family" that has made this possible.

Written by friends of Donnie.