



Jeppy McDowell 2005

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I started dancing at the young age of six when my younger brother won tap lessons, but would not take them. The teacher let me take the lessons in his place. I took tap for five years with a great teacher who would not let us use heel taps, only toe taps, this taught me to dance on my toes.

At the time, we lived in Burlington, N.C., in a duplex we shared with Louie Madden. Louie was a great dancer and introduced my brothers and me to black rhythm and blues music.

When I was in the eighth grade, my older brother, Perry, who was a well known dancer, decided he was going to teach me to "Basic", because he knew how important dancing was to high school social life. I could not have cared less!!!! I was going to be a freshman and Perry was going to be a senior the next school year. He was determined that I was going to learn to dance like all of the seniors. Little did I know that he was opening a whole new world for me!

I quickly realized that I was a "Natural" at dancing and the "Basic" was a great way to dance. By the middle of my freshman year, I was dancing with and dating junior and senior girls. My 14 year old freshman friends could not believe how lucky I was. I was soon teaching dozens of my friends to dance so that they could hook up with the girls.

After high school, I took a job in Raleigh, N.C. with Arthur Murray Dance Studio to pay my way through college. I had taken ballroom lessons while in Jr. High, so I knew most of the dances. I did not like ballroom, but it paid the bills. The good thing was that it taught me how to communicate with the students, and to adapt my teaching to match the student's ability. This served me well years later when I taught Shag Lessons for a living.

Years of dancing in the clubs of North and South Carolina, and at O.D. have allowed me to meet thousands of people. Many hundreds of these people have become life-long friends. Lucky for me, I moved to O.D. twenty-five years ago, so I get to see many of these friends several time a year.