



# Andy Grooms 2009

## ANDY GROOMS

I was born and raised in Charleston, S.C. and have lived here all my life. I look back now and try to recall my first exposure to dancing and I guess it was watching my Mom and Dad. They were pretty good jitterbuggers, or fast dancers. I liked what I saw. I also remember my Dad telling me, "Son, if you want to meet the young ladies and develop lasting friendships, you'd better learn to dance".

Not knowing anything about this dance called the shag, my good buddy and life long best friend, Tug Mathisen, and I set out to learn. We frequented all the known hot spots, places at that time like Little Ritchie's on Isle of Palms, Hudson's, the Seaside, Tobin's and our favorites, the Sands, The Merchant Seaman's Club, the Elks Club and the Folly Beach Pier.

We would head to the beaches and stand around and watch all the smooth dancers, (the original Charleston beach bums), and try to memorize their steps. The guys we watched were Sonny Snell, (Carolyn's Hedrick's brother), Flossie Grayson, Strawberry Barrineau, Bert Norman and My hero, Bobby Summerset. The gals would stand in line to dance with these guys.

The Dancing for me lasted from the mid 59's to the early 60's. I got married to a local girl, Joyce Madray. Joyce was a very good dancer in her own right. We had many great times on the dance floor.

Then came the kids, Tanya and Andy, and it was time to settle down. Time to start a meaningful career and take care of the family. Dancing was put on the back burner for a while. After 20 years of marriage, we ended up getting a divorce.

By this time, it was the mid 80's and there was a renewed interest in the dance that we had grown up with. New places opened and replaced the old. Places like J.B. Pivots, the Mirage, the Xanadu and Bentley's.

In 1989, I met Sherrie Strickland and we have been together ever since. Sherrie, it seems, knows everybody. I can't count the number of people she has introduced me to over the years. A lot have become close friends. People like Roger and Peggy Burris, Chick and Carolyn Hedrick, Billy and Jeanie Pack, Gene and Angie Jarrett, Moncille Thomas and many others.

Sherrie and I have a place in Ocean Drive and we spend as much time there as possible with our friends. We always look forward to our time there.

*The advice I was given, by my Dad, early on has really paid off. I have met a lot of people and have made many lasting friendships, SO LET'S DANCE.....*