



# Jo Putnam 1985

## JOE PUTNAM Truth and Legend

It is true that Joe Putnam was born in Greenville, South Carolina, August 17, 1934. After that, you can't be sure of anything else you hear about him.

We know that he was very ill as a child. Told by doctors he would not live long, he broke all the rules, disobeyed orders, did as he pleased and saved his own life.

Conquering death at such an early age, he set out to live his life without fear or remorse. He's always been determined to cram as much fun and excitement into each day as if it's the last and will come as close to living by his own rules as any man you will ever see.

He ran away to the beach the first time at thirteen with about seventeen cents. We'll never know who taught him to dance because everybody you meet over 40 claims to have taught him at least one step. All we know for sure is he does those steps as only JO-JO- can - without fear of what anybody else thinks, and with all the fun and excitement of a man who loves what he's doing. With each little step of his little bitty feet, he brings a crowd to cheers and joy and the soft shuffling dance called the Shag becomes a living, breathing art form embodied in the legend of JO-JO.

I was asked to say who his friends were in those early days. There again, it's hard to say. Literally hundreds of people say, "I know JO-JO" and have a tale to tell. He goes along with it all. From priest to prisoner, friend or foe, he chats with everybody. Out of all this comes a small group who always call him Joe. they are his friends and they know who they are. How do I know all this? Well, I'm the mother of his children. Heck, a few times I've even called him Joseph.