



BETTY KING - 2014

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I was a surprise, born in 1961 to my mother age 45 and my father age 52. My father bestowed two great gifts to me - the love of music and the love of books. Each have embellished happy moments and sustained me through dark moments. His first love was big band music but the sounds of jazz and blues were common in our home. He taught me to recognize the different instruments and develop a feel for the rhythms.

I was living in Greenville, NC in the early 1980's when I discovered beach clubs and "beer joints" where people were dancing to the music I grew up with. Oh, how I wish I had discovered it earlier! I took lessons at Beau's Night Club with a creative and fun loving couple named Chris and Debbie Narron. I was lucky because Eastern North Carolina was home to great clubs and great dancers. Sue Hallow and I were both single and often went on road trips to contests or parties. Sue, formally Sue Lanier, a wonderful dancer and a Hall of Fame member, asked me to attend a private party that was being held during SOS.

This party introduced me to a pure style of the dance that was different from what I saw in the clubs and/ or at competitions. Sue introduced me in a rush to people and then was off to dance. Names like Wanda and Billy Jeffers, Norfleet Jones, Jo Jo Putnam, Eddie and Kathryn Monsour, Janet Morris, Doug Perry and Betty Kennedy swirled around me. Everyone danced uniquely and yet the styles blended beautifully. I even got to dance with a few fellows - Eddie put down his cigar long enough for a dance, then there was a very nice man who appeared to be wearing bedroom slippers with a rubber band around them - he introduced himself as Rufus. We've become friends and I'm still thrilled when he asks me to dance. One fellow wore jeans instead of the popular "boogie britches" and danced in tennis shoes. In awe, I watched female dancers like Sandra Schwartz, Janet Harrold, Wanda Holliday, Ellen Taylor and Lila Munn. After a dance with one gentleman (and the word gentleman was a true description of his demeanor) I explained that I was new to the dance but loved the blend of unique styles I was seeing. We chatted a bit about the dance and the people around us. His name was Charlie Boone. One bit of advice he gave me was to take what I saw and make it my own. That advice has been with me ever since. There was a special sense of camaraderie and a feeling of admiration for each other's special flair. The room was full of people that danced from the soul. They had come together away from the crowds to enjoy a few hours of good "fas dancing" to the music they loved. I was captured by the dance that day and it has brought immeasurable joy to my life. I have developed friendships that I think will be life long and memories that will bring a smile for many years to come. Oh, by the way, the fellow in the jeans and tennis shoes - that was Jerry King - we've been married and dancing together now for 24 years. We've always felt a little something special between us when we dance. I can't describe the feeling but the music touches us. I like to think it might make Charlie smile because we take it and make it our own.

I am sincerely honored to be inducted into the Shaggers Hall of Fame and so happy to share this with my husband Jerry.