



# Tommy Hamrick - 2017

## TOMMY HAMRICK

I was born in Columbia, SC and grew up in Newberry, SC. I developed my love of music and dancing at an early age. My family vacationed at Windy Hill Beach for the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July every year starting when I was two years old. As I got a little older, when I wasn't riding the waves, I was at the Windy Hill Pavilion listening to and playing music on the jukebox. I remember watching the big boys and girls dancing there on rainy afternoons and when the sun starting setting. I had no idea what this dance was called, but I knew it was cool and I wanted to dance like that someday. I also didn't know how lucky I was to grow up in the 50's and 60's. Like most of you, I was raised on AM radio, American Bandstand, and jukeboxes at the swimming pool. When I was in the sixth grade, I took ballroom dance lessons. After lessons each Friday night, we went to the rec. center on Speer Street to the Jr. Teen Club where we would do the only two dances we cared about, fast dancin' and slow dancin'".

The summer of '65 was my big "fork in the road". That summer I went to Ocean Drive for the first time on my own. It was the summer between freshman and sophomore year in high school. Fate led me to Floyd's Apartments on Main Street and the older guys there led me to the OD Pavilion where I danced at the beach for the first time. I remember approaching a pretty little girl from Winston Salem and asking her to dance, to which she replied, "do you basic?" I had no clue what she was talking about, but I confidently replied, Hell Yea!" As luck would have it, my Newberry fast dancin' was compatible with her Winston Salem basic so we spent the rest of that night dancing together. When I returned home, I was still 14, but trust me, after staying at Floyd's for ten days, I was a much older 14. Not too many years later I did learn "the basic" and my love of the music continued to grow.

Following High School, I attended Wingate junior College and graduated from Newberry College. Afterwards, I began selling whisky and playing beach music for a living. My love of the music led to my induction in 1998 into the Beach Music DJ Hall of Fame. I've had a great life due in large measure to being part of this community. I'm proud that my son, George, has an appreciation for the music and the dance, and has a pretty good "basic" himself. I'm very thankful to Nancy McCorkle for saving my life by marrying me so that I was able to experience all that I have.

To become a member of the Beach Shaggers National Hall of Fame is the highest honor that can be bestowed on a member of our community. I am honored, thankful, and humbled to have been selected to be a part of this iconic group.