



Rufus Wactor 1990

RUFUS WACTOR

I was born and grew up in Sumter, S.C. on January 28, 1937 and began my "fast dancing" career at the age of 13 in an empty room above Delorms Durgstore. I would go once a week pay 25¢ to stand in line, count my steps and learn the "basics". I took lessons from Dot & Dick Bradford.

In 1952, my mother had temporary insanity and let me take my first trip to Myrtle Beach alone. From 1953 to 1963, I went to Ocean Drive and "The Pad". I would sometimes stay in the backroom of "The Pad" overnight. If you got there early, you got the bed; otherwise, you got the floor. Before I got a car, I would thumb to the beach and have as much as \$3.00 for the whole weekend. After I did get a car, my two running buddies, Sherbie Lancaster and Peggy Stewart, would ride to the beach with me. We always had to stop outside of the O.D. at a service station so they could change in peddle pushers, earrings and small heels and become "Sumter Hi-Steppers". On a good night, we would have Larry Blake, Frances Hyman, Bill Wingate, David & Richard Michaels. In Sumter, I spent floor time with Lila Skinner Munn, Jasmine Dubose and Betty "Stick" Kennedy at Second Mill. One of my very favorite dancers was Francz Johnson from Sumter. I must have really studied his moves. Jo Jo and I have had several conversations about how he influenced our dancing.

In 1956, I went to University of South Carolina where I joined Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity. At the first party I met Ann and Jo Blakely, and Buddy Kennedy. I knew I was home. Don Bryant and Roger Burris would watch Tommy White and frequent visitor Mike Osborne practice their drop spins. Tommy and Mike can still do them better than anybody else.

While in Columbia, thanks to Ann Blakely, I took a six month trip to Ft. Jackson. She had the great ability of talking me into not studying and going dancing at the "Web".

After college, I moved to Spartanburg and before I married in 1965, I went to Amvets in Greenville where I met Helen McMahan, Harriet Mackey and Jack Cahill. I finally hung up my dancing shoes for marriage and children and from that marriage have two sons, Matt and Clay. I started to get back out in 1981 and thanks to Sandra Bryant showing me steps I had made up and forgot, I have been able to do some of the old steps I used to do.

At Susie Beaver-Gibson and Pat Gibson's 1985 Fall Shag Explosion Party, I met Carole Mitchell from High Point, N.C. We met while dancing. We were married on November 22, 1986 at the Shaggers Limited Fall Shag Explosion party and now live in Winston-Salem, N.C.

I have been blessed in many ways by being surrounded by good dancers that have certainly influenced my life.