



# Harry G. Hitopoulos 1996

## HARRY G HITOPOULOS

I started dancing about 1938-1940 and at that time it was the jitterbug. In the early forties we were doing steps called the shag, which I still do one or two of them today. Then so many were doing the shag steps, they began to call it the shag. This is what I remember that took place.

My two brothers, Chris and Gregg, and I traveled quite a bit to Myrtle Beach, but we usually ended up at Ocean Drive. The big "O D". I remember that it was a two lane road to O D, but I'm not sure as to whether the road from highway 17 to the beach was paved or dirt. Chris and I traveled this road more than Gregg.

One weekend, Charley Cook ( Cookie), Billy Gage, Bill Lewis and a few others went up to see some of the O D Shaggers perform. Back in those days, you got on the floor and if you were good, no one else would come on the floor. This is when I first met Leon Williams. One of us would shag, then one of the O D Shaggers would shag. It ended up with Leon and then Cookie. Without a doubt, Cookie was the best there ever was, borrowing none. I was amazed seeing Leon dance; he was great and always had the heavy foot.

My older brother Jimmy, at one time, owned Rainbow Corner and we danced there quite a bit. Another place that we would all meet was Sunny's Drive In on Rivers Ave. and would end up in a contest which produced silver dollars. I picked up a few of those as did Bobby Summersett and Buddy Kennedy.

I then went to the Citadel, graduated in Civil Engineering and went to work for the Corp of Engineers. In 1961 I formed H. G. Hitopoulos Contractor, Inc and was busy establishing this firm. Needless to say, I got away from the shag for a few years. The about four or five years ago, I ran into Ann Moore, whom I had known from the beach days, at J. B. Pivots at which time the famous words were spoken, "did you come here to talk or dance". Of course I said to dance and I have been at it since, thanks to Ann. I know that had it not been for Ann, I would have been a hermit or passed on. I am grateful for her getting me out of working all the time. The only thing I can say is that it's great to be alive.

At present I am still involved with the Construction Co. own and operate a furniture making company and I coach The Citadel boxing team.

I have two sons, Harry G. Hitopoulos, Jr. "Hank" that lives in Atlanta and Paul and daughter-in-law, Chris, that live in Charleston.