



Judy McDongall Tucker 2000

JUDY "MCDONGALL" TUCKER

Seems as though I came by the love of dancing honestly. My mom and dad use to dance at the old Myrtle Beach Pavilion when I was just a toddler. I guess I just continued the family tradition. Around 1963 I would sit out on the beach in front of the OD Pavilion and watch the dancers... all the while thinking, "if I could just dance like they do."

Just as most all dancers do, I struck up a great partnership with the doorknob, bedpost, and anything that wouldn't move. Schoolmates like Kathy Beckett and I would spend hours playing 45's, listening to Ernie's Record Shop and dancing until we were old enough and brave enough to "go jukin." Then things really started to get exciting. I was fortunate enough to meet Cindy Mangum, most people know her as Slim. To me, she was and still is the best of the best. Beautiful footwork, a quiet grace, and an incomparable rhythm were her characteristics I found mesmerizing and she was so willing to teach me whatever she could.

Charlotte Clubs such as The Box, The Rooster Tail, the B&G, and of course The Cellar were my favorite places to go, hoping to dance with incredible guys like Buzz Sawyer, Richard Abney, Larry Lupo, Ham McGarty, and Tommy Funderburk who were all so "kind" to tolerate a kid like me! We were lucky to have Greensboro close by with The Castaways and Winston-Salem with the Bitter Inn where I first saw Henry Moody move like liquid magic. And of course it was like heaven to head down to the beach... to The Pad hoping to see Donnie Christenbury and Jim Jayroe. Every now and then we'd get lucky enough to see Mike Osborne, Tommy White, and Buzz clear the floor at Sonny's with their incredible drop spins and I'd say... "If I could just dance with Tommy White one time." Sadly, I had to stand in line behind such amazing female dancers as Slim, Kathy, Debbie Strong, Diane Thrasher, Rosalyn Reynolds, Cindy Murphy, and Sylvia Mosteller just hoping for a dance or two!

After college I moved to California, Tennessee, and then Georgia, married, became a mother, and finally moved back to Charlotte in 1978. One night after a movie, a friend said, "let's go to this place I know so you can see some dancing." That place was Groucho's and I saw a guy named Kim Maynard tearing up the floor! He was fantastic! He and I spent the next 3 years dancing... dare I say for fun and fortune? Of course Cindy and Buzz were always close by tweaking those spins, belly-rolls (and I mean drop belly-rolls), pivots, and other steps that had become so prevalent in the clubs at that time. Nights at The Bushes, Groucho's, SOS, and other shaggin' events brought terrific dancers like Eddie Page, Ronnie Joyce, Ed Miller, Edward Rhew, Mike Tobin and so many others back to the dance floor.

More years went by and dancing took a back seat to other priorities but luckily, it was only dormant, not dead. In fact, I love it more now than ever before. Here I am in the year 2000 spending Saturday afternoons at the OD Pavilion right back with the best the beach has to offer: fabulous memory-filled music, warm ocean breezes, timeless friendships, and a wooden dance floor that keeps calling us back time after time, keeping our dance ageless, all the while, rekindling old dreams. By the way... I finally got to dance with Tommy White. It was worth waiting for!

Thank you to the Hall of Fame for this very, very special honor.