



Thomas E. Wood 2011

THOMAS E. WOOD

A bunker in Vietnam, a brain hemorrhage at age 26, watching our daughter play in golf tournaments throughout the US and Scotland, dancing in "honky tonks" across the Carolinas, Christian mission work in central Mexico, these are just a few of my life experiences that have shaped me into the person I am today. One of the biggest lessons learned is that I am neither greater or less than any of the people involved and I belong in one situation or place equally as much as any other.

I was born in Zebulon in 1945 and became interested in dancing at age 10. My parents were friends with the owners of Lake Glad located in Wendell, N.C. and we spent a lot of time at the lake. Swimming was my initial interest, but as time passed I became aware of the music coming from the jukebox and of course investigated the source—a dance floor with lots of people dancing the "bop". My interest in the dance grew with my sister as my first teacher.

Time progressed and my high school days were upon me. The small town of Zebulon did not offer my amenities but did have an ice cream shop/grill which welcomed teenagers. It was complete with a dance floor and juke box. The Dairy Queen was the after school and after ballgame destination and I danced almost daily. My first dance with my wife, Connie, occurred at the Dairy Queen. We were high school sweethearts and will celebrate our 45th anniversary in November. After high school came the Army, Vietnam, marriage, college, and fatherhood. These life-changing events found us busy and focused on the situations at hand for the next several years.

Moving forward to the summer 1983, Connie and I decided to attend a shag contest in Southern Pines, N.C. Little did I know that the trip would be the beginning of a wonderful journey for us. We entered the contest and were "hooked". That evening we met people that continue to be our best friends. The next two and one half years were consumed with practicing every evening and competitive dancing most every weekend. Our competitive dancing career culminated with winning the SPA points championship for 1985.

I knew our competition time would be short due to our daughter's interest and talent in golf. Beginning in 1986, we discontinued dancing competitively and focused on Jessica and her travels as a junior and collegiate golfer.

Since 1986, I have been content to be on the sidelines of the competitive shag community, but will be eternally grateful for the many lifelong friends Connie and I have made along the way. We have lived in North Myrtle Beach on a permanent basis since 2000, joining many of these friends in a community of common interest and Christian love and fellowship.

I extend my gratitude and thanks to all who made my nomination and induction possible. I will strive to treat it with respect and dignity.