



# Chris Stephenson - 2019

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I started dancing at 13 years old and I must say I got it honestly, as my mother, Judy Martin, and father, Lynn Stephenson, were fantastic...especially my mother. When I was young, my mother always had the house filled with that wonderful music we all love so much. The Tams, The Clovers, and The Cornelius Brothers are just a few of the artists I grew up listening to.

As I started to learn the shag, I quickly caught on and became one of the first Junior shaggers. I got to grow up in some of the best beer joints ever. These included Harold's Across the Street, The Bushes, Groucho's, Bostic's and Fat Jacks. I also had the privilege to watch some of the best dancers. Shad Alberty, Spider Kirkman, Ronnie Duggins, Charles Gurley and Cadillac Jack Smith, who was my coach as a junior, are just a few of the best.

Some of my life's fondest memories are of when I was competing as a Junior and the friendships I made and the times we spent together. One of the best experiences was when I was asked to be a dancer for the movie "Shag". It was so wonderful and humbling to be asked to be a part in the production and I will always cherish the memories.

The love for the music, dance and lifestyle I felt as a Junior never waived but continued to get stronger. And today, it is as strong as ever, as I continue to compete, judge and support this wonderful dance. I have had some wonderful partners and enjoyed some wins in my older years, dancing in Smoothie and Keepers of the Dance contests. I recently had the privilege of judging The National Shag Dance Championships.

Of course, the most special of all of this was meeting my wonderful wife, Micki Taylor Stephenson, 20 years ago in one of my favorite clubs ever, Ducks. We've been able to share many of these wonderful times together. It has been an amazing ride getting to this point in my life and I have been so blessed to have made so many friendships that I will cherish forever.

I would like to give such a heartfelt thank you to the Hall of Fame for giving me the honor of being the first Keeper of the Dance to be inducted. Without a doubt, it is the most special honor in my life and I will forever be grateful.