



Betty Wells Reaves - 2021

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Growing up in the late fifties and sixties was an exciting time! Bands and music were the rage along with American Bandstand on TV. Everybody was trying to learn the “bop” and I was one of those preteens. Every Saturday night in Faison, NC the Blue Notes played to a shed full of young people from all over eastern NC. Fortunately for me, my sister and brother-in-law owned this dance place which allowed me to be with older young people. A little group of us in the corner tried picking up the steps to the “bop”. Then home we would go to practice with the door knob until the next Saturday night. I was thankful for my music background in tap, toe and piano to help me through this journey of the “bop”. It was a time when bands were big and you would dance the night away wherever they happened to play; whether in local towns or beaches.

My junior year in college I met and married the love of my life, Jimmy Reaves. In 1978 when Jimmy ended a successful coaching career, we started searching for something to fill this empty void. We attended a shag contest at Elliot’s Nest in Raleigh, NC; that night reconnected us to the “bop” better known as the “shag”. At that time, some of the very best were competing such as the Albertys, the Squires, the Jernigans, the Teels, D. Perry & S. Jerrette! Shortly after this contest, our shagging journey began by taking shag lessons from Percy Thorton, who was a competitor in shag with Debbie Driver.

The beginning of shag lessons led us to competition dancing. We started out in the novice division and to our surprise quickly moved to the pro division. It was exciting and fun times dancing and meeting new friends each weekend. A lack of clubs in our immediate area had us travel to other towns to practice dancing. Out of this need came the “Shagging Wagon”. The owners of the “Shagging Wagon” Bobbie & Billie Faye would take a group of us dancers to practice nightly and to Shag Competitions all over NC and SC. We had fun times traveling with Terry Bryan, Milton Nowell, Charlie Womble, Jackie McGee, Judy Bazemore and Mike Rackley just to name a few. Wherever we traveled, everybody wanted to be part of the “Shagging Wagon”! Oh the stories the “Shagging Wagon” could tell if it could talk!

June 1985 found Jimmy and I moving to the NMB, SC area because of a job change for him. We were thrilled to become part of this beach shagging community. They welcomed us with open arms! A treasure chest full of good friends, fun, and dancing! We worked with a dynamic group to help shag clubs with promoting events such as the “Shag Ball”. These events have grown and changed over the years, but the purpose, early on and still is, is to keep shag alive for every age to enjoy. I am so blessed to be connected with a dance whose roots are the Carolinas and spreading across the U.S. where different styles to the dance are recognized and appreciated by all.

I am humbled and appreciative to be elected into the Hall of Fame!