



JANIS GRIMES

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I was born in Washington, DC, and raised in Arlington and Falls Church, VA. My father was from Grandfield, OK; my mother, from Henderson, NC, so I grew up with Carolina cousins close by. In the 1950's, my older brother was excited about playing rhythm & blues music for the people who were dancing in Atlantic Beach, NC. I attended East Carolina in 1964-65 ... and I first saw people shagging at a party there, causing quite a bit of excitement. Back then, you either danced "fast" or "slow." The "fast" dancing I saw then made a lasting impression, and when I saw the movie "Shag", I said to myself, "These are My People!!"

I've always loved to dance, starting out with ballet in kindergarten, then tap like so many others. A friend later invited me to audition for a community theater... which turned out to be The British Embassy Players. I danced and performed with this very talented troupe for 6 years, including kick line, tap, and Can-Can!

After many years of working hard, raising a family, and some difficult times, I heard there was dancing at a bar in Springfield, VA. The Northern Virginia Shag Club was just starting to form in 1993. I had found my place. A memorable early experience was dancing with then Junior shag competitor Brent Key when he and his father, Ken, visited the Juke Box Cafe. I kept hearing about shaggers Charlie and Jackie, and how excited people were about their dancing. When I learned they would be in New York City at the American Swing Dance Championships, I went to see what all the excitement was about. It was electrifying, watching them dance an exhibition, in that huge ballroom in front of hundreds of people. I thought that I could not do that for a million dollars.... until I did, a few months later, at an event in Northern Virginia hosted by Craig Hutchinson. There, I met my soon-to-be teacher, coach, and friend, Susie Beaver. After that, I traveled from Northern Virginia to High Point, NC, to take lessons from Susie with four different partners over the years.

I was a Charter member of the Northern Virginia Shag Club, serving many years as President, Dance Committee Chair, Newsletter Editor, and Board Member. During this time, I became a CSA competitor, as well as any other competitions nearby. I danced with the Virginia Shag Dance Team for competitions and exhibitions at the USA Grand Nationals, Shag Nationals Prelims, and the National Living Legends of Dance.

I taught shag for Fairfax County Parks & Recreation for 18 years, and hosted weekend dances at regional venues for several years. I was fortunate enough to meet my wonderful husband, Steve Booth, through the shag community, and he has been there with me, dancing through many competitions, exhibitions and teaching group lessons for the past 25+ years.

I was honored to be inducted into the Virginia Shaggers Hall of Fame in 2001, and the National Living Legends of Dance in 2002.