



Larry Blake 1987

LARRY BLAKE

My first unsupervised exposure to the beach occurred in 1950 when at the age of 15 I somehow ended up at Carolina Beach where I got hooked on R & B music and fast dancing. I spent hours at Batson's Bathhouse, Bop City (when Chicken could sneak me in) and Ocean Plaza watching Harry Driver, Clarice Reavis, Charlie Boone, Jean Allen, Chicken Hicks, Nelson Burton, Betty Lou Hockaday, Bunk Leach and other greats exhibiting their talents. They were awesome and I knew then that I wanted to be just like them when I grew up.

The following spring of 1951, Gayle Ross moved to Durham from McColl, South Carolina and he and I became instant buddies. He had tailor-mades (1 pair) and could do the "basic" which I had somehow acquired, although it was crude and somewhat primitive. Gayle and I thumbed to Myrtle Beach that summer and ended up at Spiveys where we almost got killed. I am not sure, but I think Maurice and Ronnie Treadway took exception to our dancing with their ladies, or maybe it was just our dancing. We made a fast exit and went north to O.D. where I discovered what I was sure was heaven. That summer and the following summer of 1952 I thumbed to O.D. almost every weekend where I danced to every song they played. During this time I met and became life long friends with some rather unique people such as Maurice, Wormy Wall, Sonny Small, Sam Ship, Lila Skinner, Dennis Beam, Sleepy Timmerman, Swink Laughter, Fred Collins, Don Reid, Billy Moffatt, Rosa Huntley, Charlie Porter, Bobby Joe Edwards, David Smith, Toby Long, David Michaels, Joann Nichols, Tommy El Ramey and many others.

George Hall gave me my first real job in 1953 calling Bingo (10¢ a game) at Robert's Pavilion where Wormy, Sonny, Sleepy, me and a few others had a magnificent suite of rooms on the second floor, which was often referred to at that time as the "Snake Pit".

During the summer of 1954 thru 1957 I worked on The Beach as a life guard for Walter Beaver's Beach Service. I was paid \$35 a week plus room and board at the world renowned "Beaver House", which we were told was the mosquito breeding grounds for the entire State of South Carolina. During this period The Pad opened and I was there the night the KMA Club, which was located in The Pad, opened for those who live and/or worked at O.D.

That was my last year on the beach and the following year I met my lovely wife Lorraine who I have been married to for almost 29 years.

God Bless O.D., beach music, Lorraine and my 4 kids, the true loves of my life.