



# Rick Little 2013

## RICK LITTLE

I was born and have lived in Monroe, North Carolina my entire life. I went to college less than ten miles east of Monroe, attending Wingate University. The only dance I saw in my younger years was on American Bandstand and Kilgo's Kanteen. I would watch each Saturday and was forever envious of the people who were able to dance on the shows.

In October of 1983 at a church charity auction, where I was serving as the auctioneer, I met my best friend, Maureen, who became my wife in September of 1984. Since the time I met Maureen, she has been my constant, my rock, my best friend and my biggest supporter. It was not until the late 80's that I was introduced to the shag. I had done a type of bop in high school and college but it was not shag. I knew from the beginning, I had found the place I wanted to be.

I went to my first Shaggers Hall of Fame Induction at the Sand Flea in 1989. I can remember it like it was yesterday. From the time I walked in, I felt welcomed. I met a lot of people that night who were to have a big impact on my life as a dancer. Although I was not dancing in the 50's, the stories that were shared allowed me to feel as if I had been there. People took time to talk to me about the music, the dance, the people and the lifestyle. Through their stories, I was able to experience the clubs and the lifestyles of the time.

Shad and Brenda Alberty had a big influence on my early days of dancing and provided me with a good understanding of the basics of the dance. Maureen and I spent a lot of time working with Shad and Brenda on our dance. I also spent countless hours with Shad understanding some of the early R&B music I came to enjoy. I was also fortunate to be able to continue developing my style of dance with the help of Mike Pace, Charlie Womble and Jackie McGee.

We began competition shag dancing in 1991, dancing in SPA and CSA contests from 1991 to 2012. We spent many a night at Groucho's in Charlotte, meeting friends and learning new steps. Over those 21 years of competition, we made friends throughout North and South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia. Countless week-ends were spent leaving out on Friday afternoon, returning on Sunday evening, exhausted from late hours but excited for the upcoming week-end to do the same. Some of my fondest memories include contests at Groucho's, The Jukebox, Weejuns, Duck's, Fat Harold's and Loafer's.

There have been some very special friends that have taken care of me through a lot of my more trying moments and have provided me with direction, encouragement and a lot of understanding. Bill and Sharli Drew and John and Pee Wee Teel have been there to help and support me and provide me with much needed direction. They would always give me their honest opinions and have been great friends over the past years for which I am most grateful.

This dance has provided me with a lifestyle that has been wonderful. As a dancer, it is a tremendous honor to be one of the 2013 inductees to The Shaggers Hall of Fame. I had no idea when I went to my first Shaggers Hall of Fame induction that I would one day have the honor of being among those that have gone before me. I will always remember these words from that first event: "You can learn dance steps and take from a lot of people, but at some point, you have to just dance from your heart."...and that is what I intend to do!