



M. R. “Chicken” Hicks
November 27, 1925-July 4, 2004

Known as a true pioneer in the world of shag, Chicken Hicks, began his love for the dance at age 14 in his neighborhood in Durham, North Carolina. Chicken’s stature was long, lean, and agile and was handsomely tanned by the sun’s natural rays. By age 15 he was traveling to Myrtle Beach and setting the foundation for the origins and infusion of the Carolina shag along the North Carolina Coast and inland. His influence today has stretched to encompass most who know and love the shag. Born with God given talent that permeated rhythm and blues, Chicken could back regular dancers off the dance floor with his moves. He gave credit to the *music* for his dancing abilities. In his own words, he stated “Music does my dancing for me. I feel what most others can’t feel...I wish I could give people what I feel”. His freestyle dancing was influenced in predominately black establishments in Durham and Sea Breeze Beach located over the bridge from his beloved Carolina Beach. He gladly hit the dance floor with anyone who loved to dance.

Chicken had his own signature steps when coupled with his charisma and what he called “hot dogging” became a shaggers icon at Carolina Beach and the Myrtle Beach strand. The “camel walk”, a step he learned at “Skinny’s Shoeshine Parlor” in a black area of Durham, became Chicken’s premiere move that will live in infamy. His tall frame, looseness of style, along with the clever use of his feet, knees and legs created a “shag walk” that many dancers emulate. He is well-known for teaching and closely mentoring junior shaggers who desire to learn this magnetic dance. Chicken’s legacy continues to impact today’s juniors as they learn from his humble beginnings. Some of his juniors are now national champions in their own rite.

Chicken danced for the pure love of the dance. He was a popular “demonstration” dancer at shag events He entered into the Shaggers Hall of Fame at Ocean Drive, South Carolina in 1984. His humor, personal style and friendliness live in our hearts and minds. He was a gentleman whose passion for Carolina Beach; energetic soulful music, juke boxes, jump joints and rhythm and blues bands get credit for growth and popularity of the shag. He is known, too, for literally integrating the music for the

benefit of all. The shag community pays a special tribute to Chicken Hicks for all of his contributions.