



In the Spotlight



Tom and Donna House Beginner and Intermediate Shag Instructors

The story of how Tom and Donna met, became engaged, and married is a smash hit; is it not just a tale about the nature of becoming bedazzled on the dance floor; indeed, it's a knockout.

Tom and Donna met in 1991. Because they were both dancers and lived in the same area, they became acquainted while teaching dance. They got to know each other better as instructors and even better while demonstrating a particular dance step. Tom was addressing students, and he missed Donna's next move. As he faced their students, he did *not* see that elbow coming. His petite partner knocked him unconscious.

The incident which they recount with humor did not occur because of anyone's lack of dance experience. Tom House started dancing as a teenager while living in Washington state. He often engaged in country dancing before, sometimes during, and often after his twelve years serving in the U.S. Navy. After moving to Chesapeake years later, he began teaching dance at the Parks and Recreation Center where he met Donna. After marrying, they taught many styles of dance including country, ballroom, and basic shag dance.

Donna's dance experience began when she was just a teenager also. She acquired her degree in dance, and from 1972 through 1982, she owned the Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Chesapeake. From 1986 to 1996, she taught ballroom, country, and shag dancing through the Chesapeake Parks and Recreation, and from 1993 through 1998, Donna taught the accredited ballroom dance course at Tidewater Community College and Old Dominion University.

Their love and enjoyment of dance resulted in both Tom and Donna becoming more active in the shag community. They joined Boogie on the Bay Shag Club in 2003 and the Virginia Beach Shag Club in 2016. Tom served as Vice President for BOTB from 2005 to 2008 and President in 2009. Donna served as 2nd Vice President and is presently 1st Vice President for BOTB. In addition, they both are always eager to help on

various committees and club events. Many shag dancers in Tidewater have attended the June Bug dance workshops which Donna organized as the chairperson. She has also chaired the club's Halloween dance and is chairperson for the Shaggers@Heart bash, one of the most popular dance workshops in the state.

They both love to bring the joy of dance to others by teaching and demonstrating the shag throughout the Tidewater area. The couple has been active in Happy Feet, a dance team for BOTB and also joined the demonstration team for Two Left Feet in Newport News. They have taught shag for BOTB. When Tom Edwards is unavailable for their Tuesday lessons, Tom House becomes "the other Tom" as he helps Marsha Ruth.

In addition, Tom and Donna have been teaching beginner and intermediate shag for the Virginia Beach Shag Club since 2016 both at the Banque and at Marina Shores. One of Donna's techniques in helping the leaders perfect their skill is by dancing with each gentleman during the lesson and giving them pointers for improvement. Tom and Donna both frequently remain after the lesson is over and spend extra time helping their students with a specific step. Their class at VBSC is always well attended. They are becoming members of the Board of Directors in 2018 as dance and music chairpersons.

Over many years, they have befriended countless dancers and have motivated so many others to join the dance community. You will find them at many other venues and, of course, at SOS whenever possible.

Tom and Donna House are recognized for their devotion to dance.
They were inducted in the Virginia Shaggers Hall of Fame in 2016.

*Respectfully submitted,
Diane Underhill
Music and Dance Committee Chair*