



JAMES W. OVERTON (1999)

On February 22 (2025), we lost an iconic and legendary figure in our dance community, VSHOF chairman emeritus James Wilson Overton Jr. Jim was devoted to his family whether he was boating, hunting, race car driving or dancing. Whether he was doing ballroom, Bop or shag, his style was second to none and brought much joy to his many dance partners that shared a dance or just loved watching him twirl his ladies. If you had the privilege to spend those 3 minutes with him on the dance floor, you know what we mean!

Some of you may or may not remember Jim's discotheque "Stage 54". Back in the day it was a favorite place to dance the night away and where you could find all the best dancers. Part of his giving back was serving as president of Virginia Beach Shag Club. In 1995 he was inducted into National Living Legends of Dance. In 1999 he was inducted into the Virginia Shaggers Hall of Fame (VSHOF) and spent many years on the VSHOF board as its Chairman. Jim stepped down from the VSHOF Board in 2022 and was named Chairman Emeritus by the VSHOF Board.

If you spent any time with Jim, you loved his stories...whether reliving his sports career or about taking Berta Lull out dancing to dance joints in Ocean View, the Peppermint Club, and the old Round Room at the White Heron and Stepping Out. He graced them all with his smooth style and contagious smile.

Jim was a larger than life figure who achieved the following:

1. Outstanding athlete in football in high school, Wake Forest University and he loved to tell of his time with the NFL's Washington Redskins.
2. Lifelong entrepreneur starting with his career with the Overton family grocery chain.
3. Civic leader serving on the Chesapeake City Council (September 1, 1963 to August 31, 1966), and as Vice Mayor.
4. Owner of Discotheque Stage 54
5. Co-owner of a dance studio
6. Owner/manager of Original Rhondels beach music band
7. Beach Music CD Producer, Ripete Records, Bill Deal & The Rhondels, "Spinnin' Round", 2003
8. Numerous Real Estate developments & ventures

Most of all Jim loved a party as evidenced by the family tradition, started around 1947, of throwing an annual August party at the Overton family home in the Great Dismal Swamp. Jim continued this tradition for many years at his waterside home along the Elizabeth River in the City of Chesapeake to raise money for the Wounded Warrior organization. Whether he was traveling to a weekend party, in N. Myrtle Beach at SOS or playing cards with the girls in Nags Head, he loved to party. He had a dream to have a weekend party to honor new inductees into the Virginia Shaggers Hall of Fame. That dream was realized in 2015 with the first VSHOF weekend induction/party, held in Fredericksburg. Thank you for your long service to the dance community and may you Rest in Peace, Jim!