

THE OHIO JI DO KWAN KARATE ASSOCIATION  
A BREIF HISTORY  
By Grandmaster E. A. Fuzy

Forward

I have discovered that there is no such thing as "A Brief History" of anything. I attempted to keep this as short as possible and did not include everything that I could have. Although everything that I did include contributed to forming and influencing the way we think and the direction of the association that we have today. I did not wash any dirty laundry in public because this was not necessary to the essence of the history.

I did not try to create a false picture by including only the high points of the journey. Life is a series of ups and down's and it is what we learn from them, and how we deal with them that dictates the distance we have traveled. All contained herein is factual and it is how I remember it, for in reality this is also my history. Still, I have spent many hours checking facts with others that were there in order to avoid any untruths or false impressions. In the end, history, much like art, is in the eye of the beholder.

To my students and Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association members; you finally have the history you have been asking for. To all others, I hope you enjoy our story.

Grandmaster E. A. Fuzy

## The 1960's

During 1962 **Robert C. Moore** returned from a tour of duty in Korea. He brought with him the Martial Art system called Ji Do Kwan Karate. While stationed in Korea, Moore had learned the art directly from the **Grandmaster Dr. Kwai Byeong Yun**, and one of Dr. Yun's top students, **Nam K. Yun**.

Before Moore returned to the states, Dr. Yun made him a General Officer in the **"Korean Kong Su Do (Karate) Association of Su Bak (Ji Do Kwan)"** and sent him home with a few words of advice; *"You will be teaching Americans in America, don't become Koreanized"*.

Dr. Yun was not attempting to belittle Korean Martial Arts or Artists. He was pointing out and acknowledging "The Natural Process", the evolution that eventually happens to every Martial Art when it is taken to a new society and culture.

Upon his return to the United States Moore organized karate clubs at Fort Riley, Kansas, Texas A & M University, and several colleges including Sam Houston College. In 1965 Moore was appointed Texas State Representative, Intercollegiate Chairman, and Regional Chief Instructor for the **"United States Karate Association"**.

**USKA** was created by **Master Robert Trias**, the **"Father of American Karate"**. Master Trias opened the first Karate school in the United States in Phoenix, Arizona in 1946. He also gave the first karate tournament in the United States. Robert Moore wrote a major portion of the constitution of USKA and contributed to the bylaws.

In 1968 Moore was brought to Lakewood, Ohio by **Dale Brooks** to revamp his school's failing karate program. Dale's school, **"The Ohio Judo & Karate Association"**, was becoming the hub of a "Midwest Martial Arts Community" that was just riding the crest of the first wave of many new and wondrous Martial Arts that heretofore had been unknown or misunderstood in the west.

O.J.K.A. in the 60's was a veritable beehive of "Martial Arts Activity". A Master in the Goju system, and Gung-Fu practitioners from Canada. National and International Champions in Karate, Judo, and Yudo. Aikido practitioners Representatives from the Hawaiian Martial Arts. A Master of the White Eyebrow system and expert with temple weapons. Nationally rated competitors from the Kajukenbo and Shorinryu systems. Taekwondo, Ju-Jitsu. Savate,

Sambo from Russia. All of these sooner or later made it through the dojo door. It was into this once in a lifetime atmosphere that I was introduced into the Martial Arts.

Moore never bothered teaching a foreign language. All classes were taught in English. Every technique had an English name. The three exceptions were words that I think just carried over from the long running Judo program and the Isshinryu Karate program that just ended. They were Sensei, Dojo, and Kata. Teacher, School, and Form. The same three we still use today. And I might add we use Sensei incorrectly. The word Sensei is used after the proper last name. Such as, Smith, Sensei. However, we would say Sensei Smith. It's the way we've always done it, and I never saw any reason to change it. It's uniquely American, has worked for us, and never interfered with a punch or kick.

Sensei Moore stressed the image of the Black Belt. Nothing was half way with him. *"You give your students the moon to shoot for"*. He believed in hard training; *"Get the body out of the way so you may concentrate on the mind"*. Hard testing; *"If you can't take the heat get out of the kitchen"*. And a very high standard of requirements and performance. He also believed in **American Martial Arts for Americans**. When asked what style we took he would say; *"Tell them you take American Karate"*.

In December of 1968 the Ohio Judo and Karate Association introduced a new concept called, "The Professional Program". This was a course of study that focused on creating professional Martial Artists who intended to open their own dojos. The professional student was taught at an accelerated rate. Karate, Judo, Ju-Jitsu, Aikido, Hand to Hand Combat, Business Management, Business Law, Preventive Taping, and First Aid were but a few of the subjects covered and studied.

To help in this endeavor, Sensei Moore brought one of his first Black Belts, **Sensei Curtis Herrington** from Texas to Lakewood. Sensei Herrington had spent time training in Karate and Hapkido while stationed in Korea like Moore. Back in the States, Herrington trained in Tang Soo Do and Hapkido with **Kim Pyung Soo**, Judo and Ju-Jitsu with **Sonny Thompson** and Karate with **David Moon** and **Robert Moore**. His varied background of instructors and styles fit in perfectly, and contributed to the vast amount of "Martial Arts Knowledge" and "Martial Arts Personalities" that were whipping around the dojo.

By now I was involved as a student in the Professional Program, and met Sensei Herrington at an announcement dinner held

**Monday, December 16, 1968.** It was a meeting that was to start a friendship that would last beyond the death of Master Herrington in 1992, and bring together for the first time, the co-founders of the **Ohio JI Do Kwan Karate Association.**

By April of 1969 I was training almost exclusively with Sensei Herrington. However, specialty classes I still took under Sensei Moore. As we approached the end of the year things began to fragment. Sensei Herrington was moved from Lakewood, Ohio to take over the Elyria, Ohio dojo, and a break-up was coming between Moore and Brooks. I was never told what had happened, but knowing the two men as I did, I would have to bet it was due to business practices or rank requirements.

From my first day through the door of the dojo, up until this point I had trained five days a week, six hours a day. It was now late October 1969 and due to a personal situation I was forced to take time off. Within a few weeks Sensei Herrington would decide to take time off also and go back to Texas for a visit.

Looking back at this point in my training I realize how fortunate I was to be brought up at O.J.K.A. by these special people. At a time when it was common for students to be arguing the old *"My style is better than your style"*, I was given immediate respect for all styles by exposure and the understanding of my Senseis. At a time when teachers were protecting their reputations by taking their students only to closed tournaments, we attended nothing but open tournaments facing all styles and systems. Ah, the growth that occurs the first time a Karate beginner with nothing but straight-line knowledge has a Kung-Fu practitioner run circles on them. How does anyone's ability ever mature by competing against only the same style?

#### The 1970's

It was the decade that ushered in **"Chopsockie"** movies along with the rise to fame and untimely death of **Bruce Lee**. It saw the heyday of **"The United States Karate Association"**. The institution of **"Safety Equipment"**, and the beginnings of **"Full Contact Karate"**. Martial Arts magazines flourished. Tournaments were so popular you could find one close enough to attend almost any weekend you felt like competing.

The 70's did not open on a good note for O.J.K.A. Sensei Moore and Dale Brooks had their disagreement, and then a falling out. Moore left Ohio Judo & Karate and opened, "**The Martial Arts Career College**" in Cleveland, Ohio. Within a year Sensei Moore would leave the area. Year's later Moore would tell me that he left because the way he was teaching Martial Arts no longer held for him what he needed spiritually.

Shortly after his return from Texas in January of 1970, Sensei Herrington began teaching Karate classes twice a week at the Elyria, Ohio YWCA. Originally setting up the program and assisting him was **Sensei Clyde Hoover**, a purple belt at the time. I joined them in early February and began training and assisting again. This marked the end of the only break I would ever take in training until I was stricken with throat cancer in 1998.

The early part of 1970 Sensei Herrington moved into a three-bedroom apartment I had in North Olmsted, Ohio. We started what I called the great basement and garage tour. **Sensei Mike Adams**, a brown belt at the time, was a big help. Acting almost as a real-estate agent finding us underground property and garages to congregate in. From one student's basement to another's as needed. Anywhere we could hold classes.

We also inherited the "**NASA Karate Club**" located at The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration** Plumbrook site next to Cleveland Hopkins Airport from **Sensei Paul Ornowski**.

**Sensei AlGene Caraulia** had actually started the classes. Sensei Caraulia, a Black Belt in Kajukenbo Karate, won many important Karate and Judo tournaments. He founded the "**Cleveland City Championships**", and is director for the "**Midwest Four Seasons Karate Championships**". He was elected to "**Professional Karate's Hall of Fame**" in 1974, and named to "**Who's Who in the Martial Arts**" in 1975. Just as a note, he was the first brown belt in Judo to win a National Championship.

Sensei Moore took over when Caraulia left, and Sensei Ornowski was keeping classes going now that Moore was gone. But he was being pulled by other responsibilities, and had disagreements with the club directors.

Sensei Herrington and I took over the classes for about eighteen weeks. We taught 12 of them together, I taught the last six alone. Then we left because we could not bring ourselves to teach, what we considered to be, the altered version of Martial Arts that the directors of the club kept insisting on.

Still, our time was not wasted. Sensei Herrington would eventually established contact and begin teaching at the NASA Karate Club in Sandusky, Ohio. This led to that club becoming one of our schools. Our **Bayview School** of today is an off shoot of that original **Sandusky Club**.

Also, while at NASA we were contacted by one of Sensei Moore's Black Belts, **Sensei Ray Stegura**. Sensei Stegura was a welcome inclusion. He had converted a green house in his backyard into a beautiful little dojo where he taught a group of loyal students. This would eventually become our "**Willoughby Hills Club**".

I had collected a handful of private students that I taught in one of their basements twice a week on nights I wasn't at NASA. Sometimes they would attend the NASA classes with me. Sensei Herrington moved out of our apartment in North Olmsted, Ohio and into Elyria, Ohio because he was getting married. In a short time, he and Sensei Hoover opened a school, **Karate World**, in Elyria. I began going out there three to four days a week to help. It lasted a few months and then had to close.

The next move would be to the spot considered the first actual location of "**The Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association**". It was to Sensei Herrington's basement at 408 High Street in Elyria, Ohio. This is where we first actually used the name and the patch.

Sensei Herrington and I were talking in the corner of the basement after a class. I had drawn up a design for a patch based on the original Ji Do Kwan patch. The name, Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association, so close to Lakewood Judo and Karate Association, my first school. It held a special place in my heart. I really missed it. Looking back, that is what I wanted to recreate.

Sensei seemed to like the ideas. He offered no argument or options. I don't know if he actually cared what we called it. He agreed to the name and the patch design. Mark it late **October**, early **November** in **1970** as the birth of the association. We have continued uninterrupted since then.

I no longer taught in student's basements. During the next three years I took them to the High Street address with me twice a week. We continued to collect students, attend and give tournaments, and teach classes. We had established a Sandusky

Club run by Sensei Robert Cooper, a previous student of **Sensei Vic Moore**, and a Willoughby Hills Club run by Sensei Stegura.

Around this time, we aligned ourselves with "**The Korea Taekwondo Association**", by way of a friend in Texas, **Master Sonny Thompson**. Master Thompson was proficient at Judo / Yudo, Ju-Jitsu and Taekwondo. He spent part of every year in Korea, and was a representative for the Association. We also aligned ourselves with The United States Karate Association. Sensei Herrington had been a member while in Texas and felt it would be good for us to be a part of USKA. It was now time to move out of the basement and into a storefront.

We looked around in the Lorain / Elyria area. There was only two other instructors operating out of storefronts, and we didn't want to impose on their territories. As was the habit of the time we notified the other instructors we knew of in the area that we would be opening a school and would keep it as far away as possible from another dojo.

Lorain at the time was considered a depressed city. We found a building in the heart of the "downtown" area. It had been vacant for six years. If nothing else it had six years worth of dirt and dust in it.

**October 1, 1974 The Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association** opened it's headquarters dojo at **720 Broadway**, in **Lorain, Ohio**. At the time there was a natural gas freeze imposed by the Federal Government. As a result we were unable to get the gas turned on. So the first two years we trained in our bare feet on a concrete floor covered in tile without any heat. Of course no gas also meant, no hot water tank.

In the winter the small electric heaters we purchased meant little. At the reception desk up front you could see your breath. The changing rooms were freezing. There were even times the top of the water in the toilet bowl was frozen.

Sensei Moore had told us stories about training in Korea. They would go into the mountains and run in the snow wearing only their GI and tennis shoes. There was a small training hall where two sides rolled up and allowed the wind and snow to blow through while they worked out. This made them tough. This developed character and gave them self-control and self-confidence.

720 Broadway became our mountain. So we persevered and actually began attracting more and more students. We did the

construction work of building offices and walls while classes were going on. We confronted all adversity and developed a respect for training under rustic conditions.

To this day I will not allow air conditioning where we train. It's like camping with a mobile home, complete kitchen, t v, videos, and a satellite dish. You may be in the woods. You may be dressed like you're in the woods. You may even have a campfire. But, you certainly aren't a camper, and you certainly aren't camping.

In June of 1975 Sensei Herrington found it necessary to drop out of the headquarters school and devote more time to his home situation. All of a sudden I owned my own Martial Arts School.

Later in the year Sensei began having classes in his basement and that became, once again, our **"Elyria Club"**. The State headquarters title for U.S.K.A., and eventually Regional headquarters for A.K.B.B.A. went there. The title of headquarters for Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association stayed with my dojo in Lorain, where it resides today.

Also at this time, we were accepted into **"The Ju-Jitsu Kai Federation"**, which certified our Ju-Jitsu rank. So by the end of 1975 we had established our ranking on a National and International level of accreditation for both our Karate and Ju-Jitsu. We had established ourselves as national promoters by throwing **"The Northern States Karate Championships"** in September of 1974 and 1975. And, Sensei Tom Boyd opened our **"Vermilion Club"** in his garage, which brought our association up to one school and four clubs.

Jerry and I had been friends since we were thirteen, but the end of High School and his tour of duty in Viet Nam had separated us and we lost contact with each other. I stopped to get gas and there he was. It turns out that he was the manager of this nearby gas station that I usually never stopped at.

In just a few minutes of reliving old times we discovered that we were both Black Belts. He was Sensei Jerry Judd, a Black Belt in Isshinryu Karate under Sensei Ken York. Sensei York a well known local individual, a very tough and accomplished Martial Artist. I knew him and he is one of those **"real"** people that is easy to admire. As is Jerry.

Sensei Judd was teaching a group out of his garage at home. I told him that Wednesday nights was sparring night, and invited him and his school to come work out with us.

That began a standing invitation that continued unbroken for years. During that time we traveled to tournaments together, Sensei Judd and I began a Martial Arts supply store, and began manufacturing wooden weapons out of exotic woods. We made the only eight sided double taper Bo staffs on the market.

He and his students were traditional Isshinryu. Hard, straight line, and you could count on that reverse punch sooner or later. You couldn't hurt them. They took pride in that **"punch me again"** attitude. They called themselves **"The Troglodytes"**. They even came to a Halloween party we had all dressed like cavemen.

Soon, Sensei Stegura started showing up on Wednesday nights also. It was a long drive for him so sometimes he brought students and sometimes he didn't. However, he was always there. Every Wednesday, ready to fight and workout.

Our association with them taught us all about the brotherhood of the Martial Arts. About the mutual respect and admiration that comes from good hard fighting between people of honor. About an area of understanding that just talk can not take you. How that type of a relationship elevates you and your vision, then leaves you more than you were. Our time with them was, and will always be very special.

The 1970's rolled on. 1976 was our Nation's 200th birthday. That year we attended the **"U.S.K.A. Grand Nationals"** in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was a three-day affair.

I had gotten there a day early so Master Trias invited me up to his suite to meet **Sensei Chuck Norris** who was releasing a movie called **"Good Guys Wear Black"**.

We sat and talked for a while and they asked me if Sensei and I would have our students do some demos at theaters to promote Norris' movie. I said that of course we would. They gave me three boxes of promotional flyers.

At that time Sensei Norris was know for being in **"Return of the Dragon"** with Bruce Lee. But more than that he was known as a top notch tournament fighter. No wimp. He could take it and dish it out. He was a major competitor at the **1968 Texas State Championships** that Sensei Herrington threw before coming to Ohio.

We use to laugh because **Black Belt Magazine** covered it as "**Blood Bath in Galveston**". Ah, the old days. Later in the year we hosted the "**USKA Regionals**".

The USKA tournament circuit was dynamic. Wonderful people and everything always first class and fair. The tournaments were big, but not so big that you couldn't take a break from a ring, and have a cup of coffee and a visit with friends. They were as much social events as competitions. We traveled primarily the Midwest hitting as many as two to three tournaments a month at times.

It was not unusual for Sensei Herrington and I to be given the duties of announcers and end up working the microphones for evening events, full contact matches, and demonstrations. Always, if we were there when **Master Hidy Ochiai** was doing his sword demonstration.

We really enjoyed doing that together. We went over well and had a lot of fun.

1976 also marks our second trip to "**The United States Karate Championships**" in Dallas, Texas. This time Sensei Herrington spent time discussing with the host, **Sensei Allan Steen**, the possibility of bringing the organization "**The American Karate Black Belt Association**" back to the Ohio area. Sensei Herrington was particularly interested in the fighting rules they used. They were called "**AOK**", "**Amateur Organization of Karate**".

Our fourth annual Christmas party took place 12/23/77. As a surprise for Sensei Herrington, I had tracked down Sensei Moore and found him in Texas. Sensei Stegura and I bought Sensei Moore a ticket to Cleveland. I picked him up at Cleveland Hopkins airport. We also set up that all of the old crew that trained together in the 60's we're going to be there. There was about fourteen to sixteen of us.

Sensei Herrington was close to an hour late for the party so I called him. He was in bed. He had pneumonia. He was not feeling well at all. When I told him Sensei Moore was at the party he got dressed and came over.

We had a wonderful time. Sensei Herrington stayed much longer than one might expect. Eventually he was just so sick that he had to leave. We had taken roll after roll of film. Sensei Moore had presented Sensei Herrington, Sensei Stegura and I with a document. A Charter. He made us officers of **The Ji Do Kwan Order**

in **The Korean Kong Su Do (karate) Association of Su Bak (Ji Do Kwan)**. This charter still hangs in my dojo today.

We stayed until sometime around five in the morning. As always with Moore, it sooner or later made it around to demonstrating hip and body checks, kata bunki, 1-inch punch. The more we drank, the more bizarre it got. It was the last time the entire crew from the 60's ever got together again at one time.

We moved into the end of the 70's preparing a switch from USKA to A.K.B.B.A. Sensei was moving up from Assistant State Representative for USKA to **Regional Representative for A.K.B.B.A.** I would take on the duties of his assistant.

As I look back, I finally realized in the late 70's that Sensei Herrington was interested in functioning on a national level. He was geared to working with and for the national associations. He was very, very good at it. Where as I have always considered the Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association to be my primary purpose and love. The development of the organization and the system was all, and is all that concerns me.

This is not to say that Sensei Herrington didn't care about Ohio Ji Do Kwan. Of course he did. He loved the association and the people. But it shows where our interests and strengths were, and lays the groundwork for how we occupied our time in the up coming years.

#### The 1980's

The decade of the 80's saw us making the switch from USKA to A.K.B.B.A. early in the first year. Sensei Herrington found no problem in attracting Black Belts and their schools to the organization. He signed them up by the gross. We threw the **"A.K.B.B.A Regionals"** in 1980 and the two most successful **"Northern States Karate Championships"** ever in 80 and 81.

We rented out the **Grand Ballroom** of **"Stouffer's on the Square"** in Cleveland both years. The first year we had a **Bill "Superfoot" Wallace** seminar Saturday during the day and the **"Karate Pioneer Awards"** banquet Saturday evening, and tournament Sunday.

The second year we found out at 8:00am Saturday morning that **Joe Lewis**, who was scheduled to give a seminar that day wasn't going to show up. He couldn't get away because he was filming "**Jaguar Lives**". **Sensei Allan Steen** and **Sensei Jim Harrison**, two Martial Arts Legends, stepped up and each gave a seminar in his place. They saved our rear ends and provided the audience with two spectacular learning events. Later that evening we had "**The Karate Pioneer Awards**" banquet.

As a special treat for Ohio Ji Do Kwan, **Sensei Robert C. Moore** was in town for the weekend on unrelated reasons. He had contacted me, so Sensei Stegura and I met with him the night before and got him to the clinics where he worked as an uke for Sensei Harrison and to the tournament where he judged kata. What a surprise for Sensei Herrington

Tournament day we ran 12 rings and put over six hundred competitors through elimination's from 10:00am to 6:00pm. We had a one-hour dinner break while we set up a ring and chairs. From 7:00pm to 11:00pm we provided one thousand spectators with a marvelous evening show. We had attracted people from all over the U.S., and collected a Who's Who in the Martial Arts.

Special gratification for me was a standing ovation from one thousand Martial Artists, our peers, for our demonstration team "**Kicks**". For me to write a "History of Ohio Ji Do Kwan" and leave them out would be unforgivable.

A team since 1976, sixteen members who had to earn the right to be on the team, and then had to work, at least, twelve hours a week, besides regular classes, to stay on the team.

It was a time in the evolution of Martial Arts in the U.S. where schools were breaking boards, doing kata, and showing three technique combinations at their demonstrations. We had pushed the envelope so far that it wasn't until the year 2000, almost twenty-five years later, while watching E.S.P.N. that I have seen anything that has even come close.

We traveled with a full sound system, flash pots, explosions, fog machines, lighting, costumes, and staging. While spectators at regular demonstrations were looking for something to relate to, we were setting attendance records at shopping malls doing choreographed routines with weapons to "**Earth Wind and Fire**", or recreating a sound stage at "**Golden Harvest Studios**", or massive battle scenes, all in the round.

Wherever the members are, God Bless them all. They were real Martial Artists who were true of heart, devoted, a real team, and one of the best promotional vehicles for the Martial Arts the area ever had.

The late 70's had seen us regularly mentioned in Martial Arts Magazines. The early 80's continued that practice. **"Official Karate Magazine Yearbook"** featured us as top **"Midwest Promoters"**. Another thing we continued was to travel the state of Ohio giving self-defense seminars. This was truly one of Sensei Herrington's strong points and, with his guidance, was developing into one of mine.

We were able to institute the "AOK" rules into use in the Great Lakes Area of the U.S. through A.K.B.B.A. sanctioned tournaments and events. Also, they were accepted for use in the **"Cleveland City Championships"**, which by this time were being run on a monthly basis by the **"International Karate And Kickboxing Hall Of Fame"**.

They were very popular rules because they promoted kicking, but did not overshadow or penalize the competitor who specialized in hand techniques. A five point spread needed to win promoted the matches to reach the two minute time limit and thus the competitors would have a complete fight for their money, rather than being taken out within the first thirty seconds by two quick techniques.

This marked a time when we delved into **"Full Contact Karate"**. **Sensei Barbara Niggle** of Youngstown, Ohio was throwing a tournament with **"PKC"** full contact amateur and professional matches for the evening show. She asked if I had any one who was interested in fighting. I had two students that wanted to try so I set up their matches.

I designed a training and conditioning program for them, got them trainers who ran with them and kept time of their circuits when training. Found sparring partners, and rehearsed my crew for the corner. I oversaw everything and had them working every day. I brought in boxers to work with their hands and when they were ready, I put the legs with the hands since kicks for full contact karate are different than what we do for the art or self-defense. I took them to Youngstown for ring work and practice using the ropes.

They were to fight amateur division. This was three two-minute rounds with a one-minute rest in between each round. By

the eighth and last week of training they were fighting ten three-minute rounds with a ten-second rest between each round, every day.

The night of the fights they got a full rub down before stretching, then they jumped rope for six two minute rounds just before going into the ring. I didn't want them going in dry, because three two minute rounds is too short a time for them to warm up by fighting

**Sensei Glenn Keeney**, a friend from our USKA days and the current **Director of PKC**, was referee for the matches that evening. I had always admired and looked up to Sensei Keeney. He was **USKA Light Weight Champion**, rated **fourth** in **Black Belt Magazine's Top Ten** in 1972, and trained **Heavy Weight Full Contact Champion Ross Scott**. He was an accomplished and outgoing individual. No ego problems.

My fighters were purple belts at the time of these fights. They both would eventually become Black Belts. **Sensei Gene Madison** knocked out his opponent in 1:45 of the second round with a sweet hook that traveled about four inches and caught his guy right behind the ear. He stopped dead, thunder struck for just a moment, then crumpled to the canvas face first like a sack of rocks.

**Sensei Hector Rivera** literally plastered his opponent with an unending barrage of punches and kicks from all angles until his man staggered around the ring bouncing off first one rope, then another, and fell face first to the floor at 1:45 of the second round also. He knocked his man down five times in two rounds.

**"Senseis Don and Carol Willis"** out of Canal Fulton, Ohio had become close friends of ours. They promoted regular tournaments of high quality that were A.K.B.B. sanctioned.

At their suggestion we got together a team for **"The A.K.B.B.A. Ohio Hard Contact Championships"**. We arranged a series of four meetings to take place over the course of the year at their regular tournaments. Each team consisted of four men and one woman all under the rank of Black Belt.

The only protection the competitors wore were hand, foot, and groin protection. To score a point they had to rock or drop their opponent with the technique. I remember in the third meeting we had a purple belt dropped and down for fifteen minutes because he

ducked face first into a spin back kick. Eventually they stopped his nose from bleeding, he got up and won his match by scoring three more points before the match was over. And, yes, his opponent got a point for the spin back kick. We eventually went on to win the championships.

Sensei Herrington and I had worked hard and with the help of our Black Belts and students had developed a very good reputation for the Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association covering many facets of the Martial Arts. Quality in students, teaching, and self-defense. Touch, hard, and full contact fighting. Tournament, demonstration, and special event promotion. Forms and weapons competitors of the highest quality. Everything on a local or national level that could be done, we did.

It's only natural when things seem to be running so smooth that adversity will raise it's ugly head.

The 80's saw instability develop within in the association. Actually, since the beginning I had always felt that everything should have been set up on a more formal basis. Information, a common direction, everything should come from the Chief Instructor of the association directly to the Head Instructor of each school.

I wanted Sensei to make it a profitable organization like Master Trias had USKA. An organization that would employ him and take him out of the regular work force and allow him to earn a living at the Martial Arts.

Regular Black Belt classes and teaching seminars, would institute whatever was necessary to keep each school up to par, and thus all schools working in the same direction.

Sensei had always ran kind of a loose ship that was his style. There were always little differences in Kata and small technical inconsistencies that varied from school to school. This is very hard to avoid in the best of situations. However, now he was almost ignoring everything contrary.

He would kick a Black Belt out of the association for bad attitude and poor conduct. Then, overlook the disrespect to his authority when one of our schools would take that same individual in and have him teaching less than a week later.

There had been a time when Sensei would make regular "visits" to the various dojos. Now each school was left more or less to it's own devices regarding meeting requirements.

No real quality control of any kind was in place, no real technical consistency. Eventually we reached a point where, for the most part, the only thing that a few of us shared was the name.

We had schools bringing in "Teachers" of other systems, some of them very questionable. As they say; "There's a sucker born every minute". A few of our people went out of their way to prove it.

We had beginners learning brown belt forms for tournaments, and Black Belts actually changing technique in forms thinking their students could score higher in competitions. Or, using weapons forms and techniques from other systems as requirements on tests.

No one was truly responsible or answerable to the head of the association for anything. In most situations like this adults and professionals police themselves rather than take advantage of the temporary absence of control. Bad attitude's, egos, and low maturity level, therein was the cause of our instability. This was not Sensei Herrington's fault.

Sensei was becoming increasingly involved with a personal fight. He was beginning a compound illness that would eventually end his life.

He truly was not always himself in thought or action. Attention to association matters became difficult and truthfully petty compared to his current situation. He fought back against a series of strokes doing everything He could do to function normally.

Sensei faced his time of trials. In one hospital then another. First one procedure, then something else. The roller coaster ride that starts with good news and then bad, or good days and then worse.

I made up my mind to keep association standards, requirements, and traditions in trust. Sensei Stegura and I had trained with Sensei Moore. We well understood the discipline and commitment to quality that had directed his teachings as well as Sensei Herrington's.

I had seen to it that the teachers and instructors at my dojo were teaching the same technique and kata the same way, at the

correct rank. Requirements were equal and the same for every student. No promotions without tests. Special attention to technical aspects. No favorites among the students. The other schools of the association could travel into whatever direction they wished.

I had always continued to train on a daily basis. I studied other systems and arts starting as far back as 1975 and was still doing so. I had been in charge of aligning the forms and designating the technique for the association. The line exercises were unquestionable as to content. As was the Karate technique. Sensei Moore had put them all into instruction manual form in 1962. Anyone who didn't follow the program had to make a decision not to.

As mercenary as it might sound, I felt this the perfect opportunity to prepare the association for the future and allow the riff raff, the dishonorable, the know it all's, the wanna be's, and the half-interested to weed themselves out.

I was a full time Martial Arts Instructor. I had no other employment. A few months after the day we opened, I was putting in a minimum of 50 hours a week at the dojo, and spent three out of four Sundays at tournaments, seminars, or clinics. The Martial Arts had become my way of life. I lived in a GI.

This point was the first time I actually realized how I had spent the years of my life. While most Instructors were teaching two or three times a week, I was teaching as much and more a day. I was constantly under the influence of the arts and all that went with them.

My Senseis had long ago given me a beautiful gift. Like a plant. If they asked to see it, I could show them the same plant they gave me. Healthy, growing, every leaf there exactly the way they passed it on to me. Or I could show them a large beautiful plant that had grown, flowered, and developed into more than it was when I got it. I decided on the second option.

It's the evening of **March 26, 1988**. Sensei Herrington and I along with some of our Black Belts from the association are at a small banquet for a tournament that will be held the next day.

In attendance is **Chuck Norris** who was in town on a book signing tour. Traveling with him as his bodyguards were **Bob Wall** of "**Enter The Dragon**" fame, and **Howard Jackson, Full Contact Champion**. Also there was **Jim Harrison**, Norris' training partner

for many years. **John and Mary Townsley**, John was to receive the **"Karate Pioneer Award"**, Mary, famous for her many years with **"Official Karate Magazine"** was covering the banquet and tournament for some publication.

Rounding things out were **Sensei Dan Soward "founder"** of the **"International Karate and Kickboxing Hall of Fame"**, **Sensei George Baker**, representative for the Hall of Fame and well known national competitor, **Sensei Dearwood Daniels**, school owner and tournament promoter, and **Kim and Barb Hartman** owners of **Wolverine Brand Manufacturing**, once the makers of the best GI in the U.S.

We were having a wonderful time mixing and taking pictures. Of course Norris was in demand for one picture after another. We talked about Bruce Lee with Bob Wall, about Allan Steen and Skipper Mullins skiing at Aspen with Chuck Norris. All about the old U.S.K.A. days with Jim Harrison, John and Mary Townsley. It was a very enjoyable evening. It had been quite a while since some of us had been together.

As we arrived at the tournament the next morning we were greeted with the news that the head of our Sandusky School, Sensei Cooper, had went home directly from the banquet and died of a heart attack. Sensei Herrington had gone home, and went into insulin shock. He was in the hospital and they were monitoring his condition. It looked like he was going to be there a while.

This more or less set the tone for the end of the 1980's and beginning of the 1990's.

### The 1990's

Sensei Herrington had to drop Control of A.K.B.B.A. It just became too much for him. I had spent time as State, Asst. Regional, and Regional Rep., but was unable to pick up on it now. So, others attempted to run the region. I never heard anything about A.K.B.B.A. in the area again.

They weren't Sensei Herrington. Sensei was made for that kind of work, and it was Sensei that made it work. Everyone loved him. He was just so personable and friendly. You knew he was a

Martial Artist that could be trusted. If he suggested it, it was good. Regardless of what it was.

Changes in tournaments caused me to pull my people away from the majority of events. This was quite different for an association that had been all over the U.S. and Canada the last twenty years.

But, I had begun seeing things that I didn't like. Things that did not reflect the spirit or the purpose of the Martial Arts. Tournaments were becoming like our public school systems, "Outcome Based".

Minimums in Kata scores, toy weapons, and the increasingly blatant show of bad attitude by Black Belts was making **mediocrity** a standard.

The days were gone when Master Trias would stop a competitor in mid kata and ask them to explain the last four moves. Or not allow a competitor to run their form because their weapon was too small or light.

Less and less responsibility was being placed on the student to know and do things that only a few years previous had been considered necessary. Plain simple manners in children were becoming a thing of the past. Parents were becoming less of an example of good sportsmanship, and more obnoxious with every tournament.

Most tournaments no longer held the opportunities for my students to learn and grow in areas that I felt necessary. Without that it's just a wasted afternoon out putting money in the pocket of a stranger.

We restricted ourselves to attending the "Cleveland City Championships" every other month. I liked the rules especially **"no minimums in Kata"**. If nothing else my students could get a good work out at a long established tournament where plenty of people we knew went.

Sensei Herrington was now beginning to loose ground in his personal battle. A couple of large strokes, operations and procedures to normalize blood flow. It was a very tough time for him. His fight to remain self-sufficient was courageous and showed me a strength I had never seen in him before.

September 22, 1991, Sensei called me and asked me to come to the hospital that evening. He asked me to write up a paper that would assign any of his rights in the Association and our Tournament ventures over to me.

I did as he requested and showed up with a Black Belt that we both had trained **Sensei Mike "Sarge" Bally**. Also, in attendance was Sensei's father-in-law **Mr. Watson Beal**. Sensei and I signed the document and Sensei Bally witnessed it.

We all talked a bit longer, Sensei Bally and I left to go back to the school. As we rode I kept visualizing Sensei Herrington at different points in our relationship. I had seen my mother die over a period of time. The night my father died there wasn't enough time for me to get to him, so when I got the call he had passed, I went out on the floor and taught class. I had seen the pattern, and I knew that Sensei was starting that slow slide that would eventually end where it always does.

Year's later **Sensei Jim Endrizzi** would tell me that Sensei Herrington had a meeting with a number of his Black Belts at his apartment. He told them then that he was going to be passing the association over to me. This news was greeted with mixed feelings among the group. I know why he did this.

The devotion of Sensei's Black Belts was never a question then or now. They were all willing to do the "hell and high water routine" for him at any time. I should know, I'm one of his Black Belts.

Some expressed more of a spark for leadership than others did. Yet, not one individual, at that point in time, had shown that they were able, or willing to sacrifice enough to keep a school going beyond a minor level and only for a short time.

When given the opportunity to shine by running Sensei's classes during his period of illness, most of them did. Still, some could never rise high enough to offer the students anything beyond a constant sparring class.

In reality there was never a doubt between Sensei and I from the day we started the association that I would take over upon his retirement. I was his protégé since 1968; I was his partner and co-founder of the whole thing as well as our tournaments and awards banquets. I named the thing, and originally talked him into starting it. There was no way anyone else would get it.

The reason he told the others he was turning the association over to me was so that they would hear it from his mouth. These were his wishes. This is how he wanted it to be. It would save me problems in the future.

February 8, 1992 I remember as a very bright day. It was more like a yellow summer sun, not the washed out light you are use to seeing in the winter. There was a little snow on the ground and a normal cold temperature for February.

It was a quiet midwinter day. One of those days where it seems like everything stopped. Being a Saturday everyone must have decided just to stay home, stay warm, and relax.

I was very tired. I had spent all night awake with my wife's father in the hospital. They had him on a breathing machine. The members of the family were taking turns staying with him around the clock as moral support. I left the hospital and went directly to the dojo.

Class time hit and no one was there. Unusual, but it happens from time to time. In any event, I wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth. I knew no one was going to be down that day, so I closed up the school. I was going to call my wife at work and tell her I was going home, then ask her to call me and wake me up at 1:30. I would clean up and go visit Sensei Herrington at the VA Hospital. But I couldn't get through on the phone. So I decided to stop in since it was on my way home.

When I got there she told me that Sensei Endrizzi had just called. He couldn't reach me at the school, so he left a message with her to have me call him back. He told me that the hospital had been unable to reach me so they called him. Sensei Herrington had died at 10:00am from a brain hemorrhage.

I made the 40-minute drive home in silence. Thoughts whirring around in my head. I changed into an old GI I wore around the house, made a cup of coffee, sat down in front of the TV, and cried like a baby.

He was a gentle soul who spent his time trying to please others. He had an almost child like innocence that left him vulnerable to those around him who he loved but were willing to abuse him and take advantage of his loving heart.

His Black Belts did all they could to protect him. God knows that he certainly had the ability to protect himself, but not the

nature. In the end his life was shortened, he stepped forward a willing sacrifice to the self-centeredness of others.

That's all I'll say about that.

I looked back and thought; *"God, this has got to be two miles long"*. Cars of every make and color made up the longest funeral procession I had seen in my life. The gravesite couldn't accommodate them all, spilling numbers of them out and quite a ways down alongside the road to park. People were still arriving from the procession after the service started.

Sensei's two days at the funeral home had brought out almost everyone. I know a few of us put forth a concerted effort to reach as many people as possible. It was good to see most of the old family. Others quickly refreshed a faded memory of why we were glad they were gone. Just like a normal family gathering I guess.

A particularly touching moment was when **Sensei Dale Dandrea**, a Black Belt who had been as student with us since he was nine years old, Entered in his U.S. Army dress uniform, walked to the casket, and saluted Sensei Herrington as a show of respect from one soldier to another. It was a moment of pure heart.

It's very hard to say good-by

By March 1st we would be leaving the 720 address. The headquarters school was in dire need of repair. We did what we could, but the bulk of responsibility, which fell upon our landlord, was unattended. Water was dripping onto the training floor when it would rain. The ceiling was falling. Lights were coming loose.

**Sensei Mike Moorman** had approached me months earlier and sparked my interest in finding a new building. It was a scary move for me. This place had been home for eighteen years. Overhead was constant, everything was predictable. My situation was comfortable like an old robe. And just about as full of holes. So in December of 1991 I had set forth to find another building to operate out of. And move me out of my apathy.

I found our new place in short order. Just five doors South of where we were. Same side of the street, same block, and same neighbors we had for all those years. A silk screening business

was moving out, so we decided to take over. Three floors and a basement. Plenty of room to expand and grow.

The second and third floor had not been used for years and needed to be cleaned. Walls on the first floor needed to be torn down and an office put up. The heating ducts in the floor needed to be moved along with the first floor bathroom, a crate full of other projects waited in the wings.

I got the new building rent free from December 1, 1991 up until February 29, 1992. I had to finish enough projects by that time to move in and start paying rent. So we began work December 1st.

This move came at the perfect time. With the death of Sensei Herrington and my acquisition of the association so recent, this move caused me to delay any plans for organization or reconstruction of Ohio Ji Do Kwan. I touched nothing. I changed nothing. I contacted no one. I worked on my headquarters project while I waited, watched, and listened.

I will leave the construction of the new headquarters here to move forward with the object of this history, the development of the association. However, I would be inconsiderate if I did not at least mention the fact that every single one of my students of all ages and ranks volunteered and worked as if they were building a pyramid on the Giza Plateau.

At times they would be on all four floors scraping, painting, constructing. Or cleaning garbage out of both buildings. We even tore down the offices and locker rooms in the old school, then removed all nails from the 2x4's so we could reuse them in the new school.

This went on for the first year and a half of our occupation and is an accomplishment that I could never forget or give enough praise to. They are an amazing, wonderful group of loyal people. I honor them.

Sensei Endrizzi had joined my school before Sensei Herrington's death. He would prove to be of invaluable help during the transition since he was close to Sensei Herrington before the end. He could brief me on who or what was correct as far as Sensei's last relationships in the arts.

The first people to contact me shortly after Sensei's death seemed to come out of the wood work all at the same time. Every

single conversation with them started the exact same way. "I just wanted to check and see if there were any papers for me". "Master Herrington promised to promote me before he died". Some of these people hadn't talked to Sensei in over a year. Who did they think they were kidding?

Sensei Endrizzi had brought me all of Sensei Herrington's A.K.B.B.A., and Professional Karate Society papers. Masters Niskey, Mathna, Lombardi and I went through these page by page and never found any mention of promotions.

The day of Sensei's funeral, I and a group of Black Belts went back to Sensei's Endrizzi's house and dispensed a small number of certificates Sensei Herrington had left to be given out at the time of his death. These were all for Ohio Ji Do Kwan Black Belts. That was it.

I had decided that I would welcome any Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association Black Belt who expressed a desire to become or remain a part of the association. I would do the same with any school or club that was or had been involved with us.

At that time I had two stipulations. First, they had to contact me. If they were not interested enough, or felt they were too important, to contact me, I didn't want what was obviously going to be a problem.

Second, they had to attend Black Belt classes I would hold once every three months. This would help to keep us all on the same page.

I also alluded to the possibility that two to three years down the line, I would be charging a fee of \$25.00 a year for Membership.

Once we had gone with A.K.B.B.A., Sensei Herrington never used Ohio Ji Do Kwan Rank Certificates for any promotions. He simply signed up everyone in the association he was representing and used that as his promotion certificates. In time he came to do the same thing with patches. As a result, he had no overhead expenses for Ohio Ji Do Kwan.

As far as the schools were concerned, they had each been ordering their own Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate patches and certificates from their own suppliers, if they used them at all. Nothing actually came from headquarters.

So here is what I was faced with attempting to do. **Actually create a self sustaining, even profitable Martial Arts organization, where all information, certification and logo paraphernalia came from headquarters, twenty years after it had been started, among the people who had been allowed to be part of it for free. While at the same time I would be instituting requirements, rules, restrictions and traditions that heretofore had been ignored or unheard of.**

Sensei Herman Horn had asked to be part of the organization before Sensei Herrington's death. Sensei Herrington eventually left that decision up to me. Sensei Horn had a school in **Bayview, Ohio** where he had converted a gas station into a very nice dojo.

He had broken off from the Sandusky school after the death of Sensei Cooper. He and the current head instructor could not see eye to eye, so I guess mutual agreement had Sensei Horn leaving.

Sensei Horn was the first outside of my school to learn that if he were to train with me, he and his entire student body would be studying my style, **"American Ji Do Kwan Karate"**. He was agreeable and has been with me as one of my Black Belts and association school owners since.

A few of Sensei Herrington's Black Belts made it around to check in. I always invited them to be part of what was going on. We'd talk and they might stop back once or twice, but that was the extent.

**Sensei Tom Yerace** called me regarding the **Wellington, Ohio** school. Sensei Yerace had been around since the 70's. We had traveled to the **"Texas City Championships"** together along with Sensei Herrington. I had helped him with technique when he was a green belt. I knew him to have a wonderful personality and be a straightforward trustworthy individual.

He had opened the school in Wellington, but was now living in Hudson, Ohio and was unable to make it into the area. Sensei David Brattoli had taken over before Sensei Herrington's death. He wanted to tell me Sensei Brattoli was an "alright guy" and I should give him a chance. I told him to have Sensei Brattoli call me.

Brattoli began in Karate at age 11 under Sensei Clyde Hoover. Then he trained in Su Chi Kung Fu in Germany, and in Shorinryu Karate with **Sensei George Baker** here in the states. I knew Sensei

Baker well, and I knew that any student of his was determined, well trained, and hard as nails.

A call from Sensei Brattoli lead to a visit. I found him to be out going and eager to be part of what I was trying to do. He began coming in on a weekly basis for regular workouts. He, like Sensei Horn, has remained as one of my Black Belts and school owners in the association.

I worked with these Black Belts whenever they could make it to my dojo. At times I would travel to their dojos and teach clinics to their students on Waza, Kata, or Self-Defense.

I Video Taped every Seminar, Clinic, and Black Belt Class I taught starting in 1993. This included everything from Weapons to Women's Self-Defense through Tai Chi to Karate. There would always be the possibility of editing any of the tapes for teaching or sales purposes. Also, if anything happened to me there would not be a dispute over how I had wanted things arranged and executed.

From the past **Sensei Clyde Hoover** came into the school. He went way back as a friend and a Black Belt of Sensei's. Actually, in the early days **Sensei Hoover drifted** back and forth between Sensei Herrington and **Sensei Larry Lunn**. Sensei Lunn was a very accomplished Black Belt from the old blood and guts days of Karate. Now he was also a very accomplished knife maker. I understand he's now in Colorado.

Sensei Hoover wanted to work out at the Lorain dojo, become part of Ohio Ji Do Kwan, teach and move up through the system. He was seriously looking for a home in which to practice his Martial Arts.

He had always been Ohio Ji Do Kwan, no doubt. Now he became a regular sight at the daytime workouts. Getting in shape and learning the forms our way. Stick fighting and doing Tai Chi. It was good to see him back in the swing of things. He had spent many years as a police officer and is a big guy. I couldn't help but look at him and see thirty years back.

Speaking of Police Officer, it was about this time I was introduced to **Master Richard "Mack" McCormack**. He was a legend in Lorain, Ohio. A Police Officer for forty-three years, **"Mack"** had walked a beat in the worst areas of the city for his entire career. His badge number was **"1"**, and he had refused any promotions that would take him off the streets.

His big reputation was for his ability at hand to hand combat in real situations. A true "Master" of the Choke-out, "Mack" had actually choked-out bad guys with one arm while bringing them into position to apply the choke.

One morning he walked into my dojo and introduced himself. It seems a public relations move to make citizens feel safe on downtown streets had resulted in him walking a daytime beat on the main street of Lorain.

I had heard stories of this guy for the past nineteen years, pro and con. I wasn't sure about the attitude of who I was meeting. But after all these years in the same city it was time we met and got to know each other.

Master Richard McCormack turned out to be one of the finest men and Martial Artists I have ever met in my life. The stories about him in police work can be answered with the understanding that he always gave the individual the opportunity to cooperate. If not, then that was the individual's choice. The situation was handled as necessary.

In Martial Arts, he is a premier instructor with understanding and patients. His first and last thoughts are always for the safety of his students. His technical expertise is unsurpassed. I also admire the fact that everyone he teaches is a certified ground fighting, neck choking, arm locking monster.

Master McCormack became my Judo and Ju-Jitsu instructor. His street adaptations and instruction in general have helped me to "Beef-Up" my requirements. He and his wife **Master Patricia McCormack**, also a marvelous Martial Artist, began teaching clinics for my Black Belts on "Choking" and "Arm Locking".

This went hand in hand with the knife fighting clinics my knife-fighting instructor, **Grandmaster Emmanuel deLeon** was teaching. I had been involved with him since the late 70's, and the hand patterns I learned from him figured highly in my plans for my system.

He was another of these Martial Artists who are so good they are "Scary". His speed and pure body hardness are almost unreal. His humility is a lesson. He is very giving of himself and his art "**Eskrido**".

Sensei Endrizzi had to leave the association. His long drive to work along with his personal situation made it impossible

for him to meet requirements at my dojo. We also had a few disagreements, which I felt needed to be worked out before continuing a relationship in the same school. Nothing drastic or major.

I began teaching regular Black Belt classes for all of the Black Belts in the association. One every three months.

Out of the twenty-six Black Belts in class the majority had trained at my school and had come up under me from day one. They knew what I wanted and they knew my expectations. I told all of the other Black Belts that regardless of what they may have heard about me, good or bad, just take some classes under me, see if what I have to teach you makes sense, and above all, works. Then make the decision for themselves regarding my ability and knowledge and if they wish to stay.

Class structure was that the first half of class was devoted to a specific rank level and how the techniques, requirements, and kata were taught and executed at that level. The second half of class was directed to working on things specifically for the Black Belts.

Classes moved along well, but not perfect. Things were going good, but something was missing. If you included the classes and the clinics my Black Belts were getting instruction of the highest level. We were all together, but not all together. I just couldn't put my finger on it.

I had joined "**Unity Martial Arts**" in 1994 because I felt that we needed to be aligned with a rank certifying Martial Arts Organization. As a side benefit this association's headquarters was close by. **Master Ted Hines**, a Shito-ryu stylist, runs it. Sensei Hines is the perfect individual to be the head of a certifying association. He cares about what is good for the Martial Arts, not money. Although he is in his forties, he still competes in **Pankration** tournaments.

A true traditionalist, he's an old style hard guy. From Kata right on down to weapons through to empty hand. I admire his sincerity and honesty.

I signed up all of my Black Belts and some of my students in Unity. Master McCormack and Master deLeon did the same. To help Unity get members we started the "**Four Masters Tour**". **Masters Heins, McCormack, deLeon, and Fuzy**. We would teach a seminar for 3 hours. Each of us would take a turn and teach our specialty.

The cost was \$35.00. Those in attendance got a one-year membership in Unity, plus large rank certificate and I D card.

It was fun, and the people got their money's worth. All four of us enjoyed working with each other. It all fit together very nicely.

I was watching the Black Belts warming up for class. I don't remember which class. I could go back and review tapes but it really isn't important. What is important that I discovered how to get us all together.

We bowed in. I had them sit down and I told them that for some, I had always been their Sensei. From the day they took their first stance, up to Black Belt and beyond. For others I wasn't the Black Belt they started with. I knew that your first Sensei was always something special.

There was no way I could go back in time. I wasn't trying to replace anyone. And it wasn't fair to me to offer me less than full loyalty or trust because I came along at this point in their lives. Now I was teaching them, Now I was their Sensei, and I expected them to follow me fully or not at all. They had to make that decision and stand behind it.

I was making it a requirement that over the next six months, each and every Black Belt in the Association had to certify all of their kata, from white belt to Black Belt, move by move in front of me. No exceptions, no excuses. Who ever didn't was out of the association. For a school to retain a Black Belt I kicked out meant that the school was out also. This included all Masters and Black Belts at all Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association Schools.

I told them that I would work with any of them any time they wanted to come to my school and work. I would come to their schools and work when I could. They could certify any kata any time they wanted as long as they make the deadline.

Needless to say I spent a lot of time working on kata with people. Making corrections in stances, preparation points, line of execution. No one was very far off from most of what I wanted, but little differences even in Bunki, explanation of moves, had us worlds apart on some things.

The Black Belts for the headquarters school had learned their forms from me. During their Black Belt tests we spent at least four to five hours going over all of their forms in depth.

Including making every move work against attackers. Therefore, most problems were little personal idiosyncrasies that tend to creep in over time, and most instructors correct as they arise.

The Black Belts from the other schools had learned their forms from someone who did not understand my system or what I was after. Though we were close, a change is a change. These Black Belts had to literally learn their forms and Bunki a new way.

This brought us closer. As you work together you begin to understand and know if you can believe the person you're working with. You gain or loose respect depending upon the sincerity of the teaching and the work. They had taken that big step and allowed me to change what they had known as truth for so long. Then they worked their bottoms off to make it right. They were, and wanted to be part of Ohio Ji Do Kwan.

Some days I didn't have any time to myself. But it was worth it. All but two people made the deadline. Those two didn't even certify one form. They never even gave themselves or me a chance. They had excuses for being pulled away from whichever school they were part of. Personal troubles, work problems, physical trouble, that kind of thing. They both dropped out.

Now at Black Belt class we looked like an association. They had two main things in common, the base of their system, and the Chief Instructor they all trained under. You could tell through the execution of technique and the enthusiasm in the workouts that we were all from the same place.

I received a call one afternoon from someone I hadn't seen in eighteen years, **Sensei Paul Ornowski**. Sensei Herrington and I had taken over the NASA Karate Club from Sensei Ornowski back on the 70's. He was in the Canton, Ohio area and wanted to come visit me. We set up a day.

Sensei Ornowski had been my training partner back in 1968. Paul, an airborne Infantryman had returned from Viet Nam and signed up at Lakewood Judo and Karate Association around the same time that I did.

Being close in height and weight we paired up in class when required. Soon we began working together on our Martial Arts before, after, and in between classes. When the split came, Paul became Sensei Moore's Protege' and I became Sensei Herrington's.

The last time I had seen him was around 1979 at the 720 Broadway address in Lorain. He had taught me Moore's version of the Kata: **Empi**, **Jion**, and **Kan Ku Sho**. After that work out he just disappeared.

I offered Sensei Ornowski the opportunity to be part of the association. He had not had an instructor or promotion since Sensei Moore, although he had continued to train and continued to teach.

Paul was like a lot of Martial Artists. Their Sensei had long since died, quit, or moved on leaving them to find new teachers or train themselves. Yet, here thirty years later he was still on the path, he still kept the faith.

For twenty-one years straight I had been with one man on a regular basis, I was lucky. My sensei looked after me; he took care of me. Yes I trained and learned other arts with other people, but was always loyal to one man, **Master Curtis Herrington**.

On my behalf I will say; *"Whatever I was given I have earned"*. My continual day after day, year after year, decade after decade involvement can not be disputed. As others fell to the wayside one after another and quit, I still remained.

And here before me was my old friend, my training partner. A spirit from the past come forward through time. Like a Ronin, he had made the trip alone. What an admirable individual.

Sensei Ornowski was a window to the past. His Martial Arts were unchanged. It was all there, the power and strength. His movement mirrored the early days. The time where Martial Artist looked to execution of technique and control instead of covering their bodies in foam rubber gear.

You could see the variation from what he was doing to where I had taken us. Some things I was doing he might have seen but had not done before. I had brought the circle into play within the upper kyu ranks of the system, whereas Sensei Ornowski was all straight line.

He also proved to be a real historian regarding the Martial Arts. People their instructors, their systems, their forms and the roots of their forms. He was very impressive.

As he got ready to leave, I told him to give me a call and let me know what he wanted to do about joining the association.

He said that he had made up his mind already. He bowed and called me Sensei. I was very uncomfortable with that. I told him so. We both understood why it was strange for me. We both also understood why it was necessary.

One day Master McCormack asked me if I would like to have a seminar from a top Martial Artist. We could have it at my place. The police and my people only. "Sure"; I said. So Master McCormack set it up. It turned out to be **Master Philip Porter, "The Father of American Judo", and "Highest Ranking Man in the Western Hemisphere". "Chairman for the U.S. Olympic Judo Committee"**.

What a personality. Like Master McCormack, he's in his 70's, and also like Master McCormack he works out like he means it. You work in his seminars. You work hard.

We had all of our Black and Brown belts from the association, the Lorain SWAT team, plus various officers from local departments and the local prison.

I have found that when they refer to people as "The Father Of" something, they are usually dynamic, highly intelligent, and focused individuals. Also, **not caught up in their own importance**. No exception here.

I am very fortunate to have met and gotten to know Master Porter. He truly is a great man. His accomplishments could fill a book. People of his knowledge and ability do not come by very often. They are inspiring to train under. They are walking history.

At the end of the clinic, Master Porter elevated my Judo rank, and asked Master McCormack to work with me, but Porter would be my Sensei. His organization **"The United States Martial Arts Association"** certified my other ranks. He gave me that title of **Director/Master of "American Ji Do Kwan Karate" for the USMA Board**.

I made it mandatory that all Masters and school owners in the Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association join USMA. Any other students that wanted to join could. By this time Unity Martial Arts had recognized **"American Ji Do Kwan Karate"** as a specific art.

At the next Black Belt class I set up the structure for the Association's board, Black Belts, and why I had made the decisions regarding Unity and USMA.

Now all Masters and Black Belts were members of Unity Martial Arts. All Masters and school owners were also members of The United States Martial Arts Association. Any of them could leave me at any time and still have a body of authority to certify their various ranks and give them timely promotions.

In other words, they were not tied to me for reason of promotion. There was no way that I could hold anything over their heads in order to get them to stay as my students. If they stayed, it was because they believed in me.

Also, if anything were to happen to me, they and their students would all be looked after by these two organizations.

The board of our association would be comprised of all Black Belts who owned schools, all association Masters, (6<sup>th</sup> degree Black Belt and above), and two Masters outside of our association acting as advisors.

It's only common sense that the people who operate and own the schools have something to say about our direction. Anyone that has remained with the association long enough to reach sixth Dan Master rank has a right to take part in the decision making.

The first advisor picked was; **Grandmaster Muhammad Sallahudin**, founder of Oshirokan Budo Bujutsu. The second picked was **Grandmaster Emmanuel deLeon**, founder of Eskrido.

The advisers were there to offer wisdom, guidance, and advise to the board in the event that something happened to me that would keep me from my duties permanently or temporary but long term.

As far as Black Belt chain of command; All Black Belts are association Black Belts, but they are not all mine. Black Belts who train and teach at my dojo are directly responsible to me, as are all current associated school owners/Head Instructors. The Black Belts at the associated schools are directly responsible to the owner/Head Instructor of the school that they train and teach in.

Should an associated school owner have one of their Black Belts break off and open their own associated school, that Black Belt is still directly responsible to them.

I require that all Black Belts attend my classes because I am the **Chief Instructor** for the association, and it's a class outside

of their school with information from its source. Also, if you have the chance to train directly under the founder of a system, why wouldn't you? I will train all of the Black Belts, but I will not insert myself between a teacher and their student.

All Black Belts are certified directly by me to teach **"American Ji Do Kwan Karate"**. They have to be certified on a yearly basis. Certification is dependent on them attending Black Belt classes and their conduct during the previous year. Any school using a non-certified Black Belt to teach regular classes is out of the association.

Certification costs \$25.00 a year. It includes certificate of **"Certification to Teach"** or **"Master Instructor"**, which is posted at their school, A letter of authorization, an association Black Belt Membership card, and all Black Belt classes during the year.

Schools that certify all of their Black Belts automatically receive a certificate of **"School Charter"**.

All certification may be revoked at any time.

In today's world the fee of \$25.00 a year for certification, membership and classes is nothing. But for me it is a start of bringing the association to a point where it is self-sustaining. Eventually I also intend to charge a reasonable fee for certification of rank. Being the head of a system this is only right.

A rule I instituted is **"If you teach, you work out"**. I do not allow any strutters. I've seen too many Black Belts reach a point where they slap that belt around their waist and do nothing but strut around a class year after year. Eventually they're out of shape, and look it. A halfhearted workout would throw them into cardiac arrest. Three or four kicks and the veins are sticking out in their foreheads like rope. They allow their technique to reach a point where they are embarrassing to watch.

Now, being in my fifties I understand that the body changes quite a bit after the mid forties. Eyesight, the legs go, old injuries act up frequently, joints ache. But you look at Master Porter, or Master McCormack still going at it in their 70's. Another friend of mine **Sensei Dave Ard** an Isshinryu practitioner was entering empty hand and weapons forms in tournaments at 60. There are plenty of examples.

The people in our Black Belt classes range in age from their late teens, (I do not promote to Black Belt before 16), to their late fifties. We have everything from vibrant undamaged bodies, to old worn out bags of flesh sporting things like bad knees or hips, or shoulders, whatever. Rank includes everything from 1<sup>st</sup> Black to 10<sup>th</sup> Black with a good number of high ranking Black. No one sits on his or her butt in class.

Perhaps we all cannot work to the same level. Perhaps we do not work with the same intensity. There might even be a few things that all of us can't do. But, we all work. We all put forth the effort.

My goal is to have an association where any of our students can go into any **Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association** school or club and get the exact same high quality instruction at each. Techniques, Kata, everything taught the same. An association where if we exchanged teachers, classes would progress without missing a beat. An association where when it was time for me to step down, I could hand over an organization that was completely set up, running smoothly, paying for itself, with a salary for the Director.

My belief is that everything comes from the top. If the rules don't apply to the highest ranks, they apply to no one. If the attitude of the highest ranks is bad or found lacking, so is everyone's. The Masters are the example to the Black Belts, the Black Belts to the students, and so on down the line to the new people coming through the door.

So, Black Belts and teaching is where we attack our inconsistencies.

What a strange feeling it was to take the section, **"Requirements for Yellow Belt"** out of the instruction manual on the training floor, and replace it with the new one I had just completed.

Requirements had remained unchanged, in written form, since Sensei Moore wrote them down in 1962. To replace them felt almost like a sacrilegious act.

However, it was time. I imagined that Sensei Moore, wherever he was at, would agree. I hadn't changed much. I had added a few things here and there. The same process was in store for the next section I was working on, **"Requirements for Blue Belt"**. Just a few additions here and there, some reworking.

As a matter of fact there wasn't a section where I took anything out. The real changes, were all additions. Additions inserted in at Green Belt, more at Purple Belt, more again at the first two of the three Brown Belt sections.

Some of the changes are totally new for the students. Some of the changes are developments that I have made over the years and have been using. Others are advancements and upgrades of techniques and theory that were never touched on beyond basic concept, even at advanced levels. Four new kata over time were inserted in kyu ranks alone. This brings the total of fifteen forms from white belt to Black Belt.

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Black also have additions in technique, kata and weapons. I have plans for rank changes and organization above that level, but first things first. I must finish putting down the program on paper from white belt through to and including 1<sup>st</sup> brown.

This re-organization of the **Ohio Ji Do Kwan Karate Association** and institution of the complete style of **American Ji Do Kwan Karate**, could not be done without the full backing and agreement of all of the Black Belts of the association.

We all want something better than what we had. We have seen the proof in the quality of our students and the improvement of ourselves. To learn new things and work to perfect old things. Since 1992, each school has moved to expand and is better off than before.

**Lorain Family Martial Arts** was a little school about two blocks down the street and around the corner from me. **Sensei Bonnie Szarek** and **Sensei Lydia Gonzalez** owners, ran the dojo a few nights a week. It was on the third floor of the building, had a wooden floor most instructors would die for, a very nice layout for changing rooms and offices, and an office for **Master John Lambdin**, their Master, and my friend from the old OJKA and Karate World days. I believe Master Lambdin trained under **Master Larry Lunn** in **Tae Kwon Do**, and **Dr. Maung Gyi** in **Bando**.

We had supported each other in various undertakings and even threw a "Training Tournament" together with three other schools in the area.

It was a Saturday afternoon in February 1998, and Master Lambdin was having Master Porter in for a weekend seminar. I

could only make this one class, but had the honor of being Master Porter's "uke".

**"Gentle Way"**, Judo is everything you have heard of when someone like Master Porter is throwing you. You float, you feel nothing. It truly is gentle. Even as you hit the mat.

I was having a wonderful time but had kind of a dull headache coming on. I mentioned to **Grandmaster deLeon** and **Master Patricia McCormack** that the right side of my neck felt a bit swollen. They told me that it looked as if it were. I finished out the session, and a week later I began treatment for an infected lymph node with my family doctor.

We continued for quite a while trying first one than another antibiotic in an attempt to get the swelling under control. Eventually at the urging of my wife, I made arrangements to have a surgeon remove the lymph node.

The first Friday in November 1998, while I was feeling just great, the doctor told me that I had Cancer, Squamous Cell Carcinoma. Cancer was all I really heard.

I won't go into the entire story of everything. My cancer isn't the subject here anyway. But first a Radical Neck Dissection to remove the muscles of the right side of my neck and shoulder along with 47 lymph nodes.

My Black Belts began to mobilize. At the time there were fourteen of them teaching at the headquarters school. They ranged in rank from 7<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt to 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt.

Radiation treatments began. After two they had to increase them. I am not a big individual, but thirty-two years of training had left the remaining muscle in my neck and chest dense. The head of the radiation department told me that I probably received the largest dose of head and neck radiation they had given.

My wife, Master Mary Kay Fuzy was spending her time at work and with me, but would check on the school regularly. Master Ed Mathna 7<sup>h</sup> Dan coordinated and taught evening classes and Master David Lombard 6<sup>h</sup> Dan, coordinated and taught day classes. They kept in constant contact with each other regarding the school and it's coverage.

I thought I had prepared for radiation by gaining twenty pounds and moving up to 185 pounds. But the intensity of the treatment so burnt my throat and esophagus that they ulcerated and swelled. The skin on my shoulders split. By the end of the treatments I was at 128 pounds.

The Black Belts each picked two times a week to be at the school. Some were there three times. Sensei Mike Moorman, Sensei Dale Dandrea, and Sensei Jason Smith taught day classes. Dandrea and Smith also contributed to covering Saturday classes.

I went from Easter Sunday Morning 1999 to September 21, 1999 living off one to two Ensure milkshakes a day. When I could force it I drank three. I was unable to swallow the smallest pill, much less food. Even puree' wouldn't go down.

Sensei Holly Tutor, Sensei Mike Bally, Sensei Jim Roberts, Sensei Bernard Zagar, Sensei Ivan Zagar, Sensei Robert Klein, and Sensei Christina Long taught evening classes. Sensei Roberts and the Zagars also covered Saturdays.

I missed teaching one association Black Belt class but that was all. It is my responsibility to attend all Black Belt tests at my school. When I was at my lowest in weight and energy, Sensei Matt Born was testing for his 1<sup>st</sup> Black.

He had tested three hours each on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. I couldn't attend. He rested Friday, and was to complete his test with a thirteen-hour section on Saturday.

During that section I showed up to start and led the test. I rested periodically then would lead sections like the Kata portion, which lasted around four hours. I made it through the test.

My Black Belts were impressed with the power and focus I displayed while executing technique from kata against attackers. Especially in that condition. They told me they were amazed. I felt as if I were performing as always, but needed to hear that.

On September 21, 1999 contact with a name on a cancer web site, Don Lechance, put me in touch with the man who would teach me to eat again and turn my life around.

It is now over a year later and I am stabilized at 152 pounds. I eat all I like yet; I'm still working on getting it down. Just recently I have been able to drink coffee and carbonated beverages.

I teach Tai Chi classes and seminars, occasional Karate Classes, all association Black Belt Classes, and work out enough to move progress slowly. I still have around two of three years of healing to go. To over do would set me back months.

I'm almost a year and a half out of radiation, and my throat is still swollen. I have lots of scar tissue in my throat down into my lungs.

I have virtually all motion, power and snap I ever had. My energy level is high but depletes very quickly. A radiation-damaged thyroid gland contributes to that. Eventual correct dosage of thyroid medicine will help pull things together.

No Cancer has been detected.

## 2000 And Beyond

My schedule is still part time but increasing. My Black Belts have remained here and loyal. They have saved our school. Given of themselves for the past two years regardless of their own schedules. All of the Black Belts of the association from every school have been there at my call, at any time, for any reason. Not one ever left any doubt of that. There are no words.

Sensei Endrizzi is back in the association along with his school and Black Belts, and Sensei Hoover after a recent move has been talking about a Kentucky associated school. Master Ed Mathna, a constant at the headquarters dojo since 1975, made a move to Arizona, but has been involving himself in as much as possible to keep his membership in the association active. And a Black Belt of mine was recently made Chief of Police in a local town. Life has continued on.

As I have expressed to all of them, we are now beyond an association, we are a Clan, a warrior family. Distance has no meaning.

My illness may have held us up a bit, but we are still here and momentum is picking up. We haven't lost any ground. Our future is still out there waiting on us to arrive. And arrive we will. Growing and improving with each step.

As I finish this "Brief History" we are moving into the actual start of the new millenium. It seems as if it has taken forever to write this thing, and only overnight to live it.

Reflection shows so much packed into those years. The people we have come in contact with, the things we have seen and done. More than once we have been part of history. How fortunate we have been.

As I recuperate I find that I have come full circle and been given the wonderful chance to once again be a beginner. Missing muscle has changed my center and thus dictates I make corrections and find my new center in order to shift weight as is necessary.

I ask those of you who are experienced. Wasn't that when it was best? To put on that white belt, to be a beginner. The struggle, the sweat. I know this road. I have traveled it before. With luck, perhaps I can hit the same potholes again.

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Martial Arts: History, Tradition, and People  
By Corcoran and Farkas