

The background image shows a man in a white Taekwondo uniform with a blue belt performing a move. He is in a dynamic pose with his arms extended. In the background, other practitioners in white uniforms are visible, some sitting on the floor and others standing. The setting appears to be a large indoor space, possibly a gymnasium or a stage.

World Moo Duk Kwan

Historical Interviews
based on Recorded
Interviews conducted
by
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Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

**Moo Duk Kwan®
Oral Histories**



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Frank Bonsignore, Sa Bom Nim
Oral History

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Frank Bonsignore, Sa Bom Nim, dan bon 15805, 9th Dan,
Oral History

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



August 11, 2006, Recorded Interviews conducted by Sandra Schermerhorn, Sa bom Nim.

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Could you give me a brief summary of your training history, your instructors and the places where you trained? Starting from when? Well...You first trained in Korea? Did you?

I Joined the Moo Duk Kwan when I was stationed in the military (Air Force) and I started in October 5, 1970, that is when I joined Moo Duk Kwan, when I was stationed at Osan Air Base, in the Republic of South Korea.

Who was your instructor there? Master CS Kim, who currently resides and teaches in Pittsburgh. He is not with the Federation, anymore is he? Not anymore. NO.

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Did they have other instructors there, or just Kim was the main one? He was the main instructor. There were always seniors that assisted both as instructors and in general, seniors training, teaching and doing what seniors do. There was Un Ku Won, In Un Kue, In Kue, was more like my partner, In Kue won, was also one of the senior master instructors there. He resides in Southern Jersey at the present time near the South of Trenton cherry Hill area, south of the cherry hill area and then one of my other seniors was Chan To In who resides in Cinnaminson, New Jersey.

You maintain contact? I know where they were. All of them, at one time or another they were all part of the US Federation and they were in the Federation system.

Was this Do Jang the one that is in Seoul now? No. this was in Osan, which was actually on the base in Osan Air Base which was about maybe a half an hour south of Seoul. Where they're mostly Korean s who train there or who was in your class? On the base there was mostly GI s. because it was a Military installation facility that the only US military personnel merely trained there.

What was the training like there, compared to now. Perhaps people train now or what kind of training did you do?

It was more like rough and tumble. It was hard, it was intense, and it took like 2 hours at least a day. Did you train every day? Every day but Sunday. Really? Everyday. Sometimes twice a day. Classes were Monday through Friday it was afternoon and evening classes and then on Saturdays a morning class. You get off work at 6:00 in the morning, catch about 5 hours sleep, head over to the Studio do the training, go back to the barracks, get cleaned up, get something to eat and go to work.

So you put a lot of training into the training. A lot of training. How old were you then?

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I was in my 20's. In your 20's So mostly the guys were probably the same age? From 18 to their early 20's . The majority of the military personnel that were interested in that kind of thing.

How many students were there? It is hard to tell, because during the daytime there was only a hand full, because we had many people working during the daytime, so we would have anywhere between 4 to maybe 8 or 10 during the daytime. The nighttime there was considerably more, because of the work scheduling, so there would be maybe 25, maybe 30 that would make each class. Big class...

Do you have a favorite story about your early training? Not really. Ok.

During your training years, where they're any major changes? What do you mean training years, I'm still training...? During your training years. I know yes...that's why we want to get this information, this is all good for us. Obviously, you have some major changes in your training, started in Korea, changing instructors, changing schools, where there any other major changes in your training, any setbacks due to illness or injury or jobs or anything like that?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

No. I was just consistently training. How was it? It is interesting to note that it started in Korea, I would have thought it was have been easy to stop, but you continued when you came here. It's always easy to stop. You know it was like... you know I was a new Cho Dan, so like ok let me do some training and find out what things were around, and look in the phone book or you would call whatever source of information you could find, and you see who is around. You know and sometimes you find someone you like sometimes you don't, you know I had been to a couple of schools that were ..supposedly, well there were actually teaching tang soo do but their understanding of it and I wasn't exactly happy with it and their approach to it, so...I didn't go to them anymore. And it just so happened that I got a magazine, one of the few magazines that advertise Tang Soo Do, and there was an article about Jae Chun Shin and he was in the Southern Jersey and back then it was Burlington New Jersey, so I made the trip, first I made the call then I made the trip.

That was some trip for you, wasn't it? No about 2 hours. It was once or twice a month we would go down there on a Saturday and do some training.

Was it called Tang Soo Do in Korea also? Yes. It was the same thing, yes.

So after...when did you end up training with Kwan Jang Nim?

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I was going down to going to the studio on a regular basis, and then one day I would show up at the studio and I would see Master Kim there. He had just arrived from Korea, and said this was great, I could see my instructor again, and do some training. We had good training relations and maintaining that student – instructor connection and then right around that time maybe a year after, Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee he wanted all Dan members to get together to really form a strong organization in the United States so he asked Master Shin to call a meeting of all the Dan members that he was able to get a hold of and that was held on November 1974, I believe, that the meeting go to Burlington New Jersey from which an added discussion was done on that weekend and hence a task force was formed to basically create the charter of the Federation, as was to create a Federation based upon everything that we hold dear, and wanted to ensure that we move forward and to continue the organization under the guidance of the founder.



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I see. So you were a Cho-Dan at that time? I was an E-Dan at that time. You got your Cho Dan in Korea. Yes. Did they have a test like we have now to get your Cho Dan.?

Oh yes. It was different but nonetheless it was a test. And My test was actually out of old central studio in Korea the one where you see the old b&w photos in volume one, thats where I tested for Cho Dan. It is no longer there. Oh no longer there? Yes, things quieted down about a year or two after I left, After I tested the new railroad station is not so new now, but back then it was a Central Railroad Station terminal was there. Basically we had to....ahh...There it was different but not so much what we do now. We did forms, we did one step sparring and we did fighting, with sparring. I don't remember if we had to do any breaking but from my recollection those were the three main focused things. Was it a long test? It seemed that it was forever! There were only 8 of us testing. Yea.. so...

Where there many masters watching you, or who watched you? Now you're getting into the nitty gritty. Who judged you, like the master's people? Yes. There were several people that were there obviously, my instructor was there, because he brought us up there. He was there, another master instructor was there and my current instructor was there. And the person on the board was actually observing and scoring us. Master econ ukun and he are no longer with the organization, but he lives in England. I don't recognize that name. They used to call him "international tang soo do of England". He is no longer with the founder. Inaudible section. He has also worked Atlantic City International Championships back in 1982, I believe, he was there, as well as many representatives from around the world who were able to attend.

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How long had you trained before your dan test? It used to be shorter than now, wasn't it? A lot shorter...well it was shorter, yes, It all depended on the proficiency of the person, and because..... the course of training was more intense, people got prior experience and they also advanced ahead of time, so it depended on the individual candidate. I see.

Did most people go to 2 hours a days 5 days a week. Was that pretty much standard? No. The class was... The actual class was 2 hours, whether it was an afternoon class or the evening class, it was 2 hours and even though on the sign it said 3. I don't know. It was definitely 2 hours' worth of training.

When were you training whether here, in the United States or Korea, tournaments, what were they like then? Would they do forms and sparring or. Tournaments in Korea? Yes. I did not go to any tournaments in Korea. No tournaments there? Not that I was aware of anyway. There probably were, but I didn't know all of them, but I couldn't go to them because of my work schedule, so I couldn't answer that question. It's not like the all the tournaments today that we publish, going on in all the studios, and they were not the same, Here in the United States now? Tournaments here? Did you go to tournaments here

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I went to some of the them in like Master Cho's at Madison Square Garden, when Robert Boudin, when he was part of the organization and used to go to his tournaments in Connecticut. I went to one of his... he used to hold two tournaments in a year. One in Waterbury, in the fall and then one in the spring in another town not too far away from Waterbury. So I used to go and support him because he was a good practitioner as far of the organization. You know.

Do you have any favorite memories about tournaments, anything that sticks out in your mind?

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There are a couple of them. The most memorable was at one of the open tournaments, I actually attend, but I didn't actually participate in. Actually, participated in as a ... participant yeah that's as good as any word. There were many flamboyant people who had a variety of techniques, where they were acrobatic or traditional. A lot of times some of these flamboyant acrobatic people would win the tournament and until judges woke up. (inaudible) The acrobatic persons are happy and everybody else was. That's interesting because when I came in I thought it was traditional. I did not get to see that, but that was like a break through. A turning point. They did things like back flips, a couple of punches, through you on the ground a couple of fancy kicks. Whatever... That is not really traditional in the sense of what we are seeing as a traditional form. It may be traditional in your studio, but as a general martial arts format, it is not.



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In your years of training, what were people's attitudes toward the martial arts? No. They called in basically, specifically when you are in the military, and you have nothing else to do but go out and drink, it was something to take up the time, so that you don't become an alcoholic or get into trouble doing other things, so it was an avenue for creativity and would keep you out of trouble. Right...Right... Besides it was for.... you were able to protect yourself.

How about family or friend's attitudes toward martial arts? Did people think it was a good thing? Or your buddies, did they think it was a part of their training? It was a mixed bag. Someone would try an amazing move. Someone would say, you know that is good, that's fine. Someone would always try to get to get me into trouble. Let taking me to a bar and say I know this guy can take on everyone in here. You are not going to do that. You are not going to take me to a bar. (laughs) you know... they were busting my chops. You know I can't do that.

In your early years in training, did you have any heroes? Anybody you thought was "real cool"?

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You could always say Chuck Norris was really cool, or until we say Bruce Lee was really cool, they had their place as role models for people and something to help bring the martial arts to the public eye even better, then watched previously through the various TV shows and movies and things like that. When you don't know any better you only have what we have to see, to give us as a sample as to what would it would be to be in martial arts. There are a lot of good martial artists out there. Each one of them has their strengths and weaknesses. Among them, Kwan Jang Nim. He epitomizes what a true martial artist is. Soft spoken, calm, but don't get him mad. It's not like a lot of friends would say, he's takes karate, yeah... how come he doesn't have any muscles? Martial artists doesn't have to look like Hercules. He has his strength from within and through their training the technical expertise and the technical strength, not necessarily a muscle bound physical strength. That's what really sets a martial artist apart from a bar room bawler whatever you want to call it , fighter...so...fortunately I've never had to use it... avoidance avoidance! Awareness and avoidance... yes. Right.



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What were your ambitions in the martial art? What did you want to be as a martial artist? You know like did you want to be a 3rd dan,

I never really thought about it. I just like to train. Right, I see. Honestly when I first came back, it's like oh...cho dan, yeah this is really good. And all of a sudden, its edan, ah... yea edan...yeah that really nice, ah man that's really good. I could learn a little bit more, then sam dan, etc. etc., etc, etc. I never thought it would last this long. I never thought I would stay in it. For me it is something I enjoy. Right so kind of looking back its like wow...it's been a while. Right, right.

Talk to me about your Cho Dan test. Where was your E Dan Test? Was it in the United States? The Cho Dan test was in old famous HQ studio in Seoul, and all the other tests were here in the United States. United States? The second Dan test was in Burlington, New Jersey, under the guidance of Master Jae Chul Shin. The 3rd Dan test was under H.C. Hwang Sa Bom Nim, then H.C. Hwang. The 4th Dan test was again under H. C. Hwang Sa Bom Nim., at that time.

Where was your 4th dan test? Springfield studio! was it? At that time ...it was part of a day test. It was part of a regular test. When did it all change? I don't know. I am not sure exactly what year it was. Back then there was actually, it was in the newsletter, actually ...it was Master Yong Ki Hong, In Ki Hong, testing for the next ranking. Which would ah... I forget what they were going for... but Mary Ann Walsh, Sa Bom and I tested together for 4th. Have you two always tested together? We've always tested together since, its just one of those things, your testing partner, yes.

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When I tested for Cho Dan I was one of 6 or 8 people. —one of the was Korean (Name inaudible), and there was Charles Moore, Ver—————I forget what this other man's name was, he last name was _____myself and Donald _____since then has changed his name to Darrel Cody., he is out in Arizona some place, as far I know Darrel no longer trains. Steven Humford, he was the other one. Were these people all about the same age? Yes, we were all about the same age.



Do you have any favorite stories from any of your Dan testings? Something that sticks out in your mind?

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The 3rd Dan Test. When I and Joe Markovitch. We are up there during the endurance kick, it was like, when is this 30 seconds going to be finished! Unbelievable. Then Sa Bom Nim Hwang had to stop whatever reason, and then he had to start again. We did not move. The audience were not moved. I was embarrassed. My body was saying no. It was an accomplishment. It was interesting. I don't remember why exactly he had to stop, and start again, but not too long, well, we both passed and to retest after a while. I don't remember if we had to do a retest or whatever it was, but then we got our certificates at one of the Burlington tournaments. Boudenwin he got his 5th Dan certificate I think at that presentation. Markovitch and I got our certificates, I think Art Pryor got his either 2nd or 3rd dan, I can't remember it was a long time ago. I will have to look at the videotape. It was a long time ago. Back then certificates two separate. The larger certificate which was even larger in size than what we use now, was all Korean and then you would get a smaller one and it would be strictly in English, so I have my 1st, 2nd and 3rd Dan Certificates were in that format and then the 4th Dan came along, it was right around that time period which is when they combined both of them into one page.

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Were the Dan belts the same as we have? At a certain point and time unless you know what rank the person was, you didn't know if they were 1st, 2nd or 3rd, because a lot of times they didn't wear stripes. I forget exactly when this started, maybe really it was all along and just some studios never really followed the format and then the stripes started to come out to identify ranking, because a lot of times before they really started to enforce the stripes on the belt, I would have the patch on my uniform that was all in Chinese that said cho dan, edan or sam dan. Like the Sa dan patches that we have here? Larger...No because I made them myself, otherwise people didn't know. A lot times people would say, how come he is over they're helping a high rank person, or whatever. I was a 3rd Dan. I was told to go help this person, so I was going to help this person. People, unless they knew that you were a 3rd Dan, they presumed that you were only a 1st or maybe a 2nd, because the striping on the belts didn't really happen until a certain period of time, and I don't remember exactly when that happened, to my memory anyway. What about the little stripe for the Master?. That was always there. Actually, that started from what I understand, somewhere along 1960, the red stripe made the distinction of 4th

Just to go back to Korea then, the belts, what did they were in Korea? Just like what we had here. No stripes on the belt either. For the people in that studio, you worked with the senior. It was ok for the studio I guess, but it could cause more confusion when you go to a demonstration or another kind of gathering.

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Where the uniforms the same?

White belt trim, green belt green trim, etc.

NOTE: This is where I started to transcribe the last portion of the recording, no grammar changes have been made yet and I typed as I was listening so there are gaps, which I will go back and add correctly.

Looking back... grunting in the background.

Do you have a photograph or remember a photograph that has special meaning for you? I think so, any particular one,

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A group photo on base in South Korea, after demonstration, after I was a Dan member, inaudible...we had done a demonstration, there was a group photo it shows a lot of history there. Fond memories from that time tribute. And then one of those gentlemen his name is John Delapea, who grew up in Kingston, New York, he traveled the world around, through the military, he is my personal senior out of Osan airbase. I haven't seen him in what will be 20 years. Master Donald southerton said that he had heard from a person in Florida, that there's a tang soo do practitioner. I said who was he? He did not know. But knew someone at one of the military air bases in St Petersburg area in Florida, he's going to find out from him and tell him that if he is John Delepea. I said calmly, you get me his phone number. He got it and I made contact after around 20 years. Oh my...! We still stay in touch. He is a very unique person. He was actually translating the old MYDBTG into English on his own and he stopped after the publication came out. It is basically correct, except for some errors, which I am not going to bother to publicize. He learned Korean in the service, Yes, He was a Korean Linguist. He actually works in translating. What branches of services would call he would hear the broadcast from North Korean and translate it, Give it to Korean military or officials to disseminate to whatever details ... to Koreans . He was Korean linguist. Almost like a Korean CIA type of thing. He was that kind of thing.

Did you learn your Korean from him? No. I learned a little bit when I was in Korea, but a lot of it I learned from books. Of course, I would get corrections from my instructor. Yes. Yes, so... we are going to break here. BREAK

Continuing with our interview, we are starting up again after our break, sir is there anything you that you thought about during the break that you wanted to mention, would like to mention? No.

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Ss: there was no thing I wanted to ask you about, when you began your training, and the old style training, can you tell me a little bit more about what class was like that made it old style training,

As compared to? , what we do today, I know you mentioned your training was two hours long.

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Fb: Yeah, hmmm, In my experience, there way it was done, when I was coming up from ranks, the colored belt ranks, we would , ahmm...we do in the gup ranks, we would do every hand technique that we knew, then we would do every foot technique that we knew. Then we would every form that we knew, at least twice, we would do some one step sparring, some self defense, because we really didn't stress it as much, or in the ahhh....we did one step sparring but we didn't really do self defense as much, that wasn't stressed as much, and we did a lot of sparring, a lot of sparring, so did that take up an hour, a lot of sparring, no... it was just about equally divided throughout the two hours, so if you did something like han da maki, you did han dan maki, you did it up and down the deck, up then and return and back, san da haki, up and down, inside and out up and down, inside out up and down, middle knife hand up and down, middle punch, up and down, side center punch up and down, front punch, reverse punch, any of the hand technique we knew at our level. ...we would do it up and down the deck that could be 20 repetitions, 10 up ten back, for argument sake, then we would do the kicks, front kick, side kick, round kick, back kick, jump front, jump round, jump side, jump back, all the ones that we would know at our level. And ..but there were seniors in the class, they would be doing theirs, while we would repeat what we already went over. That way everybody is doing the same type of thing. So everybody would be doing hand techniques at the same time, everybody would be doing foot techniques at the same time, and after that we would break off into doing our respective forms, yea... a couple of times; all depends on whether you were relatively proficient in it, if not we would do it again. And again, and again. So repetition was really stressed, yea you get a lot of repetition, and then one step sparring you would ...make the circuit. If there were twenty people in class, you did one step sparring and you'd meet every person. Like there would be ...if there was 20 people in the class and one person was the senior, everybody got to meet the senior.

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Sounds like it was pretty fast paced class too? Ahhh... could be...laughing out loud, did the instructor talk less than they do now? Way less! Way less. So...it was just demonstrate and follow? Demonstrate follow, if you needed some instruction it would be explained to you in as simple terms as possible, because back then a lot of the instructors, the Korean instructors especially their English was not that well. And as time progress you know it got better obviously, as you would do with any language as you use it more and more, it was like do this, and do that. You know it was demonstrated follow. No, its not right do this...so... and it was done with 25 words or less. You know they didn't... ahh... repetition, that was it.



Did you have any pads to work with?

Oh no, no.no, no. Pads? Surely you jest! No such thing as pads. That's what your forearm muscles are for. No I'm kidding, No Pads, No pads.

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And in terms of targets, did you have any kinds of targets that you used? Yeah a person's nose. Each other? Yes... Some..you know we would have things like you know cardboard, squares and stuff like that. So that way you could work on specific techniques, without injury to your partner, who was helping you but...none of the fancy targets they have these days.

How about when you broke? Did you break wood? Wood, roofing tiles, those of us, my seniors especially, they could do bricks, I never got into that part of it at this stage of my life I'm not about to start, and that's the way it was.

Looking back over your training, can you describe one of your best times? Only one? You can pick a few...! (laughter) Ah...training? Or it can be your experience otherwise....you know if....whatever involving the Moo Duk Kwan?

Some of the best times was when I was training with my instructor and he would be my partner. And I'd be smiling...and he be ..."why are you laughing at me?" I'm just happy to be training with my instructor, its good, you know, just getting out there and being active and train its just...its like ... there was a practitioner and I don't think he practices anymore...his name was Harry Rainer, he was part of the Don Southern group at one time. He said.. I'm just happy doing Han dan maki, I'm just happy getting out there and train. Yeah. Fancy stuff, non fancy stuff, it doesn't matter. I'm just happy to be out there with my friends and colleagues, whatever you want to call them, everybody else ..that's Moo Duk Kwan and train.

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During your time of training was there a really a hard time for you? No not really. Not that comes to mind at this point. Maybe there was and I subconsciously blocked it out. But I ...I can't think of anything at this point. Yea I guess, you know what I'm thinking in terms of how did you get through hard times and I think maybe you've already said how good it was to train with your friends and training. Well you know, I have to use other people's words because I think that bring out the spirit of the martial arts. Master Jae Chun Shin said... "we practice in the hottest weather, and we practice in the coldest weather, doesn't matter what kind of weather it is, extreme heat, to extreme cold, so that way when the weather is just fine, you'll feel great." So when he'd turn down the heat in the winter time, they'd turn down the air in the middle of the summer, what would they do if there was no air conditioning, if air conditioning was not invented? Or if all they had was a coal or wood burning stove? Which in some parts of the world, they still do. You know. Central air, central heat, we have luxuries, but that was then and this is now. So we enjoy the luxuries, we use the luxuries, and we keep training.

We talked before after a favorite photograph...I was wondering if you had any treasured item from the days of training?

Treasured item? I have my original green belt. Your original green belt? Ahum... (affirmative)...I got my first dan uniform. Were they heavyweights ? No ! They were between a light and a medium weight. Not compared to now. Well I would call a lightweight, nowadays they would call it a medium weight. Because manufacturers have a tendency to change things in their manufacturing nowadays. Into what they would call what it really is like. But it's not like the old heavyweight uniforms that weighed a ton and they were like hard to iron also. It's not like those. Like equivalent to a middle weight I know I won't fit in it now it got shrunk through washing and drying and stuff like that, but I still have it.

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Did you iron it? Oh heck no, I never ironed, people just wash them and dried them and... Back in the military we had help in the barracks. Oh So, it would get ironed, oh yea it would get ironed. But we... I try to iron them nowadays on occasion. When I'm ambitious about the ironing definitely not the ahh... it's gotta be 100% cotton ...that 50-50 mix, doesn't feel like a uniform.

Well that is a treasure... and the green belt...I also got my original gup pins... oh ... what do they look like...? Do they look like the same ones we have here? They were basically the same as we have now...they only difference was that as a green belt...where the writing is for ahh...back then it was Tang Soo Do, where it says Tang Soo Moo ...it was green filled, Oh really... and as red belt it was Red filled. And Only your dan member was blue filled. So that different ones for the different ranks, yeah...I don't know if that was a local thing, studio thing, could be but that's what I got. That's One of my memorabilia. And that's nice. Great. Let me stop this.

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Ok, now...I'd like to ask you about some of the famous people in the Moo Duk Kwan. When did you first meet our founder, under what circumstances did you meet him? Chang Suh Ja Hwang Kee? Yes. Osan Airbase Korea, 19...it was either 1970 or 1971, back then the nonmilitary people more specifically the non-us military people could not get onto the military base. They had to be signed on so that way they could come onto the facility. And at different points in time, different people would perform that function. And that's how basically we first met. I signed him on the base, when I was requested to go down to the main gate say ok this person can come on. And that's how I first met him. At that time period.

What was your impression of him? Quiet man, I mean he spoke no English, I spoke no Korean, but several seniors who said alright, you need to go here you need to do this...I went down and sign him on and they escorted him back to the studio... so that was to my experience with him you know seeing him on the OnBase studio.

Did he teach a class then? Or watch a class? Basically, he watched classes, visited and was able to see the instructors.

Did you have a favorite time or training situation with you and him? Any story? With who? Our founder. Charter convention, What happened there? 1975 June 28th, he conducted the training seminar and that was to my recollection that was the only time I saw him... that was the first time I ever saw him in uniform and actually officiating a function. And he taught a class? Well he was there... and H.C. Hwang and C.S. Kim actually taught the classes, but he'd called, our founder would be there and would give words of wisdom, stressing certain points, giving certain examples, of what the people should be doing and should not doing and I'm sure that was all that charter convention was at one of the nationals in the historical room. Oh ok.

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And did he sit in on all the meetings? Oh yes... He did? He sat on every board meeting that I'm aware of.

Did he have much input or he listened? He listened, he... translations were given to him of what was going on, and he'd give an opinion or something stronger, hmm...as needed. That's from my understanding not, from my experience. I see. I see. Oh You weren't at the meetings? No not at the board meetings. I see. I see I see. He was at the initial meeting that I was at on the charter convention meeting, after that I was not at the board meetings until I became a board member. I see.

And you... how long have you been on the board? Probably about ten years. Ahh ha... I see. Somewhere around there.

Hmmm... Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang ... Yes? When did you first meet him? April 1971. And under what circumstances was that? Or was it March 1971, I don't remember, it was somewhere around there. We were doing a demonstration in Seoul, took the bus up, a bus was provided for us to up to the 8th Army Retreat Center in Seoul, we did a demonstration outside it was my first demonstration and the first time I saw him. And was he demonstrating then also? Oh yes, he demonstrated Kong San Kun, he helped with different people demonstrating and he demonstrated ...he actually did some free sparring with one of his students that I recorded on my Four A and super 8 film. Do you still have recordings that you have from back then..or...Oh yeah. Oh...! Now those are treasures too...wow. Oh yeah, that was part of my history... YES! And did you remember what you demonstrated at the demonstration then? No I was behind the camera. Oh you were filming. Yeah. Oh.. what rank was he then, do you recall ? Oh... he was Ko Dan Ja ...so...he could be 5th could be 6th...there's no way of knowing...I see.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Do you have any favorite stories about training with him or being with him at events?

There's no favorite cause they are all good. Could you tell us one, no... or two...?
No...ok. Maybe at another time.



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

One other question about people. If you had to choose the most memorable person, besides the two we've already talked about in your training time in the moo duk kwan who would you pick, and why? Why were they memorable? That's not fair, because there are several people that fall into that category ... I can't...to pick one of them...would not do justice, would not be fair to the others because they all have unique properties, unique characters, unique abilities, hmm... Master Seiberlich, Seiberlich Sa Bom Nim, Hanke Sa Bom Nim, Ahpo, Master Ahpo, Martinov Sa Bom Nim, Joe Markevich, Daymon Kenyon, Jan Seo, C.S. Kim, Kyo Nee, Don Machakobee, Frank Schermerhorn, Mary Ann Walsh. They all contributed to your... Shipley Sa Bom Nim, Ben Cortese Sa Bom Nim, Wilton Bennett Sa Bom Nim, the list goes on and on.... I just... I can't. it's...I can't. Ok.

Hmm.. its getting to that brain part... what areas of your training do you get your most satisfaction? As a practitioner or as a teacher? As a practitioner yes in your own training? Form... form exercise, any particular form? No...form exercise, ho sin sool...

How about in teaching, what do you like to teach?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

How? What do I like to teach? ...How to get the person to do the techniques correctly. So that way, it seems effortless. A lot of times, and I deem this, I'm at fault also, as human beings we sometimes in a rush a lot of times we are in a rush, but if you don't have the right understanding in how to do things, you get to shortchanging, and we probably could get away with it in a certain amount of time but for the long run if you really need the perfect technique at a specific time it's not going to work because you shortchanged it by not doing it right or as right as you can working toward the perfect technique all the other previous times. Just like self defense techniques...how effortless is this (demonstrating) YES! It doesn't need a lot of work or a lot of effort. Effortless. But if you know what to do...and work toward perfecting that technique so it doesn't you know it takes no work at all...then the possibility for success is greater.

Is there a motivational story or a story with a moral that you like to tell your students? There is not one...it all depends on the students what's happening at that particular point in time. So I can't really ...there isn't just one. Is there anyone you'd like to tell me now? No.. Ok, another time. Another time. Ok .

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

What is your personal training like now, do you get to train occasionally? Well... physically or mentally.... either. mentally I always train, because I'm always thinking about doing techniques. Physically I think about...well physically, as I'm teaching sometimes I'm also doing it with them, with the students, so I get my personal training in to a certain degree. Then I'm always thinking about utilization of the techniques, how am I ... what does this technique do, how can I use this. From a simple hand an maki to the most complex, I imagine actual utilization as I go up and down the deck. And I have to give credit to Master John Delapia, because he instilled that in me, when I met him after twenty years, based upon on his research, what are we doing in all these forms? How can we use these techniques in actual combat? What are we doing? You know to me ...doing the technique, I was just happy doing the technique. But he gave me a little bit extra to think about so maybe that will help self-motivate to go to another level. So hand dan maki could be just a little bit more than hand an maki, anheso pakuro... whatever, whatever the technique happens to me, could be a little more than what it is..., or could be just, what it is. All depends what the need is at that particular point in time. Ok. Hmm I guess that might explain your approach to training changes over the years and now. Yeah. When you look back over your training years in the moo duk kwan there must be many milestones I'm sure, is anything that stands out very satisfying for you, something that occurred that was really satisfying? It's all satisfying. Inaudible, the changes that have gone from tang soo do to soo bahk do? Well in reality, soo bahk do was the name of the organization in 1960, so we were really soo bahk do from then, even though officially that term was not reinforced or whatever the right adjective was until much later

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Whether you want to call it soo bahk do or tang soo do or Joe's Karate or whatever; it was the Founder's philosophy that really guides us, the martial spirit without some of the aggressive tendencies that some other martial arts have the tendency of doing but we must not forget that it's a martial art first and foremost. It was built for martial skill because in generations past, it actually had to be used in combat. So, people may say this, people may say that, and it has a variety of purposes depending on what the individual person wants to do, you know want to use it as a social gathering, it's there because it's a group, you want to use it as self-defense, its automatic. You want to use it for self-control, it's there, when you want to use for weight control, you want to use for tension relief, it's ...it's all there. Or it depends what the person wants, what the person needs. I think I answered the question.



Oh yes, did I go off on a tangent, maybe, I don't know...No... looking back would you do anything differently? Probably not. Maybe yes, we'll have to get back to that one...Ok.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

How do you feel about being a moment from now, being one of the senior ranking people in the Moo Duk Kwan? I'm just a practitioner. In fact, now that I'm in a position, well what should I say, it's one of those things. Just like thinking, you know, would I ever have been it in this long? I never thought in my wildest imagination that I would stay here this long. But it's something. If it wasn't for people like my instructor, and my former instructor, and the seniors that helped me come through the ranks to at least Cho dan, I probably would not have stayed. It is because of the people, if you don't have good people in the organization, then why bother staying without encouragement, go to another martial art that keeps teach how to be a street brawler, you know. Do they have value? Yes. But it's the charismatic personalities. And the nurturing of the instructors and the seniors that will be...ah...make or break whether a person stays in an organization or not. Am I sad to see a lot of those people not in the organization anymore, yea... because they have...still have a lot of good value but, it is what it is.

And I was going to ask...an important thing inaudible ... between senior to juniors, you said the nurturing is so important, to people, that you seriously nurture the juniors, is there anything else you think is important for the juniors?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Be firm. be fair. be strict, and make sure they are on the right path all the time. Like like if you don't teach the person the right way, well here's a funny antidote...if that's the right term; there was a practitioner, who got into a street brawl, he was a moo duk kwan practitioner, he was supposed to be pretty decent. And I knew him for a short period of time when I came back to the United States, and he told me that he had gotten into a street fight; and he was told if he did this specific technique, that he would kill the person that he got contact, so he used the technique; and of course, the person did not die. So, he went back to his instructor and said well you told me if I did this technique, I'd kill the guy, I mean he was after my blood, and I did this technique and it didn't work...and the instructor said ... you didn't do the technique right. Now...that's an extreme, but as instructors, if we don't teach the person right, we just collar the person, and say yeah, you're doing a great job... don't, worry, yeah fine...you're building a false sense of security, you know, I'm not saying that you have to take a stick and beat them over the head, or on the backside, or anything like that ...but, there are ways to be firm, be fair, be strict and you know, make the person go to the level, where they should be.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



So that way they can go if they have to be in an awkward situation they can handle with confidence.

Which goes back to you saying...when you do a low block you imagine doing a low block against somebody coming at you. Or something more than just a low block. Depends. So...

What you would like your juniors to know about you? Or how would you like to be remembered?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Laughing... Inaudible ... what would I like my juniors to know about me, or remember me for? Oh, the list is long....no I'm only kidding. I guess I'd like to let them as being a fair practitioner, one that contributed to whatever way I could the Moo Duk Kwan's being more publicly known because of my assistance with the helping with the publications. Between my cousin, let us use his photography lab equipment and a friend of mine who helped with the photography and we basically took the pictures for volume 1, 2 and the instructional guides. That was lot, yeah, especially when I had to develop all the pictures. and print them. So, you know that plus, you know some of the other publications that our founder then, the Korean 2nd Soo Bahk Do, that's the Korean textbook, the Yuk Ro and Hwa Sun, and the Ship Dan Khum forms ...you did the pictures, for that one, for that one also, yea. Ohh.... It's was important, it was necessary...so. Hopefully they'll get the names of the persons involved in those publications and say. we appreciate what they did. Yes...that was a great amount of work and ...so valuable. You know you were talking about translations, and you know I'm just talking about pictures. Because translations are a totally different thing. There's no way I could do any of that stuff. The pictures are wonderful.

Is there anything that we haven't covered that you'd like to share? I don't think so....not that I could think of at this moment.

Alright...well thank you very much. You're Welcomed.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Frank Bonsignore Sa Bom Nim was promoted to 9th Dan on 1 June 2017 at Moo Duk Kwan Headquarters, Springfield, NJ by Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang.



9th Dan Promotion Group photo at MDK HQ 1 June 2017.

Oral History

Sandra Schermerhorn, Sa Bom Nim initiated the oral history project to capture and preserve accounts of authentic Moo Duk Kwan® history from various active senior members.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Roberto Bonefont, Sr., 4th Dan, 13927, Region 2, WMDK Webpage Assistant; helped with the transcriptions and editing of the articles.

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Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Ted Mason, Sa Bom Nim, Oral History

Posted by Oral History on Dec 10th, 2016 in [USA](#)

Reading Time: 97 minutes

Ted Mason, Sa Bom Nim, dan bon #12896, Oral History

ONLY the first paragraph is an end to Seiberlich SBN's oral history

This is the second part of Mason SBN's oral interview.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich: One of my, the worst moments in Soo Bahk Do was when I was the chairman, it was necessary for us to take legal action against the Shin Sa Bom Nim and it was concerning a trademark violation and certificate problems. It was the first time that the organization had taken legal action to follow the charter and by-laws requirement of protecting a trademark for the member schools, and that it was very expensive, and there were many meetings with attorneys and the ultimate resolution was a meeting with myself as the board chair, Master Hwang and the Kwan Jang Nim had a restaurant in Springfield where we discussed the issues and brought the process to a certain resolution. And I highly respected Master Shin and I found it very difficult to be in this position, to take this action, but as chairman on the board. And understanding the charter and by-laws, it was required that we act in support of our members and our member schools. This was in, I believe, 1982. One of the- the truth- the truth is the philosophy book written by the Kwan Jang Nim the founder, and it was originally translated approximately four years ago. Since that time, the Kwan Jang Nim, and H.C. Hwang and I have been working many hours to assure that the founders' meanings were appropriately expressed in the wording of the book. It's a very complex book, expressing a novel philosophy of the moo do. And it is our feeling that this book is as much a philosophy book as it is a moo do text and we would like to expose it to the greater circulation of philosophy. My vision is that the Kwan Jang Nim was a philosopher, a phenomenal philosopher, and he used the moo do as the vehicle to express his philosophical opinions and position, and this book captures that very well. Today marks the point where Karen Mead, a student of Johns Sa Bom Nim, who has been working arduously to rewrite some of the areas for us, will meet with us and will finalize the document, so that it can go into publication and the final piece will be ready for our members and for the greater community.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, great. I didn't know about that. Wonderful.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich: It's–

Sandra Schermerhorn: Alright.

Larry Seiberlich: It's coming forth.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, good. The above is an addendum to Larry Seiberlich SBN's oral history.

Ted Mason: –little. You get it in Japan?

Sandra Schermerhorn: _____. No, I'm sorry, it's- it's federation.

Ted Mason: Oh.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Ted Mason: _____

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Sandra Schermerhorn: This is Sandra Schermerhorn, it's August 11, 2006, and I'm in San Diego, California, USA, talking with Ted Mason, Sa Bom Nim. First, though, could you tell me where you currently live and your Dan number?

Ted Mason: I live in Carlsbad, California. Dan number is 12896.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And your current instructor _____

Ted Mason: 12895. 12895, I don't know where the 96 came from.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: I have a senior moment every once in a while.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. So, it's 12-9

Ted Mason: 12895.

Sandra Schermerhorn: 12895.

Ted Mason: That's why I wrote it [laughs]

Sandra Schermerhorn: [laughs] He's got it. Your current instructor and the name of the studio that you own, or where you teach and you train.

Ted Mason: You're asking my current instructor?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Of record, it would be at this time, let's see, we went from Master Ahpo to now my current instructor would be Master Martinov I believe– Oh, Kwan Jang Nim.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Kwan Jin Yim?

Ted Mason: Is what I have listed now as my instructor.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. And do you own a studio now?

Ted Mason: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And what is the name of your studio?

Ted Mason: Called the Oceanside Institute of Soo Bahk Do.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: And where is that located.

Ted Mason: Oceanside, California.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oceanside, California? Alright. <break in audio> And just let me check this one, just making sure that– that my batteries are–

Ted Mason: _____

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. Alright, sir could you tell me something about yourself, such as your education or employment history, family, hobbies?

Ted Mason: Hm, let's see. My hobby was and still is guitar. I play flamenco guitar. And that was my hobby when I met my wife to be. And then, after I met my wife, I got the job with the California Harbor Patrol, and I was a California Harbor Patrolman for 27 years, four months and 21 days.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And that's– the CHP in this state handles the freeways, as far as traffic.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Did you work all over the state or just in a certain area?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: Good questions. Let's see, when I first got hired, I lived in San Diego, and we hadn't married yet, but we were going to be. And they sent me to the academy in Sacramento, but when I graduated from the academy, they assigned me to the San Francisco area. So I— that's 500 miles north of San Diego. So, because of that, we were married in San Francisco. And I worked the Bay Bridge in San Francisco, and for a year and a half, was able to transfer down towards San Diego. But I picked Oceanside because it was a better office, according to information I had; people that had been around said that I shouldn't work in the San Diego office because of some political turmoil that was always going on there. So Oceanside was a smaller office, and it was in San Diego County, so I moved to San Diego in 1967. And I previously, before I had joined the Tang Soo Do school, so I was at that time I was _____. And so I started training in San Diego again. It was difficult traveling that far, so maybe I'm jumping ahead of the story, but that's when I opened my own school, with permission from my instructor, I opened school in my area.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay. What motivated you to start training in the martial arts?

Ted Mason: Oh, that's a good question. You may have heard this before. When I was dating Kagel [ph?], Mrs. Master Mason [ph?]

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: She got me to quit smoking. She requested that I— she suggested I should, and I did, and I started gaining weight rapidly. In the meantime, because of my interest in her and things Asian, I started reading books on Japanese art, and I bought a book called “What Is Karate?” and it was written by a gentleman by the name of Oyama. That turns out not to be his real name, because he's actually Korean, and he has another name. In reading that book, I became interested in learning that, and at the same time, when I started gaining weight, and these things kind of came together where I realized, “Okay, I need an exercise, and I want to learn this.” So there was a school near me, near the place where I lived, in Hillcrest, which is like a subsection of San Diego, it's called North San Diego maybe. It has a judo school. And in those days, in the Yellow Pages, there was no, you didn't look under karate, you looked under judo to find any other martial art. So, that existed for a good ten years in the United States, I found Yellow Pages from New York the same way. It's a strange situation, 'cause there are hardly any judo schools listed there. So you look under judo to find karate, and I looked under, I finally found it, and it was the Southern California School of Judo and Jujitsu, and I remember it well because in high school I walked by that location.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, _____

Ted Mason: So, it was like two blocks away from me. So, I mean, how can I lose, so I went there and I, it was closed when I went there, and the sign on the door that gave the hours, and there it was, it said karate was taught every Friday, as I recall, or Wednesday. So, I returned at that time to see the class, and watching the class in progress, which was a Ton Sito [ph?] class, identified as karate, taught by Don Gerrick [ph?] who taught a very rigorous, very strong class, we'll call it, exercise oriented.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: And after watching that, I knew that I was never going to smoke again, and I started doing this. This is– I said, “This is for me.” Because I'd played tennis before, and the difference between tennis and bowling, is you know, intensity level, so it was for me. But I wasn't ready for that, at that time. It scared me. I didn't want to puke or anything on the floor, you know, and so I told the owner, who's a judo teacher, that ran the place, I told him, “I'll be back.” Said it that way. He didn't believe me, I know, but I had, I spent a week kind of like tuning myself up for that– that kind of training. And I maybe should've done it longer, but I couldn't wait, and I got back into it. I had been practicing some of the moves in that book, by the way, that was– that's something I <overlapping conversation> it was kind of a funny thing, but I was showing Keiko these things that I learned. And it's a true story. At the beach, at night, I showed her these moves, and she said, “But Chan [ph?], Cho Dan, was identified as Cho Dan– Cho Dan Yi Dan [ph?] as we know it, was identified as a Cho Nan Cho Dan [ph?], but they pronounce it Pi Non [ph?]. In Okinawa, that's the way they're numbered, so the reverse is true of what we know. And so, for some reason or other, it's– that's the number sequence, and that's the first for my limit, well, out of the book. Showed here that, and she said to me, “I think maybe you should take lessons.”

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Ted Mason: <laughs> I did.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's great.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: I said, "You got me." I mean, that's true, I said, "You're correct," because I really don't know what they're doing here, you know. <overlapping conversation> So, when I saw these people, it showed me some things that were not explained in the book, how to get from A to B, they didn't show immediate positions in the book, and I'm looking at these people move down the floor <clap> well, that solved the problem, and this is where I have to be. And so, upon returning and joining the class, buying a uniform and I was rewarded from then on. It was, that was it, it was just wonderful. And I was the oldest one in this school, I was 25 years old. Everyone else in the class were teenagers.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And was it all boys who _____

Ted Mason: No women within sight. The owner, strangely enough, this is his idea attitude at that time, the owner made a statement that watching a woman do karate is like watching a dog walk on its hind legs.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Ted Mason: Okay. Well, this is before, you know, women's lib, and it's before the influx of some women. And at that time, I asked Keiko if she wanted to train. Well, she didn't want to be the only woman in class, and she wanted to be, she said, she wanted to be ladylike, and ladies call for help. And I tried to convince her that help sometimes does not come, and that she should, but she didn't listen to me.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What year was that about?

Ted Mason: 1964.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Sandra Schermerhorn: '64.

Ted Mason: I joined the class May 8th 1964, is when I began training; which, coincidentally, is when Damon Kenyon [ph?] was born, in Frankfurt, Germany. But, you know, well, his father, Fritz Kenyon [ph?], became a student of that club about a year later, year-and-a-half later.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, so you trained together.

Ted Mason: We didn't train at the same time.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: He joined after I was in the Highway Patrol Academy, and I heard about him, letters, from one of my stable mates who more or less was teaching a class for Don Garrett, and he said, "You got to get down here, we have a guy that's really strong, fast, he has boxing training, I'm told." And that he was not difficult to handle, but they didn't have anybody to spar with him that was his- his level, even as a white belt, he was a very good white belt. And progressed up, and _____. And so we never have sparred, we never have trained in the same room, at the same time, until the federation was born. We were separate, it's interesting, you know, the same teacher.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Ted Mason: And so that school is where I stayed until I got the job, in 1965, December. And I was still a red belt. And so, I was at the Academy when I heard about Fred, and then when I got assigned to San Francisco, we had to move everything up, you know, 500 miles north, it was a- But it's the best thing that ever happened to us, because being newlyweds in the situation we were in, it was good to go to a far away city.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Mm-hm.

Ted Mason: Although we did miss out on our wedding and all the stuff that goes along with a big reception. We had a court wedding ceremony.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, yeah.

Ted Mason: Judge Brown.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: <laughs> And so I stayed there for a year-and-a-half. So I transferred back down south November of '67. And in the meantime, though, while I was out there, I practiced my forms. I had no one to practice with, so I got bored, not having partners, and I looked around for a school. There's no Ton Sito up there, that's what they were calling them here.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Ted Mason: And if you wanted a school, they did the same forms we did, and so it's a Shuan Ri school. And fortunately, we had some Shuan Ri connections in our school in San Diego, also. But it was really Ton Sito. And so I joined this Shuan Ri school, and I practiced Shuan Ri Okinawan style, for only a short time, while I was still in San Francisco. And so, one of the teachers, this friend of mine I mentioned that was teaching a class, this is before Don Garrett, he was sent up to check me out and witness my performance, and he agreed that I should be promoted to Cho-Dan, and that's how I got my Cho-Dan. By- by showing how I still know how to do _____. And so I did. And then he said, "You still remember how to do your forms?" "Yeah." We cleared the furniture in my apartment and I did the Bassai [ph?] and he said, "Well, I've been sent here to give you a certificate," so-

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, I don't think anybody's ever _____ to us about that, sir.

Ted Mason: Oh, worse things that happened. The best stories are the people that send film to places, and they look at the film and come watch you.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: You send a film of your forms, and then most days, when travel was difficult for people <overlapping conversation> or you know, we had no teachers, and so that was done quite often.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh.

Ted Mason: But they give you little sidelines, that's what happens.

Sandra Schermerhorn: People probably don't know about that. You know, and it makes, it makes perfectly good sense because of the distance.

Ted Mason: It's in the _____ of Korea, happened in Korea, in _____. That's what I hear.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Huh. _____ Oh. Have I ever seen you with a- before you started training, was there any tradition of it in your family, of anybody training?

Ted Mason: Hm.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You're the first one?

Ted Mason: My uncle was a boxer, that's about it. No.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay. Do you have a favorite story about your early years of training?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: Favorite story. Oh. Well, most of the stories I have are about other people, which is <laughs> but about myself — Okay, this is great, great. When I was a— this is a sideline. Lee Hyun Wang [ph?] was the person who started Ton Sito in San Diego County. Master Lee, a Korean marine, was sent to San Diego in 1960 to train with the marine corps to learn regular procedures, regular operation. He was an interpreter, so he spoke English. And because of him, we probably, in the United States, we probably have the only Marine Corps connection. Every other connection to Korea is through either Air Force or Army, 'cause they're the ones that have bases in Korea. The Marines did not have bases in Korea, at the war's end. So, but because he was sent to a Marine Corps base, and was at fourth Dan in Ton Sito, he started Ton Sito in San Diego. And everyone in San Diego, except a few transplants during the last ten years from Pennsylvania, who went into another splinter group, everyone from San Diego comes from _____. So, my instructor, Don Garrett, trained with Leroy Edwards, a master sergeant. And I'm leading up to my story.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Sure.

Ted Mason: This is another story, too. I got a million of 'em, but I- I need to be careful. We were, it was taught Okinawan style, Kimbo [ph?], Okinawan Kimbo system, and was doing it on the base, the Marine Corps recruit people, we call NCID [ph?]. And he did a demonstration for spectators, and who knows who was there. Master Lee saw this demonstration, and afterwards contacted Sergeant Edwards and said to him, the way I heard the quote is, "If you practice with me, I will teach you good karate."

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: In those days, you didn't- today, you just look at a person's form to determine what he's like, or watching classes, watching the basics or something, but in those days, in order to test somebody's ability, you fight- well, not fight, spar.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: But it was close to a real fight, you get- I mean, we're talking <slaps hands> some impact.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Contact and-

Ted Mason: Lot of contact. And so, but that was simply a custom, and everyone kind of accepted that. So, Sergeant Edwards didn't challenge him, but he said, "Well, you want to spar, and we'll see what you're made out of," type of thing. I was not privy to that, of course, and I didn't start training yet, but when Sergeant Edwards tells a story, this is hilarious, he said, "That little Korean kicked the crap out of me."

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Ted Mason: You know? And he said, "I've never seen anybody jump and do screaming kicks and didn't really hit me," he said, "Everything was pow-pow-pow!" So, I said to him, I said, "You know, you're right, I would like to train with you." And overnight, that school that _____ Edwards had became Ton Sito.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see.

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Ted Mason: Just like that. And Master Lee taught that class, so all the early participants were marines. And all the early black belt level people, and he was a black belt, to a— you know, color system that, this had only been two years, the color system was different than— than you hear anyone else use. And I think it's Master Lee's idea, 'cause I never heard anybody else say they did this. The color system on belts was taken from the Korean flag, and so if you were a white belt, and you get a stripe, a stripe, and a stripe. Of course, that's true in Korea even today, I think but _____. Orange belt is an American idea.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay.

Ted Mason: Then you went to a blue belt, which is the equivalent of green today. So you're sixth— you're sixth belt was a blue belt, it's kind of light blue, light-colored blue, skylark blue they call it, skylark. And a stripe is stripe, and a red stripe, stripe, and black. No such trainers had a red stripe in the middle of the belt, no one had that yet. Nationwide, that was something that happened in like 1960, or something, I can't remember the date now, when they had red stripes put on.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: But what about the black? Did they wear black trim?

Ted Mason: Yes. Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: 'Cause trim was saying that—

Ted Mason: _____ all black. Black, black.

Sandra Schermerhorn: _____ in it to blue?

Ted Mason: We first heard about the blue belt in 1970, through a newsletter from Detroit, when the American Ton Sito _____ was active, _____ Kim in Detroit was the president of it, and that's where Chuck Norris tested for his fourth.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh.

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Ted Mason: Things like that. That's where we heard about blue belt, we'd never heard of such a thing. For the Dan member, okay?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay.

Ted Mason: So this- this other method, totally Lee Jin Yin's [ph?] idea. Okay. So, I got sidetracked a little bit, but I had to tell you about that, because that was the system we were in. So I never in my life wore a green belt, ever. So, when I was a blue belt- by the way, I have an ID card I should've brought with me, which says, on my- when I got sixth gup [ph?].

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And I had this crew cut and I looked like a marine, you know, it says "Sixth- Sixth Degree Junior," it said, my- my rank is Sixth Degree Junior Blue Belt, or Sixth Degree Blue Belt Junior, which is the degree was Junior, meaning gup. I don't know why they didn't say that, they didn't say the work gup, except maybe it was written in Korean, perhaps, but-

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay.

Ted Mason: And that's the ID card that I'm very fond of, 'cause I was a Sixth Dan long before I was a green belt, you know.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, I was going to ask later on if you have a treasured item, and if you could do _____, if we could have a picture of it.

Ted Mason: I don't have it with me, but I can get <overlapping conversation> no problem, yeah. I really enjoyed that one.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, yes, sir.

Ted Mason: I enjoy the photograph even better. But we're all younger then, but anyway.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So the photograph would be nice for copy.

Ted Mason: Sure. Now, here's the funny story. While training in this school, we were like stepchildren. The karate people were like forced to share things and-outside. We had to train outside in the backyard of this school, on a canvas laid out on dirt. Yeah. And it turned your feet green, 'cause it was green canvas. And I know, I don't remember bad weather, Southern California.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: But I remember when I was dating Keiko, it was on Fridays, and we started class Wednesday, so Wednesday and Friday, that was what, because that second day they offered, I jumped on that, and it was for no extra money, and so I'm training now three days a week now. And because of that extra day, we shared that room on that day with the Aikido people. So, they let the Aikido have their- their mats inside, then we swapped mats. And that's where I think, canvas. So I- I had a date with Keiko that night, and so I brought her to the school, to see me train, she'd never seen me train before. And she was dressed to kill, and I've got my change of clothes, there's a shower in the locker room in the back. So I bring her in, and let her have a seat there where the spectators watch, you know. And I go to the back to the dressing room. Well, in the meantime, we had the Aikido people, and the guy who was in charge of the Aikido group, wore of the highest rank in that group, it was a purple belt or something, but we had this going argument, or contest, in verbally, about which art is best, typical low rank conversations. And he's- he would rag on us, and we'd rag on them, and we had names for each other, but in a friendly way.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Like the comedian says, "I meant that in a good way."

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>



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Ted Mason: But you know, not really. He would say, "You know, the difference between us and you, our and yours, is if a boulder was rolling down the cliff, an Aikido person would just step out of the way, but you people would try to smash the boulder with your punches." I said, "I don't think so."

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Ted Mason: No. _____ So this guy, he didn't know she was with me, because we separated as soon as we came through the door and she had a seat. So, when classes were over at the same time, we came, I came in from the outside, she- by the way, she'd be walking around the skirt of the- there's like a walkway and she could watch us from the back porch. She watched a lot, but there's not chairs out there. And she got tired of standing, she went back inside, and so classes are over, 9:00 o'clock, and I wave at her as I go in the dressing room, from outside to in, you know. And he's- he's talking with her when I- when I get out of the dressing room, and he's hitting on her, sort of.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: He said, now I don't blame him, you know. And she said, she's not blonde now, but she was this special, you know, young thing then, and I went up to her as, and _____ was right there, and she gets up in the middle of this conversation, 'cause he's trying to talk her into joining an Aikido class.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yeah, sure.

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Ted Mason: But Aikido's more suitable for women, than karate, because karate's too brutal and _____. So, she gets up and she puts her arm in mine, you know, and hug, I have this, gave me this beautiful arbitrary hug, I could not- could not waste this opportunity, I said, "Hey, don't you know, didn't you know, the karate man always gets the girl?"

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Ted Mason: You know? And I walked out.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's great.

Ted Mason: I said, "Love it, love it."

Sandra Schermerhorn: I'm sorry.

Ted Mason: I walked over to Herbie, he goes, "Yeah! That's right," because you know, he's always _____

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's right.

Ted Mason: But that's a funny story.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: I told you a lot of other stuff leading up to it, but that's my nature, you know. So I went, I trained there until- until before Cho-Dan, and then I had to, because of a job, I had to move to San Francisco, and I got promoted to Cho-Dan in my apartment, in San Francisco, and then eventually moved back toward the area. I didn't go all the way to San Diego, I went to Oceanside instead, as I explained, and got tired of driving down to San Diego to train. And so, my instructor said, "Well, why don't you open up a school in your area?" And I said, "Good idea."

Sandra Schermerhorn: And were you a Cho-Dan then?

Ted Mason: Yeah. By that time. And I found a spot, 'cause I was up- I tried to get all this with the California Highway Patrol, so I wanted mobility. And I could, while they were driving around writing tickets, looking for a place to open up, you see. And I found the place through a friend, a connection, through a fellow that ran a gas station. He told me about an old structure that was on the edge of being, was going to be torn down, he said, "But you can have it, really reasonable," because the owner is interested in martial art, and he'll use you. Okay, so I went and talked to the owner. He said, "I'll tell you what," he says, "You can have that place for \$5 a month, 'cause that'll pay for the utilities." So, it had a lot of windows in the front, and I was worried about people falling through the windows, so I got two-by-fours from a friend who tore down a fence and had bunch of leftover two-by-fours, and I put two-by-fours in the window, like railings.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Ted Mason: To keep them from going through the window.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: And my first sign was made on typewriter paper, each one for a letter, KA-RA-TE, _____, taped together.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And tacked to the inside, the outside of one of those two-by-fours. That was my first time, and a kid painted that sign for me, that I still have today, that was put in another place, on the side of the door, so when you're driving you could see it, as you, when you were looking to the right, you could see _____. It was in color, and it was red and, on white, you know. That was my first sign, and that was in 1968. I opened that school officially August 8, 1968. And as a Cho-Dan. And my first students were actually my children.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh. How old were they?

Ted Mason: I had stepchildren, by her previous marriage, my stepchildren.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay.

Ted Mason: The boy was seven, and she was eight, nine.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Now, at that time, was it unusual for children to train, or had it changed by then?

Ted Mason: It's by mutual, for children and women. Children and women did not, really see 'em train in those days.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay.

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Ted Mason: At any school, _____. And so, my wife and daughter, the wife began training shortly after that. But with me, she became my best student overnight because she's very disciplined. But the two- the two kids were the first students that I had, and I trained them, I kind of like, in my garage, more or less, and practiced, you know, in the backyard and so. And in San Francisco, for example, the daughter was going to enter a talent show, not a contest but her and her girlfriend were going to sing, and it was terrible. I said, "You know, why don't you do a- something, some martial art," and so I taught her to do bashai [ph?]. She had never trained before. I taught her bashai. And my wife knit a uniform for her, and she did it very well. Surprised me, I thought, you know, she's a good student.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: I know it's not really proper to do that, but- you know, today I know, but back then I thought it was cute, and she at that time, let's see, 1967, she was born in '67, she would've been ten. So, if she's ten years old, I taught her bashai, and she was a hit. She can't sing.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>



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Ted Mason: But when she became my regular student in the class, started over again, basic one, and the boy, too. Boy was younger, two years younger. And they were, they were the only children in the class, and so they were used to sparring and doing things with adults, and doing very well. I have students, potential students, that did not enroll because my children scared them. It's a macho thing, but one of these _____ gentlemen told me, "I didn't want to get my butt kicked by some little kid, or your wife."

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, dear.

Ted Mason: For that matter, you know, "So I don't want to deal with that."

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And so, it was years later before I separated kids and adults from the classes, you know, they were, they all, doing that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So you were pretty much a pioneer in training children and women and—

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Ted Mason: I don't know whether to call that a pioneer or not, but you know, I- You know, it's like, you know, sometimes you- you find yourself doing something that no one else is doing, but they ignore 'em, but- but in L.A., I'm sure that was, there was more going on. But Los Angeles being a city with so many people, you know, a lot like New York, that there probably was a lot of children's classes going on that I never heard of before. You know, but in San Diego County, at that time, when I started training, there was only three martial art studios, just three. One was the one I trained at, then there was East San Diego was a Kempo [ph?] school. The- the one on the Marine Corps base had more or less fizzled, when Lee _____ when back to Korea. And so the Master- Master Gunner Sergeant Leroy Edwards, so they didn't have that there. And they had that school at the University of San Diego, _____, Japanese style. So we had the three, they were the Chinese Kempo, we had our school, and we had the Japanese style on the ba- on the, at the campus.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Did you have much to do with each other, the schools?

Ted Mason: We didn't visit the Japanese style because they- Only as spectators, but you- you couldn't mingle with them very well, they're very, how should I say, we thought they're just being stuck up, but they're very independent, and didn't want outsiders training with them unless they were actually students. But the Kempo school, a open-minded school, and they kind of enjoyed us coming to visit, and we just came there to spar with different people. And the teacher enjoyed having us, apparently, and we would spar on weekends, we'd go down there on Saturday and they'd arrange for like a, almost like a contest, with, and awards, you know. And matched us with good people. That was entertaining because their style was mostly fast hands and low kicks. And just totally opposite of us. We did very few hand _____ in those days, and a lot of high kicks. And we didn't do a _____, ever. We did the _____. And but I remember, you know?

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Sandra Schermerhorn: About how many people were in your school? In the early days.

Ted Mason: My school?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Your school, yeah.

Ted Mason: My school started off with five, and then I, it grew to a dozen. And I never had more than 15 people at a time, at that time. I never— when we moved from that school, and we moved from there because they were going to tear the building down, a year later. Said, “I’m sorry, but you know.” You can’t beat it then, five dollars a month rent, so I charged my students ten dollars a month.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: It’s fair. And so we’re pulling down enough income from that group to pay for a place that I moved to, the rent was \$50 a month. Today, it’s a bar called “The Alley.” It’s on an alley, the front door’s on an alleyway. So. \$50 a month, you can’t beat that. And so, then we raised the price to \$15 a month for students, you know.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And that was in ‘6- ‘69. And that is, I moved there also coincidentally when I, I bought a home in Carlsbad. So, it worked really well. And then I got, I was asked to leave because the noise we made, there was a hotel in that building, and stupid me, I hung the goldarn kicking bag from one of the pipes on the ceiling, and it made, it made the whole building shake.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

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Ted Mason: I didn't realize the noise I was making, you know, some people were trying to sleep maybe at 8:00 o'clock in the afternoon, evening.



Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Ted Mason: And he— we would rotate it, and it <snaps> you know, so then it, I didn't really it was happening, and I <clap>. If I had it to do over again, I wouldn't have done that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: But probably the straw that broke the camel's back is there was a, it was a doll case and picture frame store, adjacent to us. We had a common door that was locked from both sides. But there were, they had the— storefront on the regular street, and we were like around the corner, behind them. One night, jumping around, I heard a god-awful crash, tinkle-tinkle-tinkle, broken glass. And I think our vibrations caused something to fall. And shortly after that, I got the letter from the landlord asking us to leave.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's— <laughs>

Ted Mason: So. We found a new place, downtown Oceanside, in 1970, and I've been there ever since. That was for \$150 a month.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: It was a good price, then, too.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That went from \$10 to \$150. Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Five dollars a month, to \$50, to \$150.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, five dollars a month.

Ted Mason: For rent. And so I raised my price for students, well not the regular students, I kept that the same, _____ 'cause there were not that many of them, you know, anyway. So it's the new people had to pay \$25 a month. That's the way it went.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: It works very well, the landlord I have is the same landlord I had— Oh, I'm sorry, 1970, that one died. And the new owner was a real estate man, 1975 I think, and he's been the same landlord since. Nice people. I've only met him three times since. He's in— he's in San Diego, he's got some trust company that has some real estate group. And he might have someone else inspect the property, then I've only seen him by accident once in a while. Nice fellow.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yeah.

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Ted Mason: And I think he lets his wife run things now because I see her name on a lot of material I get. The floor we have, we had when we moved in is concrete, with a rug like this on it. And it used to be a beauty shop, and so it had bobby pins here and there in the rug, and so we bought a new rug, and you know, cleaned it, and then it was always difficult to clean. And so, in 1991, when the Gulf War, Desert Shield began, before the real things started–

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: –we went to a wooden floor. And plywood, set on two-by-fours, about that high off there.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, about two inches?

Ted Mason: Yeah.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Off the concrete.

Ted Mason: Off the concrete.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: That is the best thing we've ever done. It feels a little harder on the feet at first, but eventually it was easier to keep clean. I realized I had to get away from that rug because on a weekend, we would practice during the day, the sun shine through the window would pick up the lint and stuff that was in the air floating.

Sandra Schermerhorn: From the–

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Ted Mason: From the rug, even though we– you shampoo a rug, there's just stuff in there you never see, and you breathe it. So, I did that in 1991 and I haven't had to recoat the, you know, the two coats of polyurethane–

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.



Ted Mason: –on that plywood, and haven't had to resurface it since. It's just great, clean and it– When we practice falling, we either use the wood floor, or I pull out some mats, we roll out some mats. It's plenty good, if you fall.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I think a lot of us have had the experience training on concrete.

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Ted Mason: Yeah.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

Ted Mason: That's the worst.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir, it is. <laughs> Alright, fast, do you have any favorite memories of your early training partners?

Ted Mason: Yeah. The one I mentioned before, his name is Fidel Mack. Fidel, he was a– he became an assistant editor of the Evening Tribune, later changed the name to Union Trib, a San Diego newspaper.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, so do you still have contact with him?

Ted Mason: Not unless I want to go out of my way to find it. We don't, not regularly, no.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Mm-hm, I see.

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Ted Mason: He was very nearsighted, and he wore real thick glasses. But he never practiced with the glasses because he wanted to be, he realized in a fight, these glasses would probably be lost anyway. So, if, I have fond memories of sparring him, because here's a guy who can hardly see you, and yet his control was very good, very good. Just, I mean, you know, you know, like would not hit you, but could've any time. The guy can't see, and he's- he's, you know, like almost blind, he's fighting a blur. And yet he can, amazing man. And he was, at that time, a college student. And he was my partner for demonstrations always. Him and I would put on demonstrations. In those days, the judo school and the Aikido people, whatever, would put on these demonstrations, and we were the third group, and we'd always come out last. And we performed- they had mats on the ground, or wherever, the stage, for the Aikido and judo. So, when we performed, we moved the mats off the stage and practiced on the wood floor. And we did some hard stuff on that wood floor, just to come right- to look stronger than anybody else, you know. And show off.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: We were crazy. And so we did some demonstrations that were, in my memory, were very good, for just two guys out there.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay. Yeah, did you have a favorite thing you liked to demonstrate?

Ted Mason: My favorite technique was breaking wood with a jumping round kick, held real high.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

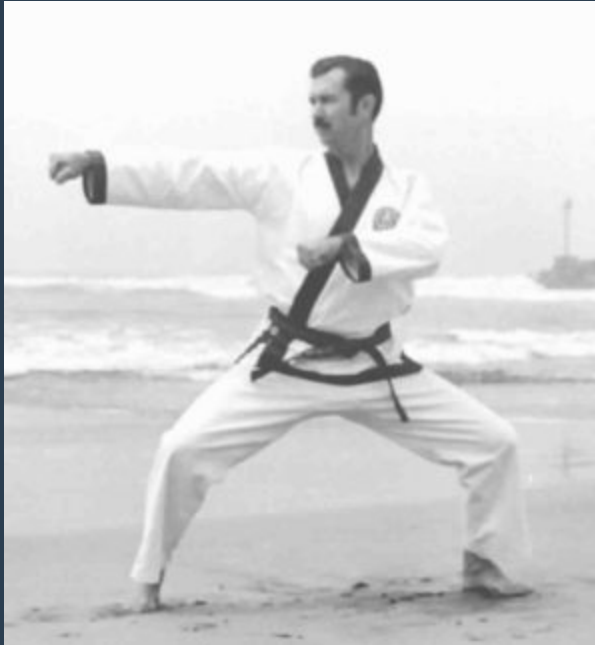
Ted Mason: And the other thing, we broke rocks a lot, in those days.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Rocks?

Ted Mason: Rocks, and I have this on tape, on video, old video.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Which tape?



Ted Mason: Super-8 millimeter film. Master Lee, _____, is famous for rock breaking. And so in tests, he would always have you bring a rock to break, or your own rocks. So, anyway, the Chuck Norris group will laugh, I mean, will tell you about this, how- how they were surprised by this, that _____, instead of bringing out lumber, he had a- a bucket of rocks. And you broke them either on one another, like one rock on top-

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: -or on a five pound dumbbell weight, that you put on the floor. And the trick was, you hold the rock just off the floor, like this is the rock-

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: -And that- that motion there would help break it. So, you'd hold the rock, and you- when he did it, he would press on the rock with his hand, and then come back and he'd lift the rock up, like- it was almost like cheating, like- like no one could chew that. But you know, then he's sit up and then he'd break it, like against metal. The speed of the rock hitting the metal is what- what breaks the rock.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see.

Ted Mason: The hand hitting the rock produces the speed and the power necessary, but it's almost like, you know, like taking a rock and throwing it down real hard. And that was done very often. Well, my- that was my favorite break, right, because I- I don't know why, I like doing that. And the favorite incident that occurred was one time in front of, everyone looked what was a dance studio, it was a dance place, where singles would meet, I guess at a singles club. And we put on this demonstration in the middle of that dance floor, and so the audience was really close to us. And when I hit their rock, it squished out of my hand like a bar of soap. And it whipped off of my face, and it cut.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh!

Ted Mason: I got a standing ovation for that. I hadn't broken the rock yet.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs>

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Ted Mason: _____ like that. Then I realized as time progressed that all this time, I never was much of an athlete in high school, 'cause I smoked. I realize this martial art has given me a good reaction– call it good sensitivity to things, and awareness, and a reaction that I never had before. I never, you know, didn't do that before. And so in the beginning I had, so a lot of, I was sort of a green belt down there, or blue belt. You don't tell anybody that anymore. And all that time I thought everyone nationwide must have the same belt system.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Nope.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Can I ask you about the rocks, about what size were they?

Ted Mason: Oh, _____.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What did they look like?



Ted Mason: Beach rocks, mostly, smooth, the kind that, I don't know if you've seen _____ films.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: But the flatter the better. This would be ideal, it's long enough where it'd break easy, this'd, if it was a rock. You know, but usually they're more like half that size.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So about four inches by two inches by one inch?

Ted Mason: Yeah, usually, yeah, usually–

Sandra Schermerhorn: About an inch thick?

Ted Mason: Yes. This thick's good.

Sandra Schermerhorn: One inch thick is good.

Ted Mason: Yeah. But the more round they are, the worse it is, because it's– you can't hold 'em, and they don't– they don't– there's no place for 'em to break. But if they're flat, like a bar of soap, a bar of soap is ideal, if it was a rock.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's right, yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And jagged edges are frowned on. <laughs>

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs> Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: It happens, you know, and there's tricks to everything, you know. You don't want to get your fingers between the rock and the hard place.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: <laughs> And what else?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you- have you taught that to your students? Do you teach them that?

Ted Mason: I don't do that in my school, no. It's funny how we've graduated from that. It's a lot cheaper than buying lumber.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Hey, I've never heard of that.

Ted Mason: Yeah, isn't that funny? Yeah, now that you mention it, yeah, I've never been asked if I taught any of my students it. I don't- I tell my students the way we used to do it. No one's ever volunteered to start that up again. <laughs>

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And we're close to the ocean. I mean, there's beach- there's beach rocks out there.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Yeah, maybe I'll- maybe I'll start doing that again.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <laughs> That would be unique, sir, because I've never heard of it and never seen it, no, sir.

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Ted Mason: 'Cause I have, like I told you, I have it on a DVD now. It, what it was, was Super-8 millimeter film, in these little five minute reels. There must've been a good 20 of those put together on one VCR tape. This off _____ people, and him. And I got a copy given to me by a fellow in Hawaii, who's no longer living, okay. Recently I was told he died of leukemia or something.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh.

Ted Mason: He gave that to me 'cause I was interested in it, and then I made copies for my friends, but because it shows what we were doing back then.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yeah, sure.

Ted Mason: And Don Garrett is on this tape as a red belt, sparring with _____. And it's fun to watch. The sparring was, the sparring they did was very good, this was before I started training. But that period, between 1961, '60s, right in there, the sparring ability was great. The forms are not so. The way they performed their basics, not so great, by our standards today.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And we've come a long way in looking at that. And even a tape I have from Korea, same thing. So, what we were doing in San Diego in '61, is the same thing they're doing in Korea, same period. So, you know, let's face it, _____ was trained there, so not a lot of _____ going on in the punches. The blocking, the defensive technique had- had the motion 'cause _____, _____ was there. But announcing the punches, it was hard to see the- the exaggeration of _____, is the point.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So, they're outstanding area was in the kicking?

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Ted Mason: Oh, yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That where it was, the strong point.

Ted Mason: Oh, yeah. The kicks are wonderful. Yeah. I think we've come farther than that since then, even, you know.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. Were there any major changes affecting you as a student, like illnesses where you had to take off time, or family responsibility, or job responsibility, where you've had to take off a chunk of time from training?

Ted Mason: Hm. Well, when we moved to San Francisco that was a problem because, I mentioned, I ended up joining a _____ school, you know, to fill that void. But it- it helped in another way, it gave me some insight. We did things totally different in the Ton Sito school I was at, compared to now, anyway. And so, for example, we did low defense, we brought both fists up to one side of the body, this is Hada Maki [ph?] from here. And we didn't use Korean terminology, ever. Not in salutation, beginning, at the end, nothing, no Korean was ever spoken, not one word.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Funny, huh? And we didn't emphasize saluting the flags or bowing to each other very much, as I recall, for _____ school, necessarily, you know, it's very funny. But we did Hada Maki [ph?] from here.

Sandra Schermerhorn: From that _____

Ted Mason: Both this-

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Sandra Schermerhorn: From here, _____ here.

Ted Mason: Right in here.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And then here, High defense, I think from the belly up. When you cross your arms, you don't think about, when you lift this arm up. _____ was from the armpit. And this is _____ was from the armpit out.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: I think you crossed your arms on that one. Some of the weird stuff, you know, and so I go to San Francisco and _____, the Sudamaki [ph?]. Trindar [ph?] Sudamaki, trying to remember now. Both hands would go to your hip. And nope, nope, fists.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Fists closed?

Ted Mason: Fists closed at the him, back-to-back. And then when you come out, fan it open, fan it open. Your fist, and then open. Yeah, weird.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And then Hadam [ph?] Sudamaki, just close it here, and then open.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Then open.

Ted Mason: Yeah. It's terrible. So I go to San Francisco, and they were doing this, and this.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Elbow to elbow.

Ted Mason: Elbow to elbow, and do like this. I loved it!

Sandra Schermerhorn: <inaudible>

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Ted Mason: Oh, and then this here low, turned into low. They put their elbows together, and they did things that I thought we should've done, and I was right. They did this, and this Okinawa stuff, you know? So I came back to the home area and had to go back and train with the regular schools. It was hard for me to go back to the same thing that broke this up. That was because we were removed from talk of instruction. And we have to blame Master Lee a little bit, because he might have been a renegade. It turns out that all the Dan [ph?] numbers that he was issuing were not _____ in Korea at all. It's only don number system. So Don Garrett [ph?] and the rest of them all had bogus phone numbers. They're not listed in the regular book.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And your shodan [ph?] number?

Ted Mason: My shodan number also. But by that time we had left Lee Zhong Young [ph?] because of differences my instructor had with him. That was over an issue— it was one of the students that couldn't afford to pay for his shodan test, and it grew into an argument that caused us to become renegades. We left Li Zhong Young. Not knowing that he had already left Korea anyway. But we thought we were dead in the water. So we were independent of him. So when Fred Kane started training with Don Garrett, it wasn't long before he realized that Don Garrett wasn't going to promote him beyond shodan after being shodan. He left Don Garrett to go to Li Zhong Young to get higher rank or to get more instruction.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: But he didn't know. I mean, none of us knew. And all we had to do— I mean, we had the right address and everything— we coulda wrote headquarters. We had their address! But we assumed that Li Zhong Young was connected very strongly with headquarters, he's Korean, and they weren't going to listen to us. Maybe they couldn't read our letters. But that's what we should've done. Hindsight.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Looking back, yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Could've wrote the letter, because when I wrote a letter complaining about something that I saw when I went to my third don test in Detroit, there were some problems, not only in quality, but some strange things were going on there that I had bad vibes about, and it was all about money again. And so I wrote a letter. I got an address from a friend across the street. He led a wig [ph?] shop. He was Korean, and he knew the person in charge of the South Korean Physical Education Department. Federal grant, she owns a <inaudible>. And so I wrote him and asked him for Kwan Ki's [ph?], address, and I got it. And it was the same as that address that was written on that old piece of material that I had. Ha! I had that address all along! So I typed a letter and I wrote, said, "What's going on here? This is Jijung Kim's [ph?] doing this and that and that." And I said, "Doesn't look right." And he said that Li Zhong Young was his _____.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Still recording.

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Ted Mason: I think the point I was trying to make was that the answer I got was from Kwan Jung Nim [ph?], Kwan Ki written by someone who spoke English as a second language, and it was well-written, even though you could tell there was some problems with grammar, but who cares? It was typewritten, so I could read every word. And he told me that Jijung Kim [ph?] had been expelled from the Mudu Kwan [ph?] because he was not a true sportsman of martial art. The expression was kind of strange. I have that letter. You might want to copy it. It's kind of interesting.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That would be nice.

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Ted Mason: And so then I realized I was belonging to an organization that was not– how should we say, authorized or whatever. So he promised that another organization was about to be formed, or make an attempt in the future. So the next letter I got was from his son, who identified himself knowing that I was training with, or had trained with– I didn't tell you this– with another teacher. I was teaching a class– my class, and one day one of my students who was a Marine Corp officer told me that there was a Korean assigned to his area that was at Fort Don in Kwan Sumuda Kwan [ph?], and that he asked me if I wanted to meet him. I said, “Of course!” Because at that time I was, you know, judging Kim, and had received promotions of <inaudible>. It's when we send films back to Detroit. And at that period of time his name was Li song Ku [ph?]. And he was adopted by an American family, and he joined the Marine Corp because his stepfather was a Marine. And Li Song Ku visited my school. At that time I was training– one of my students was Howard Jackson, who had been in the Marine Corp and had originally trained in Detroit. There was a shodan from Detroit already. And he became world famous and just recently passed away in March of leukemia at age 55. But this student of mine was pretty good. And this Korean gentleman came and he asked, well what he said was, “Can I join your class today?” And I said, “You can teach it if you like.” And he said, “I'm only a shodan.” In those days it was very common. Shodans had their own schools, even lower rank, for that matter even. So he said, “No, I just want to practice, because I haven't practiced for a long time.” So he practiced in amongst other students, and Howard Jackson was– I think Howard was the only other black belt I had that day practicing. So during the course of the class I had them face each other for one-step, so during isusit [ph?]. And I'm just watching what kind of guy this gentleman is, and he's fantastic

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He's doing things that are a little better than us in a different way than I've ever seen performed, you know? So in one-step, he had technique, for example, one of the techniques that caught me off guard, was after he did an inside defense, he grabbed this fellow's, this Howard Jackson's wrist, and turned his back to him and went to his face with the back of his head. Now I'd never seen a head butt done that way before. I'd seen it from the front. And what he was very unique. He arched his back and, you know. And I thought at the time, my computer kicked in and thought, this would never work in a real fight or sparring, for that matter, and it's not realistic in my mind. But I'd been proven wrong before on other techniques, the most notorious was a punch to the foot, which is done in bo-in ro hi [ph?].

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

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Ted Mason: And that works! If you hit a person in the foot, you're gonna <inaudible> <laughs>. So I had him spar. Now he's sparring Howard Jackson, who within the year became number one in the nation in sparring, okay? He became General Assist to _____. And he's so _____. And this Korean gentleman hit Howard in the face with the back of his head sparring. I don't know how he did it. And that's just one of the many techniques he did. Swinging back thrust, when we podo chunggi [ph?] in our class, you're lucky you didn't get hit. He did it in a way, where he pulled it off so fast, and so short, it was not dangerous at all. I never seen anybody do it that way. It was like done half-way. He turned all the way, and his foot was caught for him to hit, and it just stopped right there. And you said, "Ah-ah!" I was looking at this. And I did look in Howard's face, and he remembers it differently, the poor guy, when I talked about that, he said, "Who was that guy that was in the class?" In his mind, he thought he did very well against him. But you know, the older I get, the better I used to be also. So anyway, that's the way I met my second teacher. I wasn't training regularly with Don Garrett anymore because he was in San Diego, 40 miles south of me. And you know, I got Miles Grueing [ph?] in Oceanside, and, you know, my hands full. So I asked after class— before class ended if he would like to demonstrate something for the rest of the class, and he put on performance that was unbelievable! He demonstrated a weapon form, took a staff off the wall, and did all these twirling techniques. He also pulled out some needles, insert— these are acupuncture needles— in so many words, they're used for healing. And he pulled out two small needles shaped like— I would call them spears, miniature African spears. And he said, "These are for lacerating certain wounds, and they're also weapons," he said. And he held them between his index and middle fingers, and with a thumb with these needles.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh.

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Ted Mason: And it was interesting, and that was before video cameras. We had two great— normally the film that didn't take well indoors half the time. And so after class I asked to be his student, and he agreed. And I arranged to meet him on the base at Camp Pendleton. It was like a Wednesday I had free, or a Thursday, I can't remember what it was. I didn't teach for the recreation department at that time, I don't think. So I didn't start teaching for them until 1974. So 1971 is when we met. And I trained with him while he stayed— before he was sent Okinawa for the Marine Corp. And I learned a new seung [ph?] almost every week. And I see, I didn't know na hon chee sumdrum [ph?], nor nahon chee eedon [ph?]. We call them Side Form 1, 2, 3. They're called Side Form.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Side Form.

Ted Mason: Side Form 1, 2, and 3. I did Side Form 1. And so I told him, I said, your _____ was my second dan, I need to know Side Form 2. He said, "Well, I'll teach it to you and others." Well, I got a hold of a camera, a su grade [ph?] camera, and I arranged for this meeting, and I went up there and I taped, filmed Side Form 2 at Tungo [ph?], and I ran out of film before we finished kyung san kyung [ph?] completely. But I got half of that. And I worked on those at home until I had them to a point where— you know, this is like during the week— and the following week we went over it again. And he taught me the rest of kyung san kyung. It went on from there. And then after that many other forms. Some of which are not in the curriculum in our federation. But in addition, he taught me ti wan [ph?]. I don't think he taught me ro has [ph?]. Ship su [ph?]. He taught me shung pa [ph?], it's a woman's form, which are just recently taught at Region 10 summer camp. And good form, too, so I don't know why it's a woman's form. But it's a woman's form. I asked him why he learned it, he said, "I was curious when I heard about it." A form called San ku kwang [ph?]. It means literally "high ultimate punch." Oh, I forgot. I have them listed somewhere. I learned 12 forms from him.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Had you ever seen anybody do those before?

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Ted Mason: Never. Never. He taught me Ju Wan [ph?], what we call Jeoung [ph?] today. Jeoung. He said, "If somebody in Korea knows you knows this form, he'll assume you're at least a Fifth Dan, because he said, "This is a Fifth Dan form," and so forth with all these. So I learned so much from him in the course of maybe a year before he was transferred. And of course, passed that onto my students. Howard Jackson later became famous when he went to Chuck Norris and became part of his group, then his reputation took off really well. And now I'm working with this—you might have heard us talking yesterday. You might have been there. But the ladies that're with your group, your school, the illustration desk. I was talking to all of them about this—about his fiancé, and the fact that she has the material for a book he was writing that she's gonna complete. And I've been trying to get her to change the name of the book from— he wanted to call the book "Choices," that he's made in his life. I said, "No, really, you should put your name on that." Put, "My Life with Howard Jackson," or "Howard Jackson and I," or something like that. Because the family and others, they want that material so they can make a movie out of his life, and they want to do their own thing. I said, "Don't let them have it. It's yours, because your significant other, Howard, wanted you to have that. So you go with that, it's yours." And it helped with a lot of stuff that's mentioned about his life. They skipped the parts where he was me. That hurts. And so I gave them information, you know, and I said, "When he was at Camp Pendleton, he wasn't discovered by Chuck Norris when he was in Camp Pendleton. He was trained with me, and then about his fifth tournament, they saw him for the first time." And they treat it like, well, this guy <inaudible> of his life. They want to act like taught him how to punch. Trust me. He knew how to punch when I first met him, 'cause I know, because we sparred. Really fast hands and good kicking technique. And so he had that all down, but he had bad control in his technique. He hit a lot of people by accident, and got disqualified a lot. As soon as he simmered down a little bit, he was okay. But that's a side no one _____ on him. They're working on that. So what else? I got sidetracked again, I'm sorry. <inaudible>

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay.

Ted Mason: Oh, the ded ju kim [ph?], yes. So then the Federation was formed, and we got a notification by mail that they're gonna have a meeting back East, New York. And that they named all these people who were invited, and I was invited. But I gave Chuck Norris my proxy, but he didn't show up either. And so I'm like, "Oh, thank you!" Cream and sugar?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Still recording.

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Ted Mason: So I was not one of the people that went to that meeting in the early formation of the Federation, or as I tell people, I would have a gold patch today. But then, this is off the record, I don't need no stinking gold patch! <laughs> But it's okay, because it was so far away, I'd never been to New York before. I didn't feel like traveling all that way to be with people I didn't know. You know, I wasn't pumped up for that. Besides, I couldn't get that day off. I had maybe two weeks to get ready to go, and in the California Highway Patrol– we only got one weekend off a month. The rest of the days were during the week. And so if you get lucky, you could pick your own weekend, the weekend you wanted, so you could– certain events you could go to. And that was okay. So I missed that meeting and others after that. But I got the results for the meeting, and they looked good except I was surprised that Chuck Norris didn't show up, and other people that I thought were high enough ranked and respected in California didn't go to that. I found out later that a couple of them did, but it didn't look like they were going to be in charge. Everybody wanted to be in charge. Or they wanted some position of super authority, it looked like. And they're all lobbying to do these things, and so we don't mention their names, but they fell by the wayside, because they were not into the democratic aspect of that kind of organization, see? But I think they did very well, even– then it's years later, so I was asked to– if I would accept the nomination for a member of the board, you know, in 1978. And so I said, “Well, sure,” because Master Friar [ph?] called me. That's the first time I'd talked to him, or the first I'd ever met him, in fact. And he was secretary at the time. And so I said I would accept the nomination, and I was elected, so that 1978 meeting which occurred in LA, which was– that's when I first met Master Wong [ph?], then. A _____ Grandmaster.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

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Ted Mason: And I know you have other questions about that later, but I can get to those if you want in turn.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You can talk now about it if it seems natural progression.

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Ted Mason: To back up then to 1977, we had a meeting in San Diego with Grandmaster Wong Ki [ph?]. This is when I first met him. I know that question's on here. He sat in on the Dan testing. And the night before, when I first met him was at a restaurant, called "The VIP Restaurant." And it was a Korean restaurant. And my wife was- I was asked, "Does your wife speak Japanese?" And I said, "Well, I hope so, she's from Japan!" You know, I could have said, "Is the Pope a Catholic?" But I didn't. But they said because their interpreter that they had selected, his English is so bad they're not gonna understand his English. He was an employee of the restaurant. So they said, they learned that Grandmaster spoke Japanese, because of the Japanese occupation, and was raised with that occupation, and forced to learn Japanese. So they asked for my wife to interpret, to _____. And that was a wonderful thing, because you know, I got to hear a lot of inside things that I would not have been privy to. And she was an interpreter at this restaurant when _____ talked to the group. And the next day, she stayed home preparing a meal, because I think we end up taking Grandmaster to our house for supper or something. So we had a Dan test. My instructor was present for that, and he interpreted. My Korean instructor, _____. And Grandmaster spent a long time with him trying to get him to become active again, but he didn't want to get involved anymore in the politics of whatever's involved. He didn't want to screw anymore and so on and so on, and so he didn't. So it was good. We had a Dan testing, and a clinic, and I have photographs of that. It's interesting to watch the people in the back row who are now well-known, but they were children then. Grandmaster Kim [ph?] was there, and he was a kid. And Master Francis and I were in the front row with others, and it was one heck of a clinic. And I don't think I ever stood in a forward stance so long. I was in _____ for a good 20 minutes while he explained things. In my recollection before that, the challenge to stand in a forward stance for a long time was a big deal. Never thought of a forward stance as being more difficult. But I realize now that it's because all the weight's in the front leg, it's worse than a side stance. If you stand there 20 minutes.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir!

Ted Mason: And so my front leg started bouncing. My knee started going, “Oh, my.” And this one fellow, he stood in his own perspiration. There was a puddle around him, and it was an amazing experience, and something as simple as basics. And that was great. And then the Dan testing. And then afterward we took him to our house, and my wife just made Kim-Chi, first attempt at the Kim-Chi. And his only complaint was it wasn’t hot enough. Those’re good memories. And my opinion of him at the time, very kind, courteous, sensitive man. Who, as I learned later, through the years, when you ask a question, if it’s not a good question, the answer will tell you. Instead of putting you in a place in a way like, well, that was not a good question, he will answer the question that you should have asked that’s related to that subject. It’s very well– it manipulates the whole thing in the direction that’s proper. So if you are wrong, he doesn’t tell you you were wrong. He’ll just tell you what’s right. It’s great! It’s great. I really enjoyed that about him. And the best thing about it for me is that my wife could ask him questions for me easily. So I learned also during the years, you had to be careful what questions you asked, because of those reasons stated above. If it was complicated, it would take him some time to finish. I mean, he would tell you everything there was to know about that. So I had to be careful. I had to be very selective on the questions I asked, because I know that was the only questions I was gonna be able to ask that day, so I kind of catalogued them. And as I progressed, I found answers to some of those questions on my own, and it wouldn’t bother him _____. He went on like that. I don’t know, a lot of interesting things happened. And then boat rides in Ft. Lauderdale. We were on a boat.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: We were with him at a dinner. And so I asked my wife, could you ask him about the beginnings of Su Dak To [ph?], and when the expression was first used? And on the back of the ticket that we had to get in, the little invitation card, he wrote a series of Chinese characters as it progressed. It really is, his expression was Fak [ph?], and then it was Su Fak [ph?], and then it was Su Bak Hi [ph?], and then Su Bak Ki [ph?], and then Sub Bak Do [ph?], he said I coined that phrase because I wanted to fit in with _____ philosophy. So he used the word “Do” first. Well, as he’s writing this down, I want this as a collector’s item really bad, this piece of paper.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: And he’s scribbling on it as a teacher does on a blackboard. With a pen, he’s doing this. He’s ruining it, you know? And but I got that, and I copied that, and then I took white out and white out the scribbles, and recopied it so it’s clean. I have the original copy, and the clean copy. But all this has been produced since in the “History of the Muda Kwan [ph?]” book. And what he said is there in the way he told us. And so that part wasn’t missed. But every time I– it was just all in Japanese, and I don’t– and my Japanese is very poor, and so I can only catch every other word or less, and so I kept asking, “What’d he say? What’d he say?” “Later, later. You know, I’ll tell ya later.” Well, we’re talking about a whole hour we’re talking here, and so a lot of “later” is missed.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, yeah.

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Ted Mason: Later is like, okay, I got a _____ of it. It was– that day was good in spite of everything. You know, and those days, and the way I met him was great. And we have come a long way since, is all I gotta say. Every time I look at the movies from the past, or the films, saying, “We have learned so much since then, because we were operating on a shoestring of knowledge.” We only knew up to, as I mentioned, Side Form 1. And basics. And a lot of sparring, and no one steps– and so we did things pretty much on one side only. Right-handed people do the right, and left-handed people do the left, and that kind of thing. Probably why I have arthritis in my right hip now. Yeah.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You were gonna mention about the isolation of the schools and your talking to the founder about his answer about that.

Ted Mason: Well, the kid asked about how many styles of Tong Su [ph?] are there? And he said, “For every face I see in this room, there’s a style.” Meaning, I’m sure that it’s a personality– it’s you that makes a difference. So the way you do Tong Sudo [ph?] is different than the way another person does it perhaps, because of your own condition of body features, whatever. And so in this country we were separated by miles and miles and different teachers taught different things, even in Korea we had differences. As he says, the present Grandmaster says, “The country doesn’t appear to be very large.” It’s a small country, but because of transportation problems, it can be a very big country, because travel’s difficult. So you can be a mile away from somebody, it might as well be 100 miles, because it’s on the other side of the mountain.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Other side, this mountain.

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Ted Mason: So this country here it was separated by that, and add some ideology differences, you know? And so we didn't get together hardly at all until tournaments. We might see each other at tournament, open tournaments. And then we collectively gather in a special way that we'd cheer each other on. So, you know, Chuck Norris and I didn't practice at the same time. You know, he didn't belong to the same group exactly. The tournaments we were together in that way. We were all Seoung Sadobe [ph?]. And so we didn't have patches in those days. You know, the time the Chuck Norris Organization got their own patch, I guess they had a jumping sidekick on the front a Um Yong [ph?] symbol, which is kind of—but we never wore patches until we joined Ji Yeoung Kim's organization out of Detroit, called the American Yudo Kwan Sudo [ph?] Association, it's called. But when I found out that he was no longer connected to Grandmaster Won Ki, then we didn't stop wearing the patch, we stopped—well, I sent a resignation letter.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. When did they do tournaments, all the computer people had trim. Did everybody else have trim?

Ted Mason: Oh, nobody else had trim except—no Teoung Sudoku [ph?].

Sandra Schermerhorn: What was tournaments like? In that they might be different from what we have today.

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Ted Mason: Well, the worst part of them was a uhm.. a feeling that you're going to get hurt, or a feeling like everyone was there to show that they were best in the world. Or you know, you weren't good enough to be even in the same room with them. So we had that feeling. Sometimes among Teoung Sudo [ph?] people, too. Different Teoung Sudo people would do that. "Our Teoung Sudo is better than your Teoung Sudo attitude." One of that. But we tried our best to look good, because we had strength in numbers, if you wanted to use that. And that was the first time I heard the word Teoung Su as a battle cry type thing, you know, "Teoung Su!"

Sandra Schermerhorn: At the tournament.

Ted Mason: I heard a rumor that that came from some place, originated in Panama. The people in Panama, the group that Teoung Sudo group in Panama started that. I don't know that to be true, but it was C.S. Kim [ph?] from Pennsylvania area. He brought that back with him, and then we all liked it. We started doing that. And I traced it. Where'd you hear that phrase, and where you'd hear that. And I finally C.S. Kim said, "Well, in Panama they do that," when he visited Panama, 'cause he had a lot of students there. And that's nice, you know.

Sandra Schermerhorn: It's nice to know where that came from.

Ted Mason: Yeah, I don't know how true that is, but that has its own claim to fame.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have any favorite memory of your tournament experience?

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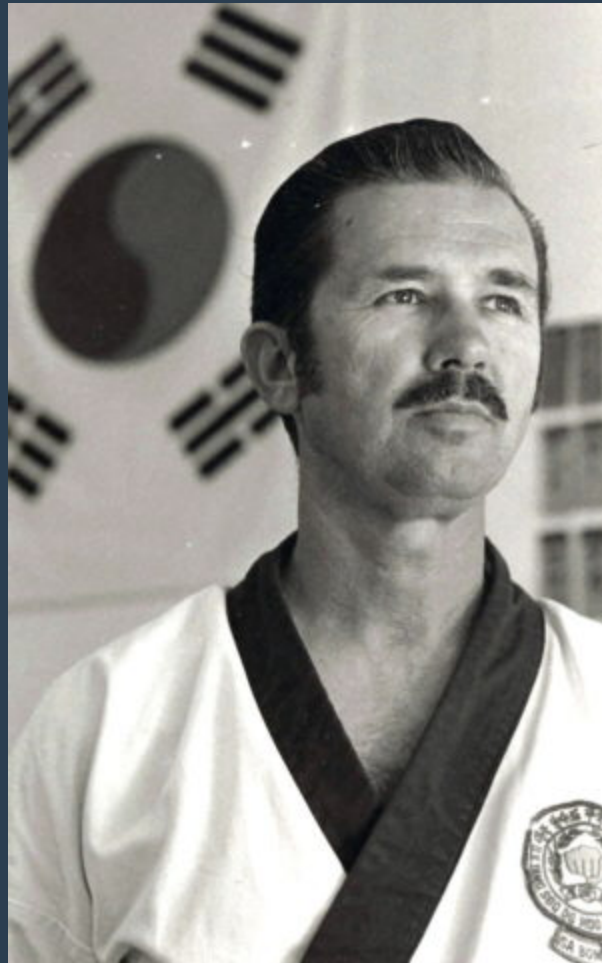
Ted Mason: Yes. My favorite memory is the California Police Olympics. My favorite memory. There's other memories of other tournaments before that, but successful memories are the best. I don't like to remember when I lose. But those, you don't forget those either. I remember I was out of the 25 people competing in forms contests, I was numbered 17, because I knew the person that was handling the sign-in– the ordered those things. And because he was in charge, he asked me where I wanted to be. Said, "How many people competing?" He said, "Twenty-five." "Eh, somewhere after 15 and before 20, right in there." You know, that was the place to be. So I remember all these people, none of them I knew. And so because I didn't know them, I figured I could win. Nobody famous, like, you know, the contest where, "Oh, my lord! Chuck Norris is..." Big names. So that we're all nobodies in a land full of nobodies more or less, and so I gotta an equal chance at it. But I felt I had better than equal chance. Five judges. One was a Teoung Sudo judge from, Master Young [ph?] from Pennsylvania, lived in California at the time. Chinese Kempu [ph?] judge. Filipino judge. Okinawa, true Okinawa judge. And a Shuru [ph?] judge was E. Fisher [ph?], who was famous at the time. He was the head judge. So everyone was represented pretty good. A wide spread of people, and during the contest I figured I wouldn't want to be bothered by anybody else's form until I did mine. So I kept my eyes shut and pretended to meditate. Just thinking about my first few moves and form, right? And so I did get off to a good start. And this is a fond memory now, okay? I'm sitting cross-legged, back in the days when I could stand up easily from that position. Just stand up straight.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Now I have to use my hands. And this is the plan to look good. You always want to look good, because we know it's better to look good than to feel good, so I've been told. When I stood up and turned– you stand up and turn because your legs are crossed, you can do this, you know?

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.



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Ted Mason: I stand up and pivot 180 degrees to the rear and straighten the uniform, adjust the uniform. When I adjusted my uniform, I ripped one of these cords here, the ties. I heard the thing tear, and I knew right away what it was, but it's not an important thing. But I couldn't help smiling when I heard this rip, but it relaxed me, you know? At that time, I'm looking eye-to-eye with some lady in the audience, and I couldn't help myself, I winked, because I felt like, "You're gonna see something really good now." This is my feeling. I motivated myself feeling, "I'm gonna win this." And I performed with Wong Shu [ph?]. This is Wong Shu now. And so I did Wong Shu. When I was half-way through the form, there was a place in the form where the form was through me. I was not doing the form. That is a scary thing. It's the first time, the only time, that's ever happened in my life. It was— I would say something bordering on insanity. It was like I was being controlled by the form. And I don't like that, you know? It scared me, so I slowed down a little bit, and it was a key moment where I got relaxed, you know? Fortunate little _____ move. And I think it's during that time that I must've got turned around, and ended up facing the wrong way, because to finish that form where I'm supposed to be looking at the judges. My back is to the judges. What to do now? So I just finish with the turn, a 180-degree turn, a _____. And you know, I finished it with that movement, which ordinarily would've been the end of that, but the Korean judge didn't care, he wanted me to win, I think. We didn't know each other real well. So he didn't discount. He didn't give me a low score. And I won! So I get a gold medal for this. This is the Police Olympics. The California Police Olympics, they don't call it the Police Olympics anymore, they call it the Police Games. Okay, so now I'm on a roll. I won my forms division, and now I'm competing the heavyweight fight. And somebody came up to me and say, "Hey, you know they've got brown belt here that's gonna buy the first round." And you know, the rest of us are black belts. He's a nobody. We don't know who this guy is

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And he appeared to have some connections with the people in charge. I don't know how they figured that out, because my wife and I did the Kindo [ph?] demonstration. We did the Kindo demonstration in between the forms and this _____. And they all enjoyed that. There's an expression in police work, "When all else fails," they have this expression, "Choke 'em out." Choke 'em out means to put somebody to sleep with a hold around the neck, and it's a cop talk. And these are all policemen and their wives, or wives- policewomen and their husbands. And so when my wife and I face each other with bamboo swords, it's Kindo, somebody in the audience yelled "Choke 'em out!" because she's very small compared to me

And really had a _____ demonstration. And now there can be in sparring, and the guy came over to complain to me, one of the competitors that knew me, he's in my division. He said, "We shouldn't allow the brown belt to get the buy. If anyone gets a buy, it should be one of us." He's right! So I went over to my friend who is in charge of the lineup, and I complain to him, and he says, "You wan the buy?" "Well, heck yes!" So I get a buy, which really paid off. I only had to fight two people to take first place. And I beat them both, and it was home free. So I got two gold medals, so that's my fondest moment. Although, you know, I faced a little bit of rocks along the way, and being in the right place at the right time. And this is the same enjoyment is this as the things you came in. It's not what you know, it's who you know.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Who you know.

Ted Mason: But those little things give you an edge, you know, and if you're not famous, it always helps, but that's my fondest memory.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Back then did they have different weights competing?

Ted Mason: Yes, oh yeah.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Really? How did they decide who was competing against who?

Ted Mason: Random usually.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Really?

Ted Mason: In tournaments with limited participation brown belts, and lower even, often fought with the black belts. And people like Mike Stone [ph?] as a brown belt beat so many black belts that they all chipped in together and got him a certificate.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, wow.

Ted Mason: I hope he kept it. He's in the Falkland Islands somewhere. No one knows exactly. They made a certificate, and he's got signatures of at least a half a dozen well-known black belts. I think Chuck Norris might have been one of us to say, "We're black belt. We can't have a brown belt beating us. The reasons he's a brown belt. His teacher was a brown belt in the Army at Fort Chappie, Arkansas. I wish he was a top sudo [ph?] man but he wasn't. So it was very common when you had small numbers, very mixed.

Q: Did you have facing competition at tournaments at that time?

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Ted Mason: It was rare. Yeah, I've only seen one breaking heart just. And I read about one back East in Black Belt Magazine. And it was a Teoung Sudo guy that one with a round kick with his instep. He broke more than two boards. And the photograph shows it clearly, his instep. And we were talking at that time that you shouldn't kick with your instep. Okay, you know, that's the drawing board. Yeah! I can't remember who he was, but you know, I saw a picture. Yeah. I hope you don't mind this little sidebar stuff.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, it's very interesting. Very, very interesting. I think we talked about some of the things about what early training, what classes were like. Just wanted to ask, is there any kind of discipline used, like push-ups? Like what do people do?

Ted Mason: Okay, most problems in class— I remember in our early training, mine anyway, was if you hit somebody harder than you should, if it was violation of that kind of thing, and we were prone to do that, we got push-ups. Of course, on your knuckles. But because we had a soft floor, we had a judo mat. Well, you know, soft judo floor, we had to do the push-ups on your knuckles off that floor, on the edge, you know? No point in doing it on the soft. And I remember doing push-ups a lot, because I liked to hit, you know, maybe too much, certain people. And that was very common.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What in the general population, back when you started training, what was their attitude towards the martial arts?

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Ted Mason: Well, you know, mostly they were ignorant of what we were doing. So they still today have the same attitude, mostly making fun of what we're doing. So if you wore your uniform in public, you know, it wasn't done. But if you had to go from your cars to a venue, it's best done without your uniform still today, because it attracts attention. But there wasn't a lot of things like movies and television didn't have a lot of that activity. So it's kind of rare, you know, there wasn't that many people doing it. You know, I don't know, it's hard to say what their attitude is. You know, it's like, how do you tell as a general population, you know, like <inaudible> last time," but we were subjected to some ridicule. You know? Here and there. And some of it's deserved, because some of these people who were wearing a uniform were acting strangely, you know? Still today. One guy had a school at Downtown Oceanside. He was throwing stars at a telephone pole. Missed the telephone pole, and hit a passing motorist. Stuff like that, you know? And he was in uniform.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh! In your early years of training, who was your hero?

Ted Mason: Hm. And you're talking about just anybody as a hero?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Uhm hm, yeah.

Ted Mason: In my early days of training. Boy, that's a good one. Heroes. But yeah, I have to think about that a while to have to talk on.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When you started training, what were your ambitions in martial arts?

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Ted Mason: Well, initially, the purpose of training was to learn a self-defense to become more secure. I think I was insecure. I had especially, because I'm dating a beautiful woman, which provoked things. So when we went out, you would have people come up and ask her to dance, and she's with me. But she handled that herself, just said, "No, thank you, I'm with him." You know, and that's the way we did it, but I felt like I needed to be ready for some physical confrontation at any moment, and that's before I even— I was a military policeman in the army, so I knew what it was like to be a policeman of sorts. And I wasn't kidding about being a Highway Patrolman, until my wife saw an advertisement, you know, on television, and at that time I realized that this martial art might come in handy, at _____. And it gave me confidence, and that's what I wanted. So initially it was the desire to become more confident, and then later on, as I went through that role, then it was for the sheer pleasure of practicing. Quite honestly. And then as I continue to grow older, then it's this little added thing call "responsibility," and things I owed my students and others, and I felt like, "Well, I gotta stay with this, b//c they need me, you know?" It's a little bit of that. That's about it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I have a section here on bowing testing. We talked about your Shodan test. Anything about your Ee don [ph?] or Strom Don [ph?] test that stands out your mind.

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Ted Mason: The Ee Dan test is done by _____ terminal. Some Ee-Don tests is done by somebody filming it. Son Don test is done by visiting <inaudible>. And nothing outstanding that I can think of except for what I saw there. The badges I got there. Trying to think of something else that might be important in that area.

Sandra Schermerhorn: For the Son Don test was it like for you had to skip class for a week, or does he actually let them perform so _____.

Ted Mason: Yeah, there was a guy in the room in this place outside of Detroit City—can't remember the name of it now. He _____ something our gym, and you had to perform. And really, really interested in breaking it seemed like. More interested in that than anything else, sparring. But the films, for example, all we wanted to see on the film was all your forms, well, they were taught in five, something like that. You want chi [ph?] done, chindo. I'll sign. I don't remember doing anything else. Now I took all three of those on one five-minute real, and I had left over, you know, so then I figured, "Well, let's do some one-steps with son." I had to do _____, so I can do one-steps. That's it, you know? Nothing, kind of uneventful.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How about for Ko Don Jim?

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Ted Mason: Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah, I'll tell you that one. That's good. The first Ko Don Jim test was done, of course, miniature <inaudible>. And we didn't have a Ko Dan Sho [ph?] week. So, Master Francis and I both tested the same day, and we both failed. Because primarily we didn't know the right terminology. We're both looking at each other. We talk to each other afterward. They'd give a command. They said- I swear it was, "When Jeng Kong Go?" I thought that was a reverse middle punch they wanted. So thought it was "Yub Ching," or something, see? So I move first, and he just copied me. So we both- we were like the blind leading the blind. And so I remember a lot of things we just, oh, we just didn't know. We didn't know, because of terminology. And in one steps I remember I'm standing there, I'm holding this <inaudible> with this- I got hit in the side of the head with his crushing kick, and I'm not moving. I'm not suppose to move. <yells> "Wow, gees!" And he liked that. So we test, we're done separately, I couldn't go the first re-test that was available to me, and so Master Francis passed that one, and then I retested latter.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Where did you go for this?

Ted Mason: The retest was done in Lakewood, Master George Dolbee's [ph?] studio, which still exists today. I had a <inaudible>, really during the clinic, a Master Onessmith's cuff, doing the outside crushing kick. On the way up, my _____ and it's _____ weight. It healed quickly. And it was a little toe that had been broken before, and probably healed quickly before. But like the doctor said, "Did you ever break this before?" And, "Yep." "Well, you did it again!" And on the way going outside, I caught on the way up on his cuff. And oh, boy that hurt! And so I taped it to the next toe, and I had to test that afternoon or evening. And I'll never forget. I had to spar with two people, and one fell out- grabbed my leg by the ankle, and when it pulled loose, oh! that hurt! Because the little toe was involved. Will never forget that. Never passed the retest.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: And where was the first test?

Ted Mason: The first test was held in Santa Barbara. Master– the same school that Master Pock [ph?] trained at. His teacher was called Li Zhong Suk [ph?]. Li Zhong Suk was like a sixth Dan at least. It was his school in Santa Barbara. And when he moved to Seattle, Master Zhong, you know, was teaching in Santa Barbara still. They had a kind of a split. Well, Master Li Zhong Suk left the Federation. Well, anyway. That's who I guessed had failed with Master Francis for this– my O Don test was held with Ko Donja [ph?] week, on the early ones, you know. The Sa Don test was held in those veins. When everyone else was testing for the Shodan and above.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Great. Any other memories of any of your other _____ tests that stand out in your mind?

Ted Mason: Wow, lots of memories. 'Cause, you know, those're long weeks.

Sandra Schermerhorn: <inaudible>

Ted Mason: That's an outstanding, and I continue them. Let me think. No, I can't remember. You said that we were allowed to perform anything additional. I performed the woman's form I mentioned for my– might have been my sixth round test. I forgot. I performed Shim Pa [ph?] for my sixth round test. And Master– Uncle Bob we call him– Master Shipley [ph?] performed– you know, the boss _____, the other Kung-son _____. It just two traditionally. We only know one of each. The Bossi [ph?], so Bossi Teh [ph?]. It's Kung Son Kung Teh. Large and small of each. We only know the date of each, ordinarily. And that's part of our curriculum. But he performed the So [ph?], the smaller of the two.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Are they very different?

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Ted Mason: Oh, yes! Oh, yeah. Yeah. Different in a lot of ways. Short moves, I explained. I don't know, I don't do the forms. I didn't ask if I wanted to learn them, but I'm too busy learning other things that I have to know.

Sandra Schermerhorn: In the time you've been in the Mudu Kwan, you mentioned that you are on the Board. Did you hold any offices where you were on the Board? And you were the chairman, you said.

Ted Mason: Yeah, _____. I brought this with me, so if you...

Sandra Schermerhorn: Good.

Ted Mason: Okay. Elected to the Board of Records in '78. I was the treasurer, elected treasurer of the board of directors 1980. Secretary of board of directors in '81/'82. Chairman of the board of directors '86, '87. Chairman again 1990/'91. Secretary in 1993/'94. Regional examiner, shall I?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, please.

Ted Mason: I was regional examiner of Region 9 from 1994 to 1998. In 1993, I assisted Master Opal [ph?] in that capacity. I remained on the Board of Directors until 1996. And then I was awarded "Outstanding Member" in 1997. TAC member of an Mego Mu [ph?] with Master Shipley and Master Bosanori [ph?] of the Mego Mu in 1999. And TAC chairman after the death of Grandmaster Won Ki. Then I was— I became the chairman of the TAC. And this is like individual stuff there. You want to do that, too?

Sandra Schermerhorn: We can do that, too.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: We are recording now. This is Mason/Schermerhorn, the second part of his oral history.

Ted Mason: So I already mentioned that I was regional examiner, and the period that I was regional examiner, and then I was asked to be on the T.A.C., which I guess the word is chosen. There's a new group of us and there's nine T.A.C. members, and there were three officers. This is all new at the time and that was in 1999, and so I became part of the Neh Gong Bu at that time. It was three member. It was a total nine on the T.A.C. at that time and we had three in each office, and the Neh Gong Bu was the office that I was in on, and then Weh Gong Bu, your husband was on, and then the, or maybe Shim Gong Bu, maybe. No, he was Weh Gong. So those three offices and so that was 1999, and then there was a three year term and then we were, the word elected is not proper, reassigned for another three years. But Kwan Jang Hwang Kee died in 2002, something like that, and because of that they needed a new chairman of their T.A.C. because of his son became the president and the grandmaster then of our association. So I was then appointed, appointed is the right word for all those offices I think, then I was appointed of chairman of the T.A.C. Then the Hu Kyun In was formed July 23 of 2005 and a new T.A.C. was assigned, and I was put on the Hu Kyun In July 23 of '05, and then appointed as its chairman. And the rest is just, I'm really proud of it, that took place through the years. May I go through that?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. Please, sir.

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Ted Mason: In chronological order, in 1982 I designed and produced the California patches for the team members in region nine. In 1985, for the national championships, Master Walsh asked me to handle the awards and I got approval and originated an overall grand championship award for the person who won both forms and sparring. And I think Master Lisa Kozak was in a third dan then and she won that, and I'm very happy. I also found the trophies. They were dishes, silver-plated trays, and we had them engraved, and they had to be carefully selected because my friend who did the engraving said if they were shallow plating and everything it would show a different color I guess when you engraved them. We went through a lot of problems and also I was able to start to award two third place awards, and that was the first time that was done in the 1985 national championships. I designed the medals for the nationals in region nine, and also they had a good discipline award. It was a medal that was made probably in Korea. I redesigned that and had that produced. Now, we're not longer using that of course but the good discipline medals.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I remember them, sir.

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Ted Mason: And I still have a few of those left over from the _____. I never got one. It was 1986. I designed and produced the USA patches for the team members that were training in international championships in England, and of course I was board of directors chairman then, and so we had a national advertisement in Black Belt Magazine, that the concept was to make ourselves more known, but advertise in all the studios. And that increased enrollment that year, and our budget really increased tremendously from \$125,000 to \$500,000 because of that. It's amazing how many new students we had because of that. It was a drop off after that because a lot of new studios realized they had to jump threw a few hoops that were difficult to learn a whole bunch of new hyung and so forth. And I didn't reside over it but initiated the first national summer camp. There was other summer camps held in Nguyen II [ph?] and California also, but they weren't considered national summer camp. And so on July 25 in 1986 we had the first national summer camp in Upstate New York.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Phoenicia.

Ted Mason: Yes, Phoenicia, that was the one the following year, but I didn't go. In 1989, this is where it gets into the good stuff now, this is trivial at first but I noticed before that we used a score sheet, a piece of paper that you had to mark all the scores of the participants as they did it. And these were all thrown away after each bout, pretty much became trash. I realized that it would be most simple to use blackboards, and so I bought a bunch of blackboards, and so in 1986, 1989, I'm sorry, in Anaheim we started using chalkboards in each ring. I think we're stilling do that, I hope, still.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: Instead of the paperwork, that we have a scorekeeper that writes the score, and that way the referee can see the scores as they're done. I started doing that. I still have the original _____ of blackboards too, in my garage. But since then other people have–

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir, other people do that. It was a good innovation because people picked up on it and.

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Ted Mason: I needed it real bad. I needed it. Still today you have to watch them because the kids, you don't know, they hold it so they can see it, nobody else can. Sometimes it could be upside down, but I'm very happy that that was accepted. But my pride and joy based upon an injury I got in a tournament in the California Police Olympics, actually it was the International Police Olympics held in Long Island, in 1980 I got about 15 stitches in my head from being knocked out, and landing on my head on a hardwood floor. So I had a personal thing about safety gear from then on and I had a heck of a time trying to get my seniors to agree, or the board, or anybody to want to go along with it. And their primary objection was it looked too much like another art we won't mention, and so I kept trying to tell people, well it's called safety gear or safety equipment and what you're telling me is you're not interested in being safe. And so I just kept pushing, and pushing, and pushing. Well, when I was elected chairman of the board again in 1989, this is after another term where I wasn't because in 1986 and 1986 I was chairman of the board. In 1988, Master Moonitz was. In '89, I was elected again. Master Pryor was elected _____ '89. So 1990 I was chairman of the board and I had a little more influence to get that changed, and so I initiated the use and it was accepted, and as long as I was on a role I also snuck in the hand gear. I figure as long as they're going to accept that, then we go to hand gear, but it wasn't truly accepted, and only I think they were interested, it was like optional for adults and children must. So we purchased some for the kids and all the kids wore the headgear then in the 1990 championships. I had a heck of a time getting our region nine to go along with that, but soon there was accepted. I think those couple injuries when they didn't have it and they said, "Well, he must be right." But that's the thing I'm most proud of, and in a newsletter article that was supposed to be mentioned, that line was omitted somehow. So the way it reads is, the thing I'm most proud of is the initiation of the region nine championships, which is not only incorrect but-

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: Anyway, so the other things are, let's see, then later on in the year 2000 I designed and produced the region nine patches that we're using now. That is it pretty much.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's wonderful, sir. Thank you. That's really wonderful. Let me play it back. Yes, sir. We'll continue with that.

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Ted Mason: At the time, in my early training of course the people I was awe of in course were my instructors. And Don Garrett would be, and I don't call him a hero. He was just impressive and he was the one I wanted to emulate. But we were totally different in regard to physique. He was a small person, or he is now, but very powerful, dynamic individual. Very quiet when it comes to speech but a very good instructor and he had black belts in Judo and Aikido also. So our class included other arts in the way he taught it. One step, for example, he included the jump kicks and punches but then we had a take down, a throw always, because he had a soft mat for throwing. So we had a lot of we might call it Judo involved in that. In our self defense techniques we had a lot of Aikido involved in that, especially knife defense, and with respect to the Si [ph?] Form that I taught in a recent- that is the reason I think Aikido people do that. And I learned that from Don Garrett who was high _____ in our organization, call it an organization at that time, was the third dan. He got that from Jaegwon Kim [ph?] the way I did mine pretty much. He had some innovations in the way he taught it. I feel he does it more softly and without a lot of focused power, no shi jok [ph?], no strength in the way we think of it, as in like in our punches for example. It's done softly, and it flows a little better, and it's pretty. But Don Garrett didn't want it to be pretty and so the way he taught it, and the way I practiced it, and the way I teach it is more in attune to the way Soo Bahk Do is practiced, with speed, and power, and focus, and it's a stronger form. Whether it's more realistic, more effective or not, that remains to be seen, but I think so. So he was my, you know, hero is the wrong word because it's more like someone that you feel has gone like above and beyond the call of duty, and you admire them for that. In that regard, then my wife would fit in that category from the very beginning when she started training because women did not do this. We didn't see any women doing this and so she, one day, spanking the kids or trying to, they were doing Ha Dan Mahk Kee against her action

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And so she ordered them to put their hands, this is one kid or the other, I can't remember which one it was, "Put your hands on the bed and let me hit you," that kind of thing. And she decided then that she wanted to take martial arts, and she became overnight my best students, and very easy to teach her compared to previous students that I had. I didn't have that many, and so she became a star in our area, and in competition was just magnificent. But you understand, this women, she won 1954 Ms. Sasebo beauty pageant. Sasebo is a city the size of San Diego. Well, I know where it is now but the last time I was there, it's a port city in Southern Japan, and in 1954 when she was, I think she was even 21 years old. She was born in '35, she won Ms. Sasebo contest

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I have photographs of that taken. And so very good looking woman. To practice a martial art and especially in a tournament at that time when the women started being involved, it's bare knuckles and you had a good chance of having your front teeth knocked out. So even though you were wearing a mouthpiece, you could get your nose broken easily, and still today maybe. But bare knuckles is, you know, not a thing that if I had to do over again I probably in my attitude now would not let her compete. But back then we were young and stupid, and not really thinking of the danger of it so much. Although, honestly I did worry about her a lot. She became a local champion. She was the woman to beat and there were many women that would not enter a contest if she was going to compete in it. They'd back out and so one particular time she told them that, well, "Will you compete if I don't?" and they said they would. And so she chose not to compete and let them. Yeah, amazing women, _____ mine, this girl she was so afraid before the contest. She said, "Please don't hurt me," and Keiko said, "Don't worry, just do your best." That's kind of a psychological blow too, see, but that's the way she was, and she says that she did that primarily to enhance my name, see. That's the way she is. It's very Asian, you know. The husband and wife thing is like, the wife will sacrifice herself forever to make sure the husband has a status, you know. It's kind of an unusual situation. It's the reason why I probably married her. My previous girlfriends were not like that. So I got to tell you about that, you know. So she would be my hero. Even today she's a model and is amazing.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yeah, you talked about her being a champion with the sparring. I saw her do forms with you. Did she like to do this and <inaudible>?

Ted Mason: Yeah. She did very well. Now, you know, we have physical problems, both of us. She's got a bad knee. She had surgery on it but those things never really heal right and she has foot problems, bone spurs on her feet that irritate her quite a bit.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Painful.

Ted Mason: I'm getting that now, and so she's not as active as she used to be in that regard with class. In class, she occasionally gets up and grows through some of the basics, and we do forms together, but that's about it now. You got to be careful at her age, you know. She's 72, I think.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Was there something else that you had thought of that you wanted to mention?

Ted Mason: That's as far as heroes and people I looked up to.

Sandra Schermerhorn: All right, if we could go back to the offices that you held. One of your offices, was there an especially challenging time because you were on the board for quite a while, and a brand new organizational T.A.C.?

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Ted Mason: The worst time, the most difficult time was as chairman of the board in 19– the last one, 1991, I think. We had a problem with some money we owed Grandmaster Hwang Kee, and not only did we have to come up with some funds, about \$64,000 because we had promised earlier in our history to give him like \$7 out of every membership, or \$3 out of every membership fee. And the membership fee kept going up but we still had this money back payment. So there was some pressure there with the budget and it really all happened at once. You know, we had to send a team to England the year before, you know, that kind of thing because we had one this newsletter. But we won't mention any names, but his initials are Master Awful, he threatened to leave the organization at the time, and in fact resigned from the board under protest about a number of items having to do with money. He didn't like the idea of having to pay that debt off, I don't think, and there were some other reasons, like we couldn't afford it. We made a settlement anyway and we did pay it off the following year, but there was a lot of pressure on me at that meeting because they were going to, they, it was more than one board member, were going to stage a walkout of some kind is what I was warned, you know, because of several issues going down. And so I was real sweet because Master _____ called me at one o'clock to vent his frustration, and the lack of sleep. And I'm chairman of the board. I could've run the doggone meeting, but I was told by Master Martinov, known Messersmith told me that, he gave me the nickname flat liner because I appeared not to be influenced one way or the other on the issues. I did not appear to be excited or concerned about them. I just ran the meeting very systematically. Well, it was because I was a zombie, you know, I was so tired, I just did my job. He called me flat liner after that. Master Kwon [ph?], at that time T.A.C. chairman, he congratulated me on a very well organized meeting, but it was only because, I'm being a pragmatic or simpleminded person, I just kept things simple

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And, you know, there was a Korean contingent there that visited and they gave us gifts of a belt buckle with a Moo Duk Kwan emblem. Even people like Master Oppel [ph?], they kind of like ridiculed that saying that that was like a buyoff or something, like that was going to excuse this other financial move. But it had nothing to do with that. It was a gift and you just take it, you know, at face value if somebody gives you something like that. But you know how people are sometimes. Well, it was very volatile and there wasn't a walkout after all. The meeting went smoothly and concluded very well, I thought. It came out even at the end and then they resigned afterward, these two men. So I got credit for running a good meeting. That's all I care about, but let me tell you, this was not enjoyable. This _____ had me under a lot of-

Sandra Schermerhorn: Internally, yes, sir.

Ted Mason: That's the worst thing, you know, that I went through. It came out all right, _____ care what that path really looked like. It's like a good sparring match to win. Sometimes it's difficult but you're so glad it's over, you know. That's about it as far as the worst thing.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, what was your best time in the Moo Duk Kwan?

Ted Mason: Best time, oh, let me think. Wait, make sure we get all these, there were so many good times, so many. And, you know, and if you have one come to mind just offhand, favorite moments of course, I just had one yesterday when our son looked so good. This is going to be his last competition. It was so much fun to see him look that good because you know how children are. Sometimes they don't train as regularly as they should and he's been practicing, and he did himself proud. You know, that's the way he wanted to leave, not to compete anymore.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Is that because, sir, he's a third dan?

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Ted Mason: It's for his own personal reasons. I think he thinks that he wants to quit while he's ahead. He doesn't want to be like some other people we knew in the past who didn't quit until they were losers, you know. Well, I told him there was nothing wrong with getting old, and slowing down, and having younger people beat you. That's just like Roop Ah [ph?], it's going to happen, but he said, "No, no. I want them to remember how good it was," and I said, "Well, they remember how good." So will mention names, how good they were when they were in their prime. We still remember that. Yeah, but do you remember how bad they were later? So I don't want that. It's a lot of what do you call it, a lot of ego going on there. But he did very well. He invited all his friends from the past that were there watching him. He was under a lot of pressure to do well and God, he looked real good. He looked good. That was one of my proudest moments. Going back in time, when our oldest daughter was still performing and she won some contests, she really looked great, I mean just shined. And when my wife one a few of those things, it makes us all feel good. And I think it's so funny how when you talk about what makes you happy, it's not usually what you do, it's usually what your children do, you know. Do you find that true?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: See, that's what you want them to be. I mean that's why we're here. If you talk about what made you the way you are, when people ask you who you are, I always feel like I have to start with my instructors because that's who I am. They made me who I am, my instructors so far. So I got to give Don Garrett some credit for his method of training because it did me a service, and when I became a traffic officer on the highway patrol, there's things in the martial arts that probably saved my life, the martial art training, you know. Sometimes it's hard to say whether it did or not, but I'm sure martial art training, this martial art especially, because I've had some other influence, made me a better person. And I think it makes me able to deal with people even on these levels that we do in law enforcement with a volatile, hostile environment. I have always showed people respect even when they didn't deserve it, and we're talking about some real scumbag, like, you know, those kind of, you know, people, dangerous elements, criminal people, you know. But I've always kept my guard up but yet spoke to them, you know, in a way that would bring a good response. And I've had partners that didn't like that, the way I handled that. They thought it was strange but it really paid off a couple of times because you get a lot of cooperation from people. You tell them, you know, to do this and that in a nice way, to look at this as an unlawful assembly. If you don't leave now, there will be some force exerted upon you, and they leave. Instead of yelling at them, saying, "Move it, or I'll bust your heads," you know, you don't have to be that way. I think I got that from martial art training. Jumped around a little bit too much?

Sandra Schermerhorn: No, sir. No, sir. We're fine. Do you have a photograph or remember a photograph that has special meaning for you?

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Ted Mason: Wow, you asked a good one. Let me think. Well, of course the first photograph that I had taken of me with Grandmaster Hwang Kee is a nice one. It doesn't reproduce well. It's in color, you know, how that goes, but it's a snapshot. And a couple of photographs with Howard Jackson when he was with me, you know, those are kind of special for me, those good old days, you know. And, what's another one, photograph. You know, it was all the martial art things primarily but, you know, there's other things from the past. My wife and I, she has it with her, a picture of when we were dating and we were so skinny it's scary. I weighed 175 at that time and she weighed 100 pounds maybe. It's amazing, and she had the beehive hair, you know.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I remember those, yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: Yeah, Priscilla Presley, and those were _____ and photographs of my youngest son when he was a baby, and my oldest son, he was my first student, actually. We gave our students, Duk numbers our own. We didn't have a system of federation given to us, and so Michael was my student. I gave him number one, and Brenda was _____. I gave her number two as my second student, but technically she probably should have been my first and best student because she's older. But I think started showing Michael how to defend himself early, so he was my first student. I'm proud of him, in those days, I have some pictures of him. He was a very good fighter. His form was so-so. He did forms like he was fighting, which was not bad but it's not real good form, and _____ he had very good technique, actually. Not real flexibility either, but technique. But, you know, Teddie had it all from the beginning because we had the federation at the end with the proper methods of teaching and methods we didn't have later on, I mean early on. Very limited in those days, what we taught was funny with no curriculum, you know, just our own, you watch that spine, just kind of like made up stuff as you went along. You did techniques you wanted to practice. The closest thing to a system I ever came across was a recommendation by my second instructor, the Korean instructor told me to take moves out of the form, out of the count and put them _____. That wasn't a bad idea, and so we did that. It was kind of funny to block a punch with a backhand and then coming into a crescent kick in your palm, right in front of the person's face because, you know, it looked and sounded like you hit the person in the head. You're slapping your hand right by here and we did things like that.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: That's creative.

Ted Mason: We had to do it like this.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

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Ted Mason: Such a nice change though, when you started giving, you know, giving clinics by the president of _____, these clinics, every time you went them, new people, experiences, and more than we because you were closer to them than us. But every time we had a contest it was a clinic, so we had two of these clinics and contests a year, and he taught them. And some really good things came our way then, said holy cow, got things to work on, and then it would pay off, in funny ways too. The technique, we mentioned when it was, but he taught a technique in 1978 in Santa Barbara and at a _____ test I had in 1980-somethng he was about to teach this technique. And the way he did it was, "Now, what would you do if such and such happened?" And I raised my hand and said, "I would do a Gi Cha Gi [ph?]. It has to do with, after a crescent kick is blocked, after you do a Ahneso Pahkuro Cha Gi [ph?]. It's defended then you drop your foot to the floor and come out with a short _____ Cha Gi. I'll say _____ and that or a Gi Cha Gi." He said, looked so shocked, because that was what you're going to teach, and he said, "How'd you know that?" I said, "You taught me that form in 1978." He said, "Oh," he says, "You have a good memory." I said, "Not necessarily. I've been practicing ever since." It's a good technique so I practice it, that's all. I didn't tell him all the things I didn't practice, but that one I liked so much. I said hey, I took it back to my students. He said outside crescent kick with a Gi Cha Gi, that's it, and it's a real short, round kick because you're so close, and it's fun to teach. I can still do it too which is nice, in spite of the other problems we have. That's about it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: All right, do you have a treasured item from your training?

Ted Mason: Well, I mentioned the ID card.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, that's right.

Ted Mason: I can send that to you easily too. I'll take a picture of it and mail it.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, that would be good, sir. Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Yeah, that's one of my treasures. There's some other things besides the photographs at that time. There is some handout material, some papers that were given to us when we were white belts that gave us a background of the art and that is basically one and two. They call it primary form number one was _____, and then they had primary form number two _____. And the history of it was brief, but it was funny, they didn't call Grandmaster Hwang Kee anything other than either Professor Hwang Kee or Master Hwang Kee. His rank was eighth dan and we were told, and it's in the writing, I have it, I can mail it to you, it's interesting to read, they said, "Art is called Tang Soo Do and there are two divisions of Tang Soo Do. One is the Moo Duk Kwan and one of the others is Soo Bahk Do." And we belong to the Moo Duk Kwan branch, so actually it was like all kinds of it is going on. This country was '64, so 1964 we had a lot of misinformation or misinterpretation of what was happening in Korea, even though we had a Korean to tell us at that time. I didn't train directly under Lee Jong Hyan, but my teacher did. So you had to see that to believe it, where it come from and all, and I found it sort of distorted from what we're told now. But that's _____. I got that. I didn't throw that away. It includes also my little area, the doodles. I doodled the direction of the form with lines, you know, _____ here and you go that way, you know, little _____ thing with, you know, I see people do that today. I laugh. I say, I did the same thing and I still have it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Did we talk about your first meeting with Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang?

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Ted Mason: Oh no, we didn't. I have a photograph of that too. The first time I met him was in a board meeting in 1978. Yeah, in L.A. I was a new board member. The first communication we had was by mail and he was still calling himself Jin-Moong [ph?] Hwang at the time. And he wrote me a letter when I first started, _____ new member of this new federation that was not really formed yet. So I joined the Korean Soo Bahk Do through him by way of Korea to register, and sent him a copy of certificate I had from Ja Jung Kim [ph?], and then they gave me a certificate for third dan in the Soo Bahk Do Korean, and that was more official, and explained that my dan number that was given to me by Ja Jung Kim was dan number six thousand something, but that didn't fit in with the numbering system. The dan number I got from Don Garrett was like number six because I was his sixth student and he was already broken away from. The dan number that Don Garrett was given by Lee Jong Hyan was 5991. Yes, I got it here, and that was the list that Lee Jong Hyan just started issuing dan numbers, but Don Garrett never joined the federation that we have. When it was forming, he was not interested in, kind of like he faded way, and I wasn't sure why. But he had a strong dislike, distrust of most Koreans because of Lee Jong Hyan. But I tried to explain, they're not all alike. I said, "It's like one American crook out of a hundred good people. Come on." So, you know, my treasured items, _____ that. Every once in a while I come across other things. That's really it. I have a copy of the suggested, there was a time when the federation was being formed where I wanted a patch, and we had a patch contest, a design contest. I have a copy of my submitted. It looks like this but the difference is I didn't use Korean letters. I didn't use Korean words. I had United States Soo Bahk Do, Tang Soo Do, what it's called. The coloring's similar as I recall, because I remember we knew what the colors had to be, and I have a copy of that. I enlarged it. I didn't win the contest. I don't think anyone did, but my suggestion was really—

Sandra Schermerhorn: Very close?

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Ted Mason: Yeah. So at least it gave somebody an idea. The fish itself, the emblem I took off a rubber stamp that I use for, you know, for other purposes that I had made for posters. And I used that design, and that design, a fist, and I collect those by the way. I have tons of those, different Moo Duk Kwan emblems through the years. I got maybe 40 or 50 of them, the ones that were used back when in all these different organizations that are Moo Duk Kwan or say they are, or not, and I have most of them identified, also foreign organizations. In early times it didn't seem to be any regulation how many leaves are supposed to be there. Some had 13, some had 17 <inaudible>. It's supposed to be 14 in the beginning, but some people didn't count very well.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You said that you had met Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang at a board meeting?

Ted Mason: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have any favorite stories about him and you or your time together?

Ted Mason: No, let's see, not at the board meeting so much. It's just that he knew my instructor, my Korean instructor. Okay?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir, we are good.

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Ted Mason: He knew my instructor real well and so that was the connection we had, and there was another connection with the Argentine fellow that trained with me a short time, when he was back East training with him. Roberto Villalba was his name. He's now in Rome somewhere. He's not in our organization. There was a situation where Kwan Jang cut his foot real bad on a technique. You kick an apple off of a knife. I didn't see this but I heard about it and it's something I've seen other people do, and he cut himself so bad he couldn't proceed. And so Roberto got out there and did a reference form that I had taught him with a sword, and Kwan Jang, at that time the son of Kwan Jang asked him where he learned that. He said, "Well, Mr. Mason taught it to me." So getting all these little nods, and kudos, and things from other people, and we hadn't met yet. So in the letter he said he couldn't wait to meet me at the board meeting, and so we met, and we got along fine, and you know how that goes. But as far as funny experiences, memorable thing or wonderful thing, at my test that I passed for fourth dan, there were people on that board that there's a lot of friction and maybe even a competitive spirit we call it in a nice way, based upon jealousy, envy, greed, whatever, they didn't want me to pass. There are, I won't mention names, and he overrode their decision, and he told me what he told them. He said, "Sometimes," and I use this quote many times now, "Sometimes a good attitude is better than a good kick many times." Sometimes attitude is most important and he said my attitude was good, and he told me _____ said, "Don't worry about these other people." He said, "You don't have to work with them real close, but they're in our organization so you got to get along." He said, that kind of thing, he said, "As long as you get along with each other we'll have a good organization, but don't let them bother you. Just do as you've been doing because you have good students and a good reputation. You'll be okay." And those people are no longer with our organization anymore, the three of them, and so glad.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: I know you had already talked about our founder and when you met him, and we went over that too. So besides our founder, and Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang, if you had to choose a memorable person of all the people you've met, who do you think you'd pick, somebody who made an impression on you?

Ted Mason: So many have, you know, so many have, favorable, you know. I'm sure you're _____ with that, but Don Garrett really impressed me with his ability and, you know, I can't think of anyone off the top of my head but him like that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Did he pass on any traditions that you still have today in your training or teaching?

Ted Mason: I don't know because so many things that he taught are no longer practiced in the federation, the way we did them then, whether it's his way that he, you know, was taught that way, I don't know. But a little bit of time I had to make those changes to come into line with what the federation wants us to do. And so a little bit at a time there's not much left of the way I used to be taught. I see it in the old films that other people taught that way too. Things just, ready for kicking, _____ was not with your fist up like in a sparring position. It was with a fist out in front and low by doing _____. That was when you got ready for kicking.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And were <inaudible>?

Ted Mason: Yeah, a little bit in front. That's what, you can see it in the tape. I have a video of the way they were doing it back then in Korea. That's what they were doing. Now, when you come to attention like this, when we come to attention, that's an old tradition we stopped doing. You come to attention like this, very, like this, hands open, okay. That's attention.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Never seen that.



Ted Mason: No. When we did _____ Gi, like this, we wound up like this, and this is pigeon toe, pigeon toe <inaudible>. We don't do that anymore. I was the last one in California to change it from _____ and this thing here, and to block the _____. A little bit of time, we're not doing any of that anymore, but maybe one thing held over is some of the techniques in self defense, I do the _____ that the federation wants me to teach. I teach that and then I teach the other things that I learned from Don Garrett. That still remains. We'll call that extra technique, or additional technique, or another way to do it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And that's the one that had the Aikido in it or- ?

Ted Mason: I believe so. I believe it's Aikido based because Master Martinov still teaches it that way because he has an Aikido background also. His Aikido teacher is really a wonderful man. I met him at the birthday party. He plays flamenco guitar also, and so I got to play flamenco guitar up there at the birthday party for him, you know, more or less. He's got an injury that he can't play guitar right now and we got along fine.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: So from what area of your training now do you get the most satisfaction?

Ted Mason

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: Oh yeah, I love to teach. I've always liked to teach and I enjoy teaching things that students enjoy learning. So the things lately that have been mostly _____ clinics that cover either a form that they never learned before, or self defense techniques. Or we had local clinics in region nine twice a year that superseded the one with the masters concept, and it raises money for the region, and I enjoy teaching those because sometimes they really click. I mean things, I do the research all the time, and I'm always trying to learn new things, but when I'm able to teach that in a nice way, in the best way possible, I really get a kick out of that, if the students do. If the students receive it very well then I really like it. We had accidentally or on purpose once we had some techniques that I learned from Don Garrett mixed in with some recent things with Master Seiberlich, defensive from the floor. And Master Seiberlich started teaching this method, and he told me his way was similar but it added to it, the information was added to it. So now I had this one hour class I could teach on floor defense, and then another hour Master Messersmith took over grappling. And it was those two classes back to back were just so complete together. There was kind of an interesting _____ continuation of the subject. It was like first you're on the floor defending and then later he's on top of you and now you got to wrestle, grapple. And so our two classes back to back, you could see the students were like, this is great, because it all blended in to something that worked from one level to another. And I like it when it clicks like that, and every time you teach you streamline, and things get better and better, and, you know, I like that. In researching a subject, I learn so much researching on a simple subject that all of a sudden expands into something else. I learned maybe seven ways to draw a bow now, and any one source I have doesn't have all seven or eight, whatever, you know. We got these things, and these things, and these things, and then we have the Asian way and another Asian way

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You know, it goes on and on, the Mongolian goes on and on, and it's so fun, and I discovered this fun in _____ artwork. They're shown depicted in a 17th century depiction of some combat, people drawing a bow, and it's war, and we see that the artist has drawn them with this finger sticking out, but this thumb is obviously being used a Mongolian bow should be used instead of doing this. This is standard today. In Turkey, and Mongolia, and Korea, and Japan, this is the way they draw their bow. They wear a thumb ring and the string hooks on the thumb ring, or they use a glove, and that's the Mongolian way. So I'm teaching a class on wa dong [ph?], the wa dong do [ph?], whatever, you got to include that because they're very good archers. And so I'm researching this and I'm stumbling onto all these different things. I said, "Wow." Well, then I get to pass it on to the students, and my wife warns me, as Grandmaster told me this, "You don't have to tell them you just learned it." Leave that part out. Just tell them this is what you know, but I'm really too honest for my own good. If I just learned something, I want to pass it on, just like you find gold and you got to yell, "Eureka." Sheesh, you know, and that's the way I am, and she said, my wife, "_____", don't tell them everything, you know. Just tell them what you want to tell them. Don't tell them," but I want to tell them this. And that's one of my weaknesses, maybe, of being too honest, too forward. That's me, you know, take it or leave it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Has your, and I think maybe you probably talked about this, but has your approach to your own training changed over the years?

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Ted Mason: Had to be, yes. Got to be careful what I do now and so my approach is to do what I can and the best I can, but I have some problems in time spent to train. You know, I'll put off training when I shouldn't because of other, go off doing things that I shouldn't do. I mean I should do them right away but, I'll do that tomorrow, you know, and I'm doing that regularly more and more. And then when I go to do it I'm not as prepared as I should be, but mostly that's because, you know, I don't have to be prepared so much in that way. But it comes back to bite you when you go to demonstrate a technique and you haven't done it for a while, you know. It's tough, especially like you were with _____ not ready, you're in deep trouble, you know. But my memory is getting bad, so I forget, like, parts of hyung, or I'm teaching them, I leave things out. I just do that in Jersey this recently, one staff form I left about three moves out of that thing and I don't _____. It's like, it's gone, and I get, you know, send e-mails to these people that they give the e-mail address, like send the whole thing in writing, and that's when I saw, moving down to 19, 20, 21. I look down, how'd that happen? Maybe subconsciously I just didn't want to do it, or maybe just wanted to shorten the form somewhat.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. It's a time issue. Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: Honestly, I just forgot, period.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What do you think is the most important thing a senior person in the Moo Duk Kwan can contribute to the juniors?

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Ted Mason: I think, and we have done this, probably one of the most important things is to let them learn from our experiences, like our children, say, "Don't do what I did in this way because that doesn't work." Do it this way and you'll be better off than we were, because we did it the hard way." It goes on and on, and I'm talking about everything from studio operation. You know, they want to open up a studio downtown in a higher end district right away, start small, build, and then you can move up, move on downtown. Things like that, that kind of advice. I've been telling my students this too, you know. Young people don't listen very well to things like that, but, you know, it's important that they know that when we did those things it was incorrect. A lot of us old-timers maybe had fun talking about the good old days, but they weren't that good. They were real ignorant of a lot of things and so we did things the hard way, and some of us got hurt doing them. And it pains your teacher, but you don't want to cripple yourself, you know. So I warn people, like the stretches. We do ballistic stretches. We throw our leg in the air and see how far it'll go, and pretty soon it's flying up in the air and we're <breaking noise>. And that's the way we were taught, and so we pass that on, and I said, "No, no, no. This is, you're much better off doing it slow and easy at first and kind of gradually build up to it. Got to get you warmed up first." We did stretches before warm-ups when I was a beginner. Stretches were part of the warm-ups. We didn't really warm up. We were stretching. That's not a warm up but everything is backwards. We had water discipline. We said it was not good to drink water during class. It was a matter of discipline not to. After was okay, and so that didn't enhance our ability. I think it hurts physically, you know. I lose six pounds in moisture in a class, hour and a half. I remember weighing myself before class and after. Five to six pounds every class, and then of course the water tasted after class, but there should have been more breaks in there, every half hour maybe to chug some water

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And we were told in those days it would give you cramps or something if you drank water and then worked out, but to the contrary, it's the opposite. They said if you don't drink water that's the worst kind of cramp. You might get some stomach sloshing around in there, you know, but it's not going to hurt you. A lot of things, I think the seniors have a lot of that to offer. We probably had more fun telling about the way things were done in the old days because _____ now. I don't mind telling about that if it means you're going to _____ me, I don't mind talking about that now. I don't know, it might be like the rock, breaking rocks is, I realize now, I didn't realize it much, you know, that a lot of people didn't know about doing that. I don't know nationwide what we're doing. I can't speak for others but I saw literature that was handed out from those places, like from Detroit to New York, photographs and statements made by stuff in Black Belt magazine that there was something similar going on in every place else too. Not a lot, you know, and they were all doing the same things we were, kind of, but every instructor is different.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have any story with a moral that you like to tell your students, any particular story?

Ted Mason: Yeah. You're asking the wrong man. I have too many stories. You know that _____.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, you could tell a couple. That would be fine.

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Ted Mason: Okay, here's one. There is a tradition in the Kiowa tribes that before you enter a cave, and this is an ancient tradition. It's probably gone by the wayside, but before you enter a cave and they had different things, different incantations, that you chant before battle, before you get in the water with a canoe. There's like a prayer but it's a song and they sing this song to the spirits of the water or the spirits of the cave to appease them before going into the water, you know, before going into a cave. The story goes a young Kiowa hunter following the tracks of a deer into a cave, but he's hot on his trail. He totally ignores the custom, tradition, and enters the cave after this deer, and is killed by a grizzly bear who slept there. Moral of the story is, some tradition has value because he could have woke the doggone bear up and that might be the _____. Before you go into a dark cave <imitates Native American prayer>, hear that roar. That's one of my favorite because, you know, tradition, what are you talking about, tradition, you know? What good is it? What good is it? I tell you, there's a reason for everything. That's one of my favorites, and just off the top of my head. But like the guy said, I have a million of them. We're trying to come up with several that fit each of the things, like the Moo Do [ph?] values and other aspects, and I was working on them, and that was one that I had come across within this past year. My wife said, "You shouldn't tell people that you just learned it," but, so I mean _____.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Great, yes, sir.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Ted Mason: My attitude _____. It's like that in today's society having to do with respect for people is one that, this really happened. A friend of mine, thanks to his kid, this is a new tradition, okay. He calls me, I won't say his name because there's probably a lot of people who have the same name, but I was in the army with this fellow, and we weren't the best of friends but because we were in the army together, we ran across each other, recognized each other somewhere downtown. And we struck up a conversation, and exchanged phone numbers, you know, something to do with we were young and single then. I was thinking about, well, you know, if you know any good parties let me know. Because the Jewish people throw some really good parties. I wouldn't be invited to those, but he called me one day years after we were both married and he said, "I got a problem. My father is dying and he wants me to come and say this prayer." It's an old Hebrew psalm prayer. It's an ancient tradition in the orthodox faith of the Jews. He didn't practice orthodox. He's, like, reform, and really not very that much active anyway. But he didn't want to do it because he didn't like his father. His father and him didn't get along. He didn't approve of his marriage, that kind of thing, you know. He might have married outside the Jewish faith. That's another thing. And so he asked me what I thought because he really enjoyed my insight to things outside of his customs. And we got along fine. I was a really good soldier in the army. I knew things that he didn't know about the army because he _____ in high school. And so I gave him some advice that saved him in peacetime. So that's our connection. So he said, "What do you think I should do, because my father and I hated each other?" I said, "He's your father. Say the prayer. If you want to cross your fingers behind your back or something, you know, it's your father. He's dying. Yeah, I think you should say the prayer." He said, "Well, I don't even know the blankety-blank prayer." I said, "I'm sure they'll give it to you. You can read the thing and say it." And I always joked with him that I was related to Jackie Mason

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That was not true, the comedian, that's my connection also. And so when I came this kind of advice I was like, "Say the prayer. What can you lose?" Well, he didn't say the prayer. His father died and disinherited him. His sister got everything. We're talking about \$1 million worth of _____ plus, I think he said more than \$1 million. We'll leave it at \$1 million right now, whatever it was, and then he calls me says and how irritated his father is, again, pissed him off even after death. And I said, "Hey, you had your chance. That was the time." I said, "Right now, I could think of a million reasons why you should have said the prayer." And, you know, some things are so logical. It goes beyond tradition. It goes to doing the right thing, period, and sometimes you have to weight what's right. In this sense, what is the right thing? Okay, I don't care if you hate your father or not, there's something there that goes beyond personal feelings. It's a matter of discipline and _____ would agree with that. So I think, yeah, that's another story I tell to adults, tell a story about how this guy screwed up. And, you know, right or wrong it had nothing to do with money. I think it's the principle of it. I would've said the prayer.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir. What would you want students to know about you? Or how would you like to be remembered?

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Ted Mason: Now, someone asked me that recently. A young student of mine doing an essay thing for school, a high school kid. He asked me what my legacy was, would be, and I told him my legacy is my students because I couldn't think of anything else at the time. But how to be remembered, that's another thing. You know, I've always wanted to do a video tape, to have it played at my funeral. It would be too humorous for a funeral but I'd just like to say, I really hate funerals, you know, especially this one. I would like to be remembered as being someone who tried to do the right thing, you know, for better or worse, and who probably had a good sense of humor. I don't know. I never thought about that too much, like what I want put on my gravestone. I can't give you very much other than, you know, the standard thing, husband, father, _____. I'm hoping I was a good father at the end, you know. So far so good as far as the kids turning out. That makes me happy, you know. As far as a good husband, you'd have to talk to Keiko. I don't know whether I deserve that or not but, you know, _____. Like Keiko said, "they're going to miss you when you're gone. Yeah, they'll miss you too. Yeah, they'll miss both of us." She's worried about this family trust thing she wants me to _____ because she don't want the burden on our children to have to worry about. So sorting the gun collection goes to the son, and the diamonds, and rubies, and jewels go to the daughter. With two daughters that's a problem. So we got to figure that out. We will. I think I covered, good?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Is there anything else you wanted to say? Anything we didn't cover or if you think about something I'll be carrying this around Sunday, or tomorrow, or whatever. We can put a little extra on, okay.

Ted Mason: Okay, thank you.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Great.

Ted Mason: I enjoyed it.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay. We're back on.

Ted Mason: And this fellow, Roberto Villalba visited our country in 1973, '4, something like that. And he was a Taekwondo man from Mar del Plata, Argentina, which is in the super south of their country. He had connections and more or less the president of a martial arts group that had studios throughout the country, Taekwondo studios. And very dynamic personality, was a character, you know, super loud individual. He read a letter I wrote to the editor of Black Belt magazine discussing the situation in Korea and the way, you know, it had something to do with the forms and stuff. And this letter was read at the first meeting of their federation. I wasn't there but this is the kind of thing they said they wanted more publicity. They wanted us to be visible, and as I complained about certain things and the way the Korean government had treated Moo Duk Kwan, and Hwang Kee, and everybody else. And I vented. This is before word processors that I had control of and I know what cut and paste was, because I took scissors, and had to cut this, and rearrange thoughts because I wrote it in kind of a scatterbrained way, because this is the way I talk. You know, I rewrote that damn letter a dozen times, and they corrected my spelling, Black Belt magazine. There was one thing I spelled wrong and, you know, thank you, thank you, I caught it after it was too late. And so he read this letter while he was in L.A., very dissatisfied with the instruction he received. This is a thing by mail. He found this Taekwondo instructor in L.A. and at great expense to his organization they sent him off here to learn new forms and get a promotion test. And he was on the edge of suicide because he had nothing really of great value to bring back. So he read this letter in, I think it was Karate Illustrated then, and he got hold of me, and he asked to come and see me. And he came to our school, watched me teach. He said, "You will not believe this, but I teach exactly like you do, only in Spanish." I didn't use Korean terminology then. This was before the federation. So he moved to Oceanside in an apartment, and lived there for a month and trained with me, and we didn't have tape

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We filmed it in on Super-8, our forms, up to the rank that he was at. I think the highest rank, maybe Jin Don [ph?], Jin Don and Han Gi [ph?], one and two, something like that. Could have gone further but that's the things he brought back to his country. And he writes to me afterward, and he writes just like he talks, flamboyant, _____ paper for that. Said, "Hola, che [ph?] Que Tal?" Means, "Hello, brother. How are you?" And then the rest is in English. God, he says all these studios changed to Tang Soo Do this day. He was a dictator. Yeah, he had _____. He was all for Peron in those days, you know, little bit of a Nazi type character. Degree in philosophy from the University of Buenos Aires

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So because of him they became Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan because of this visit, because of him. I get credit for that. He called me El Pedrino del Tang Soo Do, the Godfather of Tang Soo Do in Argentina. Lovely. So then Grandmaster gets a hold of this information and of course he lived there for a while and trained with him, Roberto did. And so Argentina now has got this contingent because of this connection. Wonderful, and then I never did visit Argentina until 1999. Grandmaster was going down there to have his celebration. Their federation is older than ours because they started right away. They started in 1975 or '74, as soon as he went home. Typically ours started in '75 even though they keep announcing '76. I don't know how they get that wrong. Anyway. So I went there in 1999 and they let me teach a clinic, and I got to tell you this as an _____, you know. I come around the corner in this car to go to the studio to teach a clinic that night after I had some rest, and there's a banner across the entire street that says, "Welcome, Ted Mason." Sheesh. I said, "Never in my country," you know. I said, "You know in my country that's illegal. You can't do that." He said, "Here too, but you have to catch us." So I got a picture of it on the way back, taught the clinic. Then we, you know, long story short, _____ Mar del Plata which is quite a ways south of Buenos Aires, and Grandmaster taught his clinic on the _____. And I had a déjà vu experience there too, by the way. Better than that, I had _____. Do you know why we do, you notice you're doing middle punch going this way, where you turn, you go hadamake [ph?]?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Ted Mason: You ever wonder why we don't do a middle punch turning?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

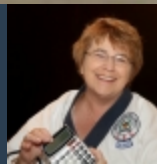
Ted Mason: I wondered. High punch, you do a turn, you do a little _____. Well, I've always wondered, and the joke in my studio is, when I make Grandmaster, as if, I will change that. But I discovered that day in Mara del Plata why, because in his clinic he teaches the _____ this stuff, right. And we turn like this, and like this. Well, when you're doing the punch thing, you're doing the hip going forward. When you turn, it's very difficult to turn all the way around this way. So you don't. You'd just rather to this, and it came to me, I said, "That's it. That's why it's done this way." And so I wanted to scream, you know. It's like the other things I mentioned.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Eureka.

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Ted Mason: I found Eureka. I found it and that day. Well, after he finished teaching he divided up the group into dans, adults, kids, and Cash Cooper was there. He was teaching in one corner and I came out. I got the dans, you know, because I was more senior probably. I got an interpreter there that considers himself my student. Roberto's no longer in Argentina. He's in Rome. So, and he's not with anything connected to us. He's his own guy. Anyway, that's the way they go. So I'm teaching the class. To make a long story short, you know, start with the form. We do it by the numbers and then I talk. Well, we do it without the numbers first. It was interpreted. We did this several times and made several corrections, and then somebody in the front row, some senior _____ level asked a question, who am I? I wasn't introduced and so I didn't realize it was important, and my interpreter, said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot to introduce you." So he tells them, "This is Ted Mason." They go, "Oh." They gasped. So then I told them, I said, "Well, you know, even Jesus said he wasn't a prophet. He's not respected in his hometown," and he wasn't. When he went back to Nazarene, right, he was a Nazarene, and so even he said that, and they all laughed. They're all Christian, Catholic types, and I said, "It's funny," I said, "I don't get this kind of response in my country. I really don't. I really appreciate your hospitality. You've been very good to me and I'm just passing on to you what I have learned from him. From Kwan Jang Nim." At that time he wasn't Kwan Jang Nim. So I gave him all the credit for this, but I said, "I have to teach you because there are so many differences, just like here," you know. Anyway, that's my favorite connection there. So I'm a godfather of Tang Soo Do. Of course now, they call it Soo Bahk Do too. Very good group of people and I really, really liked them a lot. I'd like to go back with Keiko to enjoy that kind of attention to, you know. She doesn't like to travel that far unless it's to a home country. So I thought _____.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Thank you.

Oral History

Sandra Schermerhorn, Sa Bom Nim initiated the oral history project to capture and preserve accounts of authentic Moo Duk Kwan® history from various active senior members.

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Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Jin Tae Hwang, Dan Bon #11 Oral History 📖

Posted by Oral History on Dec 10th, 2016 in [Korea](#)

Reading Time: 15 minutes

Jin Tae Hwang, Sa Bom Nim, dan bon#11, Oral History

By: Sandra Schermerhorn

Translator: Dae Kyu Chang

August 10, 2006

Jin Tae Hwang

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Who is Jin Tae Hwang? (bio, photo, etc.) Jin Tae Hwang, Sa Bom Nim is a cousin of the current Kwan Jang nim.

Why is he significant in the Moo Duk Kwan history? He is Dan Bon #11, and was a student of the Founder. As lawyer in South Korea, during the Korean War, Jin Tae Hwang, Sa bom Nim, defended the Founder during a legal hearing where the Founder was accused of working with the Communist North Koreans.



Jin Tae Hwang Oral History Recording

Audio Player

00:00

00:00

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Use Up/Down Arrow keys to increase or decrease volume.

Oral History Transcript

Sandra Schermerhorn: This is Sandra Schermerhorn. It's August 10th, 2006 and I'm in San Diego, California, USA, talking with Jin Tae Hwang and our interpreter is John Trabamien [ph?].

And your current residence and dan number?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Sandra Schermerhorn: All right, we're back on. Now, about his history in the martial arts. When did he start training in the martial arts and where was he?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I lived with the _____ before even Moo Duk Kwan started. So that's where we began Moo Duk Kwan was _____ in Seoul.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, how old was he when he started training?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I was 19.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Nineteen, and did he train in a class with people, or just with the founder?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: It depend, because he lived with The late Kwan Jang Nim [ph?] and if there's class he was with a group.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What was class like?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: When we began to train, the facility of Do Jam [ph?] was very, very poor. So everybody had the challenges to train. The circumstance was after they free from Japanese occupation. So everybody had a difficult situation to train and endure the circumstance.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay, is there anybody else in his family who trained with him?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: No, I was only 19 so I didn't have family then. So I was _____ my family.

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Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I lived with the late Kwan Jang Nim since I was little.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, since he was a child.

Interpreter: Yes, and he was with the family too.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When they had classes, Tae, tell me something about the class. Like, they did they train inside or outside? Were the classes long?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: When we began, we rented the abandoned building hourly, so it's not the whole day thing. So since we were a very small group, the Late Kwan Jang Nim had to borrow an abandoned building just for lunch hours. That's how we trained.

Sandra Schermerhorn: On their lunch hour. Okay, did they train every day?



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

#14 is Jin Tae Hwang Sa Bom Nim, directly behind the Founder, Hwang Kee.

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Every day except Saturday and Sunday, but the class, beside the class everybody trained at home where they can train. So that's not included in class. So it's much more vigorous training by every individual.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When in the class, was it all mostly young men? Did women or children train?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: It's early twenties mostly, but no women, and mostly the railroad employees utilized their lunch time frame.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And he worked on the railroad also?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That was his job?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: In the beginning, only the railroad employees, the transportation actually at that time, little boys did on the train. That's how they started.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see. Now, how vigorous was the training? Like did they condition their hands for breaking?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The early days, we just trained the basics. Only basics for a year and then after all the basics training and then after get a different belt, and the training differs. But in the beginning part, a year, it's just basic, just like elementary school is basic, went to next grade. It adds up more subjects, that's how our training was then.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: It's not like these days where there are several hundred people. In the early days because they have only few and because it's different rank, all the basics do together and the class structure was certain amount of class percentage is all basics together. And after that, you know, different ranks were practiced different form requirements, and different rank for the various rank practiced their required _____, or one step sparring.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, they did one step sparring too? What was sparring like?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: We didn't spar right away. The Late Kwan Jang Nim had to watch and see if we can, who was ready and who was not ready, and the people who is ready to spar, and then we'll have sparring class. And as now, same as now, we did have a control sparring.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh did they?

Interpreter: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: But no equipment? That's a very new thing isn't it?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: No, just bare fits.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How about Chok Pa [ph?], breaking, what did they do?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The Moo Duk Kwan is well known for Chok Pa in Korea. The Chok Pa part, any martial art demonstration, Moo Duk Kwan practitioner always wanted to demonstrate the very artistic Chok Pa demonstrations.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What kind of techniques did they use?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Usually hand techniques, mat and strike, and then fist, and then _____, sidekick. Very simple like that.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: And also elbow strike.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Sandra Schermerhorn: Quon su [ph?]

Interpreter: Quon so was very popular.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: These days I don't see Quon su and they use elbow.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir, they do. What does he like to break? What's his favorite?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Chung Quong [ph?], fist.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And what did they break, boards?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Red bricks, usually red bricks.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Or roof tile.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Usually red bricks, usually for the stone, and roof tile at some point. They used to use the roof tile for Chung Quong and used red bricks for Soo Do, mat and strike.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The Kwan Soo [ph?] _____, they did use a board.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Boards for that one. Did they have tournaments?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: No, at the beginning, no, it's not enough people.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: The Late Kwan Jang Nim didn't believe in tournaments. I believe that still we don't have a tournament. We have a martial festival, where you can demonstrate the Chok Pa and other area in _____. So I don't see this as a tournament. I see this as art festival.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The tournament or competition, I believe there cannot be a competition is because competition means somebody lose, somebody wins. In our art, we are all winner. So therefore we cannot be a competition. Somebody has to die, somebody has to alive. So the art is not about that killing or winning. So the Late Kwan Jang Nim never use the tournament or competition. He always use Chung Yun Da we [ph?]. Chung Yun Da we means art festival.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see. All right, can he tell me what other people's attitude was about martial arts?

Interpreter: About Moo Duk Kwan or just martial art?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Actually, both.

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: Those days, early days we have _____ now in Moo Duk Kwan and other start is Orso [ph?] is smaller numbers. Because very few people trained, public were not aware, because those trainings were pretty secluded. It's not a secret but it's not well known then to the public, so public wasn't aware. But if the public knew, only few people knew that the training martial art, the martial art people who trained the martial art, that it's very strong or powerful, be, you know, not afraid but respected, that they knew something.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How long did he actively train in the martial arts?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I was teaching at a Chin He [ph?] until 1984. It doesn't mean that I stopped a Moo Duk Kwan life. My Moo Duk Kwan life continues. So I still practice in Moo Duk Kwan.

Sandra Schermerhorn: All right, what is his favorite thing to do? Like did he like sparring, did he like forms? What did he like as a person training?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: My favorite training is the multiple sparring, or the multiple special sparring with the tan do [ph?] weapon. That's what the Late Kwan Jang Nim asking to practice a lot. So he did- I did demonstrate many times the multiple sparring and multiple weapon, self defense.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: If he would give us some advice about the multiple sparring, what would he like to say?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I don't know. I mean I'm sure there's unlimited way to tell you or the practitioner. It's hard to say, you know, it's hard to tell you what advice I would give to you.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: Actually, we didn't have a dan system first, as you know. The Late Kwan Jang Nim didn't wear dan belt until later, but the early days we used to go to the mountain and certain skills we mastered, takes five or six years, or whatever, and we come down, you know, and we teach or demonstrate. So that's the way that we used to train in the early days, talking about two, three people at a group. So the master goes, takes a couple disciples and train your certain skills and then master approves. In this case, the Late Kwan Jang Nim would go okay, you can demonstrate.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Was it considered like a better place to train in the mountains than in the buildings in town?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I believe there is difference between training in mountain, or nature, or in the city. In the city it's easy to get distracted, and the towns are divided. So it's much more effective to train in the mountain is because it's almost like one in one situation. So you can really concentrate on certain training and less distraction. So I believe that training in the nature is much more effective.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I did that for four years. I wish I did it one more year but there's Korean War broke out and unfortunately had to stop that. He regrets that he didn't do long enough because of the Korean War.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: I was some time almost losing my mind, thinking about my training, and if trained properly you don't have to actually go contact the person. Actually the person comes to your hand or foot, they hit. That's how the good training will do because if you don't train hard enough or effectively, you have to go out, reach out to punch instead of the person comes to you, to your hand, or your foot, your kick. That's how your body has to be fluent. You have to be free and by the time you have to block and contact it's too late. So when I was training it's almost like I don't have to look where the technique is coming. Automatically my hand will move, or my foot, body will move away without looking, that you will become like that if you train severely, severely, certain basic techniques or certain techniques for a long time. So you would gain awareness.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: When you spar, the chisan [ph?] becomes very important because in the beginning you want, intend to use very physical talents. But as you go higher, more advanced, it's eye to eye combat. So when you see your opponent's eyes, you know what techniques he or she might use, which direction they're going to move. So you can detect, you can see their motion to come in the eyes, and then same time you have to learn how to breathe carefully, because you can detect when they're going to move and how they're going to move by listening to their breathing. So it's good to confuse your opponent by various breathing technique, and there's different angle posture or distance. It is good to confuse your opponents, and so the opponent cannot detect you.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I have not ever heard of that, the breathing.

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: When you get hit, why you inhale is much more different than when you hit, contact, when you exhale.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You know, I hear the eye to eye, you know, but I even don't think about listening to the breathing, you know. It's good.

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Let's don't go into detail but somehow if the talent, the skill is too different between person A and B, the person has less skill try to maneuver the techniques to the senior rank or much higher skill, it doesn't work that way no matter how. And versus the high skill person can control the lower skill person easy as it is, and that is the nature.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: Let's do the other things.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay, when he was training, he's trained a long time, what changes has he seen over the years in the training, the number of people?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Oh it is a lot.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The biggest things happened in Moo Duk Kwan life is the Korean War and that was devastating, not only my life change but social changes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Did he live, for the Korean War, did he live in Seoul?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Yes, I lived in Seoul during the Korean War.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That was kind of a dangerous place?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Of course it was very dangerous, life threatening.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yeah.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: When the Korean War broke we didn't have time to pack or anything. So what I remember was I ran out with underwear and t-shirts _____.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And how long was it bad in Seoul?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: When the Korean War broke, actually it broke June 25, actually the North Korean came and attacked us in Seoul June 28th. That's when I escaped and ran out to the near mountain.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, he went up to the mountain. Oh, and he trained before the Korean War stopped, then later?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Of course I did.

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: Because the Korean War broke and Moo Duk Kwan was all dismissed, and it was lost, and it start back a year and a half later, we met and continued on.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: During the war, it depends on the situation of the war. The Late Kwan Jang Nim also has to move around to himself _____ like that and that's when we had a Moo Duk Kwan _____.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Were you in Pusan too? Did you go to Pusan?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You did too.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The current _____ was five years old.

Sandra Schermerhorn: A little boy. How about, were there dan testings in Korea?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Of course we had.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: What were they like? You know how ours were a day or a couple hours.

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: In the beginning because a few of us, it only took a few hours, but I remember the biggest event at that time in Pusan, almost 500 people were applying for dan Shin Sa [ph?] and that took a long, long time. There was a very, very, one of the biggest growing period at that time was when we had over 500 people, candidates were applying for dan Shin Sa.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Does he recall when that was?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: That was just before 1960, the coup-de-tat. So it must be 1959.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So he saw the Moo Duk Kwan go from three or four people training up to 500 people testing then?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



L-R: Master Bonefont, Allen Ruqus SBN, Master Rachel Schepperly, from Region 2 USA, and Jin Tae Hwang Sa Bom Nim, meeting for the first time during the 60th Anniversary in Korea, 2005.

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: So I was then when the 500 people were testing, I was the Shin Sa board.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, I see. So did he have a school then?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: That's in the naval academy I was teaching.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: This is the naval academy rank.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Sandra Schermerhorn: 1956, yes.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: And in 1983 he stopped teaching.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, I see. That's a treasure. That's a very special– can you tell me a little bit about the schools that he's taught at, that he had?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Because they were only there for four years, it was difficult to teach them longer period. So my responsibility to teach is only for four years so that _____ some people stay a little longer, they didn't go beyond Hi Dan [ph?].

Sandra Schermerhorn: Does he have a <inaudible> with any of his former students?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Many, many of my disciples live in Seoul.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Interpreter: Now, I know they live in Seoul but they're over 70 years old. So, but I know they are there and many people get together, but I am in Chinhae, it's much, much south of Korea.

Sandra Schermerhorn: About how far away from that is Seoul?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: It takes about five to six hours.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, far. That's far.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: In Korea, they each like a school especially naval academy, my disciples have certain class championship. They have a, like a graduate '62, they have more like a union, like class campus union and they have contact. They have _____. So if I contact one person, so everybody shows up. So it's easy to find my disciples in Korea.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, good. Yay. Oh, about dan testing, does he have any favorite memories about getting ready for dan testing?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

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Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The Late Kwan Jang Nim never gave me good scores. He just give me enough for me to just work harder, harder, gives about 70 to 80, just enough to pass. So that next meeting to work harder and the Late Kwan Jang Nim always, always gave me something to work on. So that's hard but sometime it's disappointing but I know Late Kwan Jang Nim intention. I think he thought on my training it will last in my memory.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I never could get 100%.

Sandra Schermerhorn: He has a long history, long time in training. Does he have a best memory, something that made him feel good, very satisfying?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The most enjoyable moment for me was when the Moo Duk Kwan was explained to the public, it was so dynamic period. The saddest memory of my life is when Taekwondo _____ surpassed Moo Duk Kwan and we lost a _____, the studio, we lost many schools, and some of them had to flee to different countries. So that is not only Moo Duk Kwan's sad experience, it's my treasure too, also my personal in my career.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

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Interpreter: If that didn't happen, if that Taekwondo _____, the government didn't suppress Moo Duk Kwan, you can imagine how big, dynamic Moo Duk Kwan would be today. Ever since I see that, it's very unfortunate.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: During the Korean War, all the head of the different organization was lost, and they went away. Only Moo Duk Kwan and Moo Duk Kwan, Kwan Jang Nim, stood as head of the Moo Duk Kwan organization and that's only organization that the founder, the founder saved the position and stood by the principle.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, in talking about the founder, do you have a favorite time you spent, he and you together, or favorite story about him?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I don't have my memory of certain way as you probably expect, because our Moo Duk Kwan, my Moo Duk Kwan life started with the late Kwan Jang Nim same place on the same house. I lived with him. So it's basically just no memories. The only memories at that time was to recover from the lost period. It just work, work, work, nothing but work to save Moo Duk Kwan and to reestablish the Moo Duk Kwan, and getting the late Kwan Jang Nim's fight to find disciples, and me try to support him, and the whole Moo Duk Kwan association at that time was vigorously trying to work hard to rebuild the Moo Duk Kwan System. And that, I think that is very, very hard work because of that. I would say that is my, the best memory of the late Kwan Jang Nim myself being together.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: Working hard, yeah. Do you have a photograph or remember a photograph that has special meaning?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: The Korean broke out, as I walk out there were, you know, underwear and shirt, we don't have a picture, and in those days we didn't have the technology, having cameras and any equipment to have pictures, just simply that's how the war effected in our life. It's really, really rare to have somebody has camera or things that we can photograph.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I had so many books related to martial arts but I lost it all.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Lost everything.

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: When we got hit by the bomb, we had to lose everything.

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I have a lot of materials, as I repeat, I had a lot of reading materials gathered before the Korean War and it just so disappointed I couldn't save those books.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: If he could give some advice to practitioners now, what would he say to them?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: Only I wish to members, to the younger generation is to unify, everybody unifies under the current Kwan Jang Nim. Everybody must unify whether you're smarter, or less smart, or you're better or worse, everybody must unify to the one Moo Duk Kwan and support the current Kwan Jang Nim. And that will ensure our _____ Moo Duk Kwan.

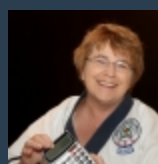
Sandra Schermerhorn: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us, anything that he thinks we ought to know?

Interpreter: <speaks Korean>

Tae Hwang: <speaks Korean>

Interpreter: I didn't prepare for this surprise, so now I don't have much to say. Maybe next time.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Oral History

Sandra Schermerhorn, Sa Bom Nim initiated the oral history project to capture and preserve accounts of authentic Moo Duk Kwan® history from various active senior members.

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Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Larry Seiberlick, Sa Bom Nim, Oral History Interview

Posted by Oral History on Dec 11th, 2016 in [USA](#)

Reading Time: 43 minutes

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich, Sa Bom Nim, dan bon #1815, 9th Dan, Oral History

Seiberlich and Mason interviews are mixed in the audio files and transcripts and must be sorted and edited to separate them.

Sandra Schermerhorn: This is Sandra Schermerhorn. It is August 10th, 2006; I am in San Diego, California, talking with Lawrence, (Larry), Seiberlich Sa Bom Nim, and Sa Bom Nim Seiberlich, could you tell me where you live now, and where you flew in from?

Larry Seiberlich: I live in Maplewood, Minnesota, I lived in the Twin Cities almost all my life.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see, and your Dan number and your current instructor?

Larry Seiberlich: My current instructor is Kwan Jang Nim, and my Dan number is 1815.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And do you own a studio now?

Larry Seiberlich: I have a studio which was established at the beginning of the federation, Studio #7, Minnesota Tang Soo Do Association, but actually I only teach my students who are all master instructors.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, I see, and where is your studio located?

Larry Seiberlich: It's in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see. And can you give me just a little sketch about who you are in terms of your education, employment, family, hobbies, any one or all of those.

Larry Seiberlich: That's a story. My education, I have a BA degree from the University of Minnesota, a Professional Degree in Architecture, and a Masters and Ph.D. in other disciplines . I have owned and operated an architectural firm for thirty-some years. Three years ago I started a biotechnology company, and we are in the midst of working with both commercial and government agencies in the use of our technology. I have been married 40 years and I have three children, grown, and some grandchildren. I play a lot of competitive handball, and I train in martial arts, play a little golf, etc. The only way I could attend college was to get an athletic scholarship which required I play three sports, Then fate found me coaching college football, and scouting for the National Football League-

Sandra Schermerhorn: You did?



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Larry Seiberlich: I've been involved in a lot of different areas of athletics all my life. I have also trained law enforcement personnel for 35 years; I have trained government forces.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When you say trained, you are talking about the physical like—

Larry Seiberlich: Defensive tactics, guerrilla tactics, firearms, special operations.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, I see. Can you give me just a brief history of your training in terms of instructors and locations?

Larry Seiberlich: I started in Judo as when I was in US Army Military Police school in 1958. We were required to learn Judo and some Jujitsu techniques. Following that I trained more in Judo at my next post in Texas and I became a Judo player when I arrived in Korea. I was told my second week there that I would be a body guard for the UN Forces Commander Far East, a four star general, and that they would like me to volunteer to take Tang Soo Do. In the Army, when they ask you to volunteer, they are telling you that's what you're going to do, so they enrolled me the next week in Tang Soo Do at Yong San Military Reservation in Seoul. I was with Charlie Company 728th MP's, so we were the police of Seoul, basically, and Trent Gym was the location on the Yong San Reservation. My instructor was Master Cho Won, Dan Number 80, and my assistant instructor was Shim Sang Kyu, who was a third Dan at the time, and his number was 180. (Master Hanke could fill you in on that because he housed Master Shim when he came to the US.) I trained there and at the Central Do Jang near the RTO in Seoul, and the Army provided me with two hours every day, five days a week, that I could train on my own during my patrol shift, and then I trained in the evening.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, great. What motivated you? I guess you already talked about how you got into the Martial Arts, but the question is what motivated you to get into the Martial Arts, but you were pretty much put in. Is that something you were interested in anyway?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, as a youngster I was always involved in sports, so I felt that this was another physical activity, and I liked physical activity. I liked to jump high, so this allowed me to jump and people didn't look at me strangely.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And how old were you when you started?

Larry Seiberlich: I was 17 when I started Judo; 18 when I started Tang Soo Do.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Was there any tradition in your family training in the Martial Arts?

Larry Seiberlich: No.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You were the first one.

Larry Seiberlich: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When you trained in the Do Jang in Korea, what was the class like?

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Larry Seiberlich: It was all American soldiers and we trained in a handball court 40×20, that was my first introduction to handball and it stayed with me the rest of my life. The class was run along the lines of any other class in Korea, because I visited a number of other Do Jangs when I was there. Our instructors spoke very little English. There were a few, maybe they had a 30-word vocabulary of English, but almost the entire class was taught in Korean, demonstration was a big part of it, and the class would last two hours and we would train steadily for two hours. One time we did 400 Yup Podo Cha Gi continuously. I'm not saying that's good or bad, but just telling what we did.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have any favorite story about your early training?

Larry Seiberlich: Oh, there are many stories, and I don't think I have a favorite although when Syngmun Rhee was the dictator of Korea after the Korean War, (the President of Korea), his main bodyguard, a Korean gentlemen, and I would train at Yong San Hill and if I were on MP duty I would stop by and we would do a lot of training, an awful lot of Kyok Pa. Both of our hands were heavily callused at the time. I had half-inch calluses on my knuckles and my hands were callused, and so were his. He had so much callus on his hand, and he did so much Kyok Pa, that he had difficulty operating chop sticks in order to eat, so he was eating with a fork that I got him from our mess. It was strange at the time.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When you practiced, what did you hit?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, a board with a certain kind of— it was wrapped in different ways, different type of wrapping, and we also hit in a certain kind of sand, heavy grain sand, and gravel, and there was an ointment that we put on the board and on our fists so that it wouldn't deteriorate the calluses.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And then when it actually broke, what did you break?

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Larry Seiberlich: We broke wood and there was a roof tile that was made out of cement that was on a lot of the buildings. We'd break those tiles; they were slightly curved. You'll see some pictures of those. In my first demonstration as a green belt at the 8th Army Club, the first one that my class did, Frank Scalercio who was at that time a Cho Dan (he was our class leader), he broke a stack of ten of those roof tiles with his fist, and I broke a shorter stack with soo do. I have a few photos of that demo and there are some in the Moo Duk Kwan history book also.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You did that? I've seen those tiles, they're pretty thick, too, right?

Larry Seiberlich: Oh, that's not very big material. I would say it's the equivalent- a stack of six patio tiles is stronger than ten of those roof tiles.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have any memories of your early training partners?

Larry Seiberlich: There was Kelly Phalen who was a military policeman with me in the same platoon. He was a good partner. And Colonel Butterwick, he was an older gentleman, a colonel who trained with us. And, of course, Frank Scalercio the Cho Dan. But there were a number like Bill Trogden who I kept in contact with in Washington.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Through your training, and there's probably been some major changes affecting you as a student, you know, training in Korea, coming back, can you talk about some of those changes?

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Larry Seiberlich: A lot of things changed, our Art changed. One thing I noticed when I was in Korea, we were a very large martial art, in fact, at that time, we were the largest karate type art, kick-punch-block-strike art. When I wore my Dan pin in Korea, people would bow, and they'd know, everyone knew what the Moo Duk Kwan was, and it was highly respected. So we were known pretty well in the community by the Koreans just because we were Moo Duk Kwan and I was an NCO in the MPs who they saw quite often. The Art at that time was very powerful, obviously we all know what happened when the Sygmund Rhee was deposed and the new government came in and Tae Kwon Do became the art of choice for the government.

I came back to the United States and no one had heard of Martial Arts, so every Martial Artist was probably on square one as far as the American Public, and I tried to teach some of the things that I learned, but there weren't any Tang Soo Do practitioners in my area and there were very few in the country at that time, but I did teach in a Shotokan School for a little while, and I taught some other people in my small class. I actually applied my Tang Soo Do training many times as a military policeman and as a body guard. When I returned to the States, for 13 months I was at Ft. Lewis, Washington, as a patrol supervisor in the military police, so I used that training, and I also trained Special Ops Forces, where I combined the Tang Soo Do training with three other instructors. One of them was a US Army Ranger, he showed me some Ranger techniques and one was a Ju Jitsu Judo Master. One was a government spook. We combined our knowledge into a comprehensive tactics system and I was able to learn some different techniques.

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Obviously it has changed. I didn't have an instructor for a long time in Minnesota. Starting college in 1961, I was busy playing three sports, although I started the Minnesota Tang Soo Do Association December 1962, and it's the oldest continuously functioning Tang Soo Do (Soo Bahk Do) organization in the country. Then I trained with a number of other instructors in the area, and we were sort of the scouts that came out with the first ideas, so I learned other types of arts and eventually became a Master in several such as Tae Guk Kwon (T'ai Chi Ch'uan). In 1964, Sang Kyu Shim contacted me (Master Hanke had brought him over from Korea), and he suggested I come and train with him, so I went to Detroit, took a second Dan test with him, and I also competed in some tournaments in other cities.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How far is that from where you live?

Larry Seiberlich: I drove once and I flew once. Driving is about 16 hours.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see, yes. Okay. In terms of the not having the instructor there, certainly that was a challenge for you. Did you have any setbacks in your training due to illness or you said school, did you train during college?

Larry Seiberlich: Sure.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, you still did.

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Larry Seiberlich: In fact, I started a self defense class for women at the college and I had 50 women every time I offered it, and it was good, and I ran a regular Tang Soo Do Class three days a week. I taught college athletes for 12 years, so I didn't know that people weren't able to do 20 one-handed push-ups every once in awhile during practice and it was kind of a shock to me to find out that not everyone functioned at that level.

My Dan number is an interesting thing. I didn't know until quite a bit later, that Shim Sang Kyu didn't turn in the Dan numbers after my Cho Dan test in Korea. He issued me the Dan number of 1815, so I had that number, but he kept the money and he didn't submit it to Kwan Jang Nim. It wasn't until Kwan Jang Nim came to the United States in 1974 that I realized that. In 1965 or 1966, Shim SK said, "The Kwan Jang Nim has developed some new forms and I want you to come to Detroit and learn them". So I did. He had gone to Tae Kwon Do and he taught me all the Tae Kwon Do forms. Later, when I found that out, that was the last I had anything to do with him. Then, I really had no Tang Soo Do instructor until 1974, when the Founder came here and he became my instructor.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You kept in touch with the Kwan Jang Nim before he came here?

Larry Seiberlich: No.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Or how did you know he was here?

Larry Seiberlich: I had talked to Norris about something else and he told me that he was coming with other people to New Jersey to meet with Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee in November and that I should represent my area. A month later I received a letter from Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee inviting me to the meeting.

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At the time, I had been teaching in Minnesota for 14 years and had schools going and many students, but we had no relationship to Korea because I had no instructor and I had no entre to Korea. So we were completely cut off, and in a way, Tang Soo Do abandoned us. We didn't abandon Tang Soo Do. I asked a number of other instructors what they were doing, and they were doing just about the same thing because a number of the Koreans that came to the US told us that they were supporting Kwan Jang Nim. But they weren't; they were keeping the money and they just defected. So, after awhile we became very suspicious, and that's why, when we formed the federation, we structured it very carefully so that that would never happen in the future. People like Martinov and Hanke Sa Bom Nims and I, and others throughout the country, had been affected negatively by some of the Koreans that came over and were dishonest about representation. And, obviously, the person who was the most affected by it was Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee because they let him down.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, that's interesting. It must have felt very disappointing to everybody to have these people come over here, who you hoped were going to train you in Tang Soo Do and—

Larry Seiberlich: Not that disappointed, because then you become disappointed with the subject. If you have a bad teacher, you can still enjoy the subject, but unfortunately, after a few trips through the same subject where the teacher lets you down, you don't like that subject anymore just because of the relationship with a poor teacher.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, understandable, sure. Just going back, we'll come back to the charter members, but sticking with your earlier training, you said you went to a lot of tournaments. What were tournaments like then?

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Larry Seiberlich: Well, a few tournaments. I can remember one that I was in and there was a demonstration prior to it in which a number of Martial Arts presented. One man who was about, oh, 6'5", about 250 pounds, came out and stacked three patio tiles between some concrete blocks and leaned over them, and I thought, "What's he doing here?" All of a sudden he smashed them with his forehead, and I thought this fellow doesn't bode well. I wondered who he was going to be fighting with in this tournament, and, sure enough, he was the first person I drew.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You!

Larry Seiberlich: I was 6'3", 215 pounds at the time, but so much smaller than this gentleman, and after his demo, I thought he was a few clicks off anyway. In my match there was a lot of contact. Contact wasn't acceptable, but after the referee said break each time, my opponent would get in a late hit. And this happened about four times. After the fourth time my lip was bleeding and I had a cut on my ear, and I thought, this isn't too good. We didn't wear any pads. I thought I'll never make it through this. There were a lot of people at this tournament, and some folding chairs in the front row that they put adjacent to the bleachers. and I jumped up and kicked him with a Dwi Dollyo Yup Podo Cha Gi, and I thought I hit him pretty hard in the chest. I flew back like I had hit a concrete wall and landed on the floor and he slowly crumbled into those folding chairs. In a tournament today, obviously, I would be disqualified, but I was just trying to survive.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Larry Seiberlich: Well, I hopped up and looked down at him, and thought at least he's not going to cheap shoot me anymore. And to my complete surprise, they raised my hand before they even attended to him and said I was the winner. So things were a little different in those days.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir, yes, sir. Did they have form competitions?

Larry Seiberlich: Yes, in most tournaments they did, but, as I remember it, we'd do a form and it was very difficult for anyone to judge it because unless your art was represented well in a judging group, the people didn't understand and they favored their art. I can remember when we first planned the Diamond National, we were trying to recruit people who were fair judges who understood many different Martial Arts, because most people didn't have the experience with numerous arts. When you're judging open competition you need to understand the basics of physical movement and what can be accomplished in movement. So it was much more important in those days to have people experienced in those kinds of things. It's easier to judge fighting because either you see a score or you don't, whereas the forms were more difficult. When weapons were introduced it was even more difficult. I was in an area where there weren't many tournaments. We didn't hold tournaments because there just weren't enough schools. In 1965, I think we had five Martial Arts schools. I taught at the University of Minnesota, and I taught at Macalester College, and there were three street schools in the metropolitan area of two million. Most metropolitan areas would love that, very low competition. We just had no one teaching.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And were they full time schools or part time?

Larry Seiberlich: The street schools were full time. There were a few people who operated out of their garage, etcetera, but I probably had more students than most. At the University of Minnesota school, we did a lot of training, just people from other Martial Arts would come and train with me there. Instructors of the other schools would come and train with me, so we all knew each other very well. And that went on until probably 1972 or 1973, when there was enough critical mass. That's when we first held our first Tang Soo Do tournament.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Where was that?

Larry Seiberlich: That was held in St. Paul, Minnesota. Our first Martial Arts tournament held in a Karate style art was in 1965. The five school operators put together a tournament, but, again, it was very difficult to get competitors and fair judges.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And when they competed did they do forms and sparring? Did they do breaking?

Larry Seiberlich: Occasionally they did breaking, and always in the— when we started the Tang Soo Do tournaments, there was breaking. Our Region is known for breaking in tournaments, testings and demonstrations.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What's your favorite break, yours personally?

Larry Seiberlich: Now it's performing what I call a discretionary break where I take three patio tiles and suspend them between the bricks or whatever, and someone tells me which one they want me to break, and I will break that one and the other two won't break. Breaking long ago was jump spinning double kicks, and general jump kicking and breaking a lot of things before landing, you know, that type of thing. But, now, obviously, I don't (can't) do that anymore.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir, yes, sir. Okay. One other thing. Is there any memorable occurrence at a tournament, something that stuck in your mind, made an impression on you?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, I think there were all kinds of events that made impressions on me. I've seen so many tournaments that I don't think I can come up with one.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Sure. Okay. We talked a little bit about training, and you explained what class was like. Can you tell me what kind of discipline was used in class?

Larry Seiberlich: You mean what type of protocols were introduced or discipline or what?

Sandra Schermerhorn: What kind, like push-ups?

Larry Seiberlich: I never found that people acted incorrectly. I mean, there was never a punishment thing that I did because the people that I trained were all well disciplined athletes, and they all were there because they wanted to learn. When people strayed from intent and focus, all I did was mention it to them, and if people couldn't stay with it, they just left, it was just too demanding for them. There was never a case of people not performing. It's not like teaching eight-year-old kids; it was adults who were very driven.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Right. They were motivated; they wanted to be there. When did you see the change in classes where women started training, children started training, families started training?

Larry Seiberlich: Interesting question.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When did that happen?

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Larry Seiberlich: I didn't train women. I saw Martial Art as a Moo Do discipline and fundamentally a high level of discipline to develop awareness and an ability to defend oneself, and to maintain discipline in all situations. And I taught it to people so they would survive. It wasn't for sport; it was to survive. And part of that was doing things which would incapacitate other people. I didn't teach women until 1971; that's when the women's movement was really picking up and a group of women from a commune came to me at the College and said, "We would like to learn this Art." I said, "Okay, I've never done this before, let's give it a whirl." But it was difficult for me. It was their general lack of self-discipline and their self-entitlement attitude that created a, what I would call it, a falling out and I excused 17 women at one class session. I said, "You're through." Now that I look back on it, I guess I failed.

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That was the last time that I taught women until 1975, when two women came to the college and wanted to start, and I said, "No." They said, is it okay if we observe classes? They came to every class, that's three times a week, for two months. And, finally I decided that anyone with that kind of discipline to sit and watch through that many classes, I'll teach. One of them became one of the best students I've ever had. And that's when I decided that the art was for some women. One of my daughters is a Dan, and Charlotte Grove, who was that woman, was my daughter's teacher. I never taught my daughter or my son. But my son was doing jump kicks over the furniture when he was five years old. But now, the last two months in my classes, we've been talking about the women's role in Soo Bahk Do. About 30% of my students are women. But in Soo Bahk Do, there are many physical things that are more difficult for women to do; it's not easy for them. I'm wondering, and I posed this question to my students: How is the art going to prosper in the future if it doesn't recognize a very powerful and meaningful dimension of our society, women, and accommodate that in our Art? Kwan Jang Nim and I were talking about that this morning. How do we accommodate different groups rather than the 22-year-old men who were the traditional students 50 years ago? What about all of the Senior population that can benefit from some aspects of Soo Bahk Do?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir, yes. And children make up a big part of the school.

Larry Seiberlich: Well, that's a whole different element. I've never taught a child and that's something I would never do because I don't feel that the Martial Arts that I know, is appropriate for children. Part of the Martial Art is, but not as I know it. So I'll let others who have a different view of it, and better skills than I have, do that.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, speaking of men, 22-year-old men training in the earlier years, and then women coming along and children coming along, too, when you look back, your perception, what were people's attitudes in general towards the Martial Arts initially?

Larry Seiberlich: When I first came to the United States as a Martial Artist, and I came back in 1960, no one knew what the Martial Arts were. And we were considered to be mysterious people, violent people. And as people became more informed about it, by 1965, many police forces were interested in us teaching them, and that's when I started to work with law enforcement agencies and parts of the Federal government. And we were considered to be highly trained good people. Then, as the flower children came along and the peace movement, there was another stimulus, and we became the bad guys in some eyes and the great guys in other eyes. By 1975 or 1976, there were so many different Martial Arts that featured so many different perspectives, that I think most people understood it wasn't so much the Martial Art, but the Martial Artist and how each Martial Artist interpreted their training and purpose. And that goes back to the instructor; what kind of values the instructor personally passed on to the students. But then again, it went back to the art itself, and what are those fundamental values that the art describes for the practitioners? But it can be very different from the point of what the Martial Arts founder envisions to what any member actually practices. I think that Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan is very, very good in presenting and maintaining its values. I was just in the TAC meeting and they were talking about controlling those kinds of value issues and making sure that all members understood them and how they can pass those down so that every member passes on those qualities in the dojang and in his/her life. Unfortunately, many other Martial Arts weren't (aren't) that way.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How about your family's attitude toward your training?

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Larry Seiberlich: Well, I was a Martial Artist, and I had taught Martial Arts for four years, before I was married. And I started Martial Arts eleven years before my first child was born. So, really, I was a Martial Artist for so long that it was just part of my life.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's who you were.

Larry Seiberlich: That's who I was, and that's what my family saw me to be.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see.

Larry Seiberlich: You know, like everyone else, there are many other facets of me, but that is part of it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When you started the Martial Arts, did you talk about what your ambitions were in terms of Martial Arts?

Larry Seiberlich: I had none.

Sandra Schermerhorn: No ambitions?

Larry Seiberlich: No.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You were just training.

Larry Seiberlich: I was told to be there and, as such, I did what the Military told me, I trained.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, sir.

Larry Seiberlich: It was challenging and it was fun and I used in my work every day.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Have you changed over the years for your ambitions?

Larry Seiberlich: No.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You just like what you're doing.



Larry Seiberlich: I just do it and whatever comes up, comes up. Now I'm doing work with the World Moo Duk Kwan, the international organization, and we're working with Kwan Jang Nim on that. I carried the faith for ten years when I felt I was abandoned out there, and I just kept going along. Although I trained with other teachers in other arts, I kept the faith of Tang Soo Do, it was on my uniform, the grand master was my model, I followed the book I was given, and it was very important to me. Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee came to our class a number of times when I was in Korea and he said and did some profound things, and I felt that he was a great leader.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: You were going to say something.

Larry Seiberlich: I was saying about Kwan Jang Nim that I've always respected him highly. I've read a lot of his material and I've watched him conduct himself. Obviously, the first time I met the man I was 18 years old, and I knew him for quite awhile, not well, but I certainly had been with him. And whenever I had an opportunity at an event where I could see him, I would ask Master WY Chung or others to interpret, and I would ask Kwan Jang Nim a number of questions, just general questions about life, about Soo Bahk Do, about many other things, and he was very informative and he helped guide me in a number of areas and he was a positive influence on me. My father died when I was six, and I didn't have a father image and as an only child, pretty much on my own, but I became my own person and it was good for me in a way. But I was always looking for people who had some insights that would help me and that's who he was.

Sandra Schermerhorn: He was very willing to talk to you even though the language barrier and—

Larry Seiberlich: Sure.

Sandra Schermerhorn: —because he was still available.

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Larry Seiberlich: Sure. I can remember one time along the north shore of Lake Superior when we were at a camp, he was in the room next to me, he and Master Hwang (at the time) stayed in this one house. It was a house on a hill, it was a very beautiful place and there was a cook, and in the morning he would get up, and I'd hear him for an hour, an hour-and-a-half, these noises in the room, breathing and stomping and that kind of thing. So finally I asked what it was, and I was told that he was doing his exercises in the morning and it was his Moo Do training, and it kept him healthy and he felt good because of it. I asked what these were and what kind of exercises he was involved with, and he was very willing to share some of those things

Sandra Schermerhorn: With your training, your Dan testing, when was your Cho Dan test, do you remember when?

Larry Seiberlich: Interesting. My Cho Dan test: I took a test at the Trent Gym under Master Cho Won. It was just a test during the class session, and then there was a revolution/civil war in Korea, and no one was allowed out in the streets. The only UN Military people that could be anywhere on the streets of Seoul were US Military Police, so there wasn't any training. It lasted about two-and-a-half weeks and then people were allowed back.

Larry Seiberlich: About a month later, I was told by my instructor that I would be at a test at the Central Dojang. And he said you'll be there and you will work with the Koreans who are testing there. So I said, "Yes, sir, I'll be there." I was asked to fight all the Koreans who were testing and to do all the hyungs with them, so I thought, okay, that's just part of it and I enjoyed sparring. I was told later that was my Cho Dan test. But I had performed a Dan test at the school for two hours during the regular class. That's my Cho Dan test experience. May be they both were my Cho Dan test.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: So you had several challenges in a short amount of time and rose to the occasion.

Larry Seiberlich: It seemed to be okay.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yeah, all right, I don't think many people had Dan tests that they didn't know they were taking.

Larry Seiberlich: At that time in Korea, we didn't know from day to day what was going to happen, whether there would be a revolution or whether the Chinese would come from the North, so everything was in doubt...

Sandra Schermerhorn: A really tense time.

Larry Seiberlich: Oh, very much so, because the North Koreans and the Chinese could have invaded at any time. On one occasion I was near the DMZ after taking some allegedly secret things up there, and in the night the North Koreans invaded a town nearby. I was with a group of military policemen and convoy vehicles, and we got out and dove in the ditches and a mortar blew one of our vehicles apart. There was a lot of tracer fire; we took a lot of rounds but no one was hit. These raids happened quite often.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you recall about what year this was?

Larry Seiberlich: That was 1960.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yeah, yeah. How long were you in Korea?

Larry Seiberlich: Thirteen months.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Thirteen months. So, you answered all the questions about your Cho Dan test. Do you have any favorite memories or anything you'd like to say about your E-dan or your Sam Dan tests and where did you take your E-dan test, were you back in the states?

Larry Seiberlich: Detroit.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And your Sam Dan test?

Larry Seiberlich: I sent film in to Kwan Jang Nim for his review, that was my Sam Dan test.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, was he in New Jersey at the time?

Larry Seiberlich: I don't remember the situation.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's unusual, right, right.

Larry Seiberlich: At the time I was coaching college football and scouting for the NFL, so I was very involved in activities, physical activities and I held a lot of clinics for professional and college athletes on movement and performance, and Tang Soo Do was just part of it, it all became one thing, movement and discipline and focus.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I guess you probably don't have any training buddies that came up through Dan, E-dan, Sam dan, you were pretty much by yourself.

Larry Seiberlich: Right.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yeah. How about your Ko Dan Ja testing, where was that?

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Larry Seiberlich: That was, let's see, that was in St. Paul, Master Hwang came for that test.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What was that like, a day?

Larry Seiberlich: It was a test for 4th Dan basically, with the other Dan tests.

Sandra Schermerhorn: But it was one day.

Sandra Schermerhorn: It was one day.

Larry Seiberlich: It was one day. It was at my school. I can't even remember my 5th Dan test. I can't remember. Interesting.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay, 5th and 6th Dan testing?

Larry Seiberlich: I can't remember which is which. Now, 7th Dan was in '91. Seven years from '91, and it's '84.

Sandra Schermerhorn: '84, mm-hm.

Larry Seiberlich: Okay. That was the first complete Ko Dan Ja session that I attended.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, where was that?

Larry Seiberlich: That was at Kwan Jang Nim's studio in Springfield; the Headquarters.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

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Larry Seiberlich: That was the second Ko Dan Ja. I was at the first Ko Dan Ja as one of the judges. And then I was a participant in the second one. There were only four of us.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, who was there?

Larry Seiberlich: Master Moonitz and Master Cortese.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Larry Seiberlich: Oh, the member from Philadelphia, who left—

Sandra Schermerhorn: Scott.

Larry Seiberlich: Fred Scott.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

Larry Seiberlich: Master Hanke was there as an assistant. We were just talking about that this morning. It was cold, it was in November. And the day of the test, we were sitting with our backs against the wall from six until eight in the morning, meditation, two solid hours. Now none of us were Zen meditators and we had just gone through a number of days of hard physical activity. So we're sitting cross-legged on the floor, and everything's gone numb. And the floor is cold. One of our major jobs was not to get hemorrhoids sitting on this concrete floor, and with our backs against this cold wall. Now it's eight o'clock and time to get up. We started to get up and our pants were frozen to the floor. We didn't want to tear our pants, so we got a little spit and a little hot air and got our pants loose. There are a number of things I'm not going to talk about that happened during that test, but were really funny.

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The test started at nine, and it began rather strangely. Kwan Jang Nim came to the door and Master Hwang was with him. Master Hanke really wanted this to be a special entry, because it was the first time that the Kwan Jang Nim had attended the actual Shim Sa. He had held some clinics for us during the week. He didn't attend the first Ko Dan Ja test. As he appeared in the doorway Master Hanke said, "Sa Bom Nim Kay Kyung Ret." Well, we looked at him, and jumped up, and I said, "I wonder what's going to happen now." And then Master Hanke fell apart for a second, but he recovered quickly as good martial artists do. That's the way it started. So then we performed from nine until a little after one. It was for four of us, one of the longest– I was asked by Kwan Jang Nim to present everything I knew. Defense against a bong, a gun, defense a knife, defense against two people, defensive fighting against three people, and every Hyung that I knew. And all of us did a lot of things, but it was for me like, "Let's see everything you ever knew." And I enjoyed it, I was up for it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, that was your strong point too, the defensive.

Larry Seiberlich: Oh yes I enjoyed that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

Larry Seiberlich: Then it came to answering questions. Each of us was asked a question. I was up last, and I'll bet that Kwan Jang Nim asked me questions for 20 minutes. And I answered every one of them. Then, all of a sudden, he told Master Hwang a question to ask me and Master Hwang said, "The grand master would like to know if you know who..." and he said a Korean name." And I thought, "Who could this be?" The name sounded familiar so I said, "Sir, I believe that was the military general that defeated the Japanese—" You know, I created a story.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Right, mm-hm.

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Larry Seiberlich: And Master Hwang told him, and Kwan Jang Nim started laughing.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

Larry Seiberlich: Master Hwang said, “No, that’s not right.” I realized that I had something to learn, but I checked Volume One and there was no mention of the man. Afterward, we went over to the Hwang home and Mrs. Hwang, one of the nicest persons I’ve ever met, made a beautiful eight-course Korean dinner. She, her daughter, Master Hwang, Kwan Jang Nim, the four of us and Master Hanke were all seated at the table. I leaned over to Master Hwang and I said, “Sir, would you ask your father who that man was?” He looked at me and said, “Really?” And I said “Yes, ask him.” He felt a little, I think, strange about asking him that, and I thought maybe I shouldn't have asked him to. But he asked him. Kwan Jang Nim started laughing again, and said something to Master Hwang, and I said, “Who was he?” He replied, “He went to high school with the man.”

Sandra Schermerhorn: High school.

Larry Seiberlich: One of his high school classmates. So that told me to learn something from this. I’ve told that to some candidates at the beginning of Ko Dan Ja, to let them know that if you’re cup is empty then just be learning, because there’s going to be something there that you don’t know. Be ready to learn about it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Great, that’s a great story.

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Larry Seiberlich: On one occasion, I was over at his house and Master Hwang wasn't there, but his sister was there with his mother. I had to wait for Master Hwang for a couple of hours. So I asked his sister if she would translate. I talked to Mrs. Hwang for two hours, and asked about the many pictures displayed around the house. She told me about when she was married, showing me a marriage picture of the Founder and her. She told me about the Founder's father, and those kind of things. She was just a super person. I learned so much about the history of that family talking with her.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I remember her. My impression, she came to everything, she was there. She was there, and that was nice for me to see.

Larry Seiberlich: We invited her to come with him on his first trip when I was Chairman of the Board. We funded that trip for him around the country. And we made sure that she was included, so she came. She came to our Region, and she's so gracious.

Larry Seiberlich: Oh yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, this is where I'd like to get back to talking about offices you've held in the Moo Duk Kwan, and I think especially maybe the founding fathers Charter Meeting.

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Larry Seiberlich: Okay, we all came to the meeting in New Jersey. I had received a letter from Kwan Jang Nim inviting me about a month before the meeting and Norris informed me by phone. I met a few people that I knew, and the majority of them I didn't know. There were probably 28. That's the first time I saw Master Hwang and Master Jae Chul Shin. Master Shin hosted the event at his school. He was a very nice man. There was a lot of discussion and we saw some excellent sparring between Master Hwan and Master Chun Sik Kim. Master Hwang did some techniques that I thought were just fantastic.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Did they have a tournament at that time, or a demonstration?

Larry Seiberlich: A demonstration and then Kwan Jang Nim held a clinic. There are several pictures taken at the clinic. We did some forms and some kicks and then Masters Hwang and Kim demonstrated some sparring. Every time that Master Kim would do something, Master Hwang would counter effectively, beautifully. But we came together and we talked. Most of the people had real concerns because they would have to give up some of their autonomy, and they were very used to that autonomy. But at the same time, they would gain great connection to the Kwan Jang Nim and to the art, and be taught. But they were cautious and said, "We've seen this happen before. Unless the Kwan Jang Nim is really here and he's on top of this, we don't want to do this." A number of them expressed that quite strongly to me. A few days later, after we'd gone home, most of us felt that it was the right thing to do. I remember meeting with some members at their schools around the country trying to convince them to join us.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So no decision was made at the actual meeting?

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Larry Seiberlich: Well, there was a decision to form a group of members to put together a charter and bylaws. And they did. Some of us were not sure at that point, so we said, "We'll let you know." We talked often over the next month or so about it. This group kept forming the charter and bylaws, and we kept talking.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So the membership on the committee, did that change then, as people decided not to—

Larry Seiberlich: No, no. The membership on the committee was about six folks. And they were putting together the Charter and Bylaws of the U.S. Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan Federation. I'll tell you, the people on that committee were fantastic. They put together a Charter and Bylaws that were very sound. I was asked to review it later and comment, so I know it well.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you recall who was on the committee?

Larry Seiberlich: No, but we have a list somewhere, it's available.

Sandra Schermerhorn: We'll get it.

Larry Seiberlich: I know Master Martinov has been the protector of that Charter and Bylaws. So he was a major player. Charlie DiPierro, is another serious player in that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: About how long did that take to finalize and get people on board?

Larry Seiberlich: About a year, because we had our meeting in 1975. And then we had our first Official Board of Directors Meeting in June of '76, at Kennedy Airport.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, and you were on the Board at that time?

Larry Seiberlich: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, okay. So you were one of the first board members.

Larry Seiberlich: Yes, at that time I was an elected member from Region 7. And then I was appointed two years later by the Kwan Jang Nim, and I became the Vice Chairman. Some of the interesting things about this has to do with fate. I was the Vice Chairman and the Chairman for three years a piece and the acting Chairman on two other occasions. I was on the Board for 26 years.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And you always had to travel for them, far.

Larry Seiberlich: Oh yes. And the first three years, we weren't reimbursed for it. It was all out of our own pocket. And we had two, sometimes three meetings a year. We'd go to California, go to New Jersey, go to Pittsburgh, and we paid for it. That's how we invested in this Organization. I hear some people complaining today because they don't get the suite. We gave so much at the beginning, and what made us decide to do this is that Kwan Jang Nim would be here and oversee it, and Master Hwang would be here to work it out. With the two of them with us we felt that was a guarantee of success.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That you would trust.

Larry Seiberlich: Oh, definitely.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You would trust them.

Larry Seiberlich: We trusted them implicitly.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Understandable. How many people were on the board at that time?

Larry Seiberlich: Too many, 28.

Sandra Schermerhorn: 28. It stayed pretty big for quite a while, didn't it?

Larry Seiberlich: Right. I can tell you how it became less. Do you want to hear that?

Sandra Schermerhorn: I don't know. Yes, I'm not sure how that happened.

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Larry Seiberlich: In 1980 or '81, we had our what we called our "come to Jesus" meeting, to use a religious metaphor. Unfortunately, as an Organization, we had committed to provide many services. I think there were 76 services. I was the chairman the year we had our meeting. After evaluating our performance and commitments, I was convinced there was no way we could provide all those services." If you look at the original book, it has page after page after page of what we'll do, and there was no way we could do it. We were losing money and it was a serious thing, so we had to cut quickly in order to survive. As you know, organizations at first they go through the organizational phase, where they start out. Then they go into a growth phase, and then into their maintenance phase. Well, we were in our organizational phase and we had to transcend into our growth phase. Usually there's a survival dip in there and we experienced our dip, where you get real close to the edge of survival. We cut down to about 10 or 12 services that we could provide. We also decided that we couldn't pay the way of all these Directors coming to the Board Meetings, because several years prior we'd started to pay their package. We wrote an Amendment to our Charter. I was the first Chairman to try to get a Charter Amendment passed. I couldn't get enough members to vote on it. The Charter reads that so many members have to vote. We couldn't get that many members to respond, so we couldn't change our Charter.

Sandra Schermerhorn: They just weren't responding.

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Larry Seiberlich: No. So we changed our Bylaws, and we were able to change the number of Directors. But we had to maintain the two-thirds elected, a third appointed relationship required by the Charter (this ensured that appointed members could not take over control of our Organization). It would always be a members' organization. That's what we created from the beginning. Many of our Federation members have served on the Board and have given considerable time and energy to the creation, growth and future of our Organization and the Art of Soo Bahk Do. This has meant a large investment for some.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Were all the people who were appointed, appointed by the Founder and then that responsibility fell to Kwan Jang Nim?

Larry Seiberlich: Right. All the Appointed Members were appointed by the Founder. The TAC chairman, Master Hwang, was the TAC Chairman for many years before there actually were any members. I think in 1986 or so Kwan Jang Nim appointed eight TAC members and he started training us. Twice a year we would train with Kwan Jang Nim, for several days.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When you say "us," you mean?

Larry Seiberlich: Those eight TAC members, the original TAC members.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see. There were eight of— oh, I understand what you're saying. Yes.

Larry Seiberlich: There was just a TAC Chairman for maybe ten years.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see.

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Larry Seiberlich: He appointed eight Senior members when he thought we were at a level of standardization that made us effective TAC members.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So you were a TAC member at that time. Did you have a specific area?

Larry Seiberlich: No, no. TAC members serve at the discretion of the Kwan Jang Nim.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Have you held any other offices?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, let's see.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Board and TAC?

Larry Seiberlich: Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board, Regional Examiner and Administrator, TAC, and SAC. I'm doing a little work now with the World Moo Duk Kwan as the Symposium Chairman.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

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Larry Seiberlich: Well, we just discussed that at the Board of Directors Meeting last night. There's a member (Designee) from each country's organization with a total of 22 countries. We have a Designee from the United States. Because the Designee can make certain commitments on the part of our U.S. Federation, the Federation Board was very interested in who this person was and what the demands would be on that person, and then what issues would be voted upon. So Kwan Jang Nim and I provided that info to the Board last night. We are working on the Agenda for the upcoming WMDK Symposium. We have been working in this area for a number of years, the World Moo Duk Kwan, and visiting people and talking with them and organizing them in Korea, where we met last year. I explained the Robert's Rules of Order to the Designees, which was difficult in itself, because they have interpreters, and many countries do not use that structure for running meetings.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

Larry Seiberlich: Just to initiate Robert's Rules was a rodeo but we're getting the ball rolling.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see. Brand new stages.

Larry Seiberlich: Yes. That's where we (the US Federation) were 25 years ago. So this is what I'm doing, going various places in the world, and talking to our members. When I go over there for this meeting in October, I'm going to visit the folks in Switzerland and Paris and in Italy. You know, just to say hi, and maybe hold a clinic and that type of thing. Master Hanke goes over there, and he does some things, and he's been around so, those are the kind of things we do.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Come a long way.

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Larry Seiberlich: Yeah, it seems to. There's a lot of pieces to it. As Kwan Jang Nim keeps saying, it's a work in progress, and we're just getting organized, so let's not push it too far.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir, yes sir. Okay. We might have touched on this already. If you feel we have, just let me know. What was your best time in the Moo Duk Kwan? Most satisfying for you? You've done a lot of things.

Larry Seiberlich: You know, there's so many different times that satisfied me in different ways.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Exactly.

Larry Seiberlich: I can't really say there was any specific time. Many things have made me feel good. The successes of the Organization, the successes of the many individuals in our Organization, and just being together with— you know, I've been together with groups of folks that have been so great and inspiring.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have any worst time, and what helped you through it?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, one thing was the “come to Jesus” meeting, because that could have been the end of the Organization.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich: Along with that same meeting, there was another chapter that I told to somebody. There was concern that the Korean government may want to steal the Dan Bon book. It was brought to the United States, and it was given to Lyn Stanwich, who was the Chairman the year that we did this transition, when I was the Vice Chairman, but I had to play his role. I had a rent-a-car from the airport, and I picked him up. He gave me this book and said, "I've got the book in the car now," so I put it in the trunk, and I put it under the spare tire. I said, "No one will ever see this. If they break into our room, no problem." Well, that evening, we went down into the bar and were imbibing a little. At the time, Lyn had serious cancer and was really concerned, but he said, "You know, I want to get this Statement of Purpose of the Federation written. I've been working on it." He read pieces of it to me and said, "I want to put this together. Would you help me?" So we spent about two, three hours in the bar, and after a while the thing magically came together and we read it back and forth to each other. It sounded pretty good. That's what they use at the beginning of every Board Meeting. Anyway, that was a special night with my good friend Lyn. A very positive thing and we finished it. Then the next morning, I couldn't find my car in the parking lot. I had a key, and all it said on it was "Hertz" and GMC. Well, there were 100s of cars out there in the two lots of a huge hotel in Clark, New Jersey. And there must have been 300 GMC cars. I couldn't remember what color it was, and of course it had the Dan Bon book in it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Larry Seiberlich: There was a little panic. But we did get the book when I found the car— we went through the lot, every GMC car. I was saying, "I can't remember what color it was. I think it was an Oldsmobile, but maybe it was a Buick." You know, you pick up enough cars at airports, you don't remember any of them.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: Right, right.



Larry Seiberlich: That was the Dan Bon book story, the writing of the Statement of Purpose with Lyn story, and the Come to Jesus meeting story — all the same weekend.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay. Do you have a photograph that you have or that you remember that has special meaning to you?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, you know, again, there are so many photographs that have so many meanings. Kwan Jang Nim just sent me a photograph about three months ago. I didn't have any photographs from my class in Korea. He found one and was kind enough to send it to me. So I sent it to all of my students saying, "You have to see your instructor when he was a green belt." That's kind of a special one.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, yes.

Larry Seiberlich: And pictures with Kwan Jang Nim and Master Hwang, and some of the people I trained with in the 60s and 70s.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Now, do you have a treasured item from over the years of training?

Larry Seiberlich: You know, if I had trained for 15 years, I might be able to come up with one. But I started training now in 1958. In 48 years, you can pick up a lot of artifacts. I can't think of one. I can list eight probably, but I can't think of one. So maybe we could put that along with the pictures.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay, because I was going to ask you if we could have a picture of it. If you had a special item, maybe something you keep in your house or on a shelf?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, I have a shelf of some things that I was given or whatever over the years that have— some of them are more special than others, that different people have given me.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Larry Seiberlich: But one thing that's very important, of course, is the book that I got when I received my Cho Dan certificate. It's the yellow book.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I don't know what that is.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich: That was the second book that the Founder wrote. The Tang Soo Do book from 1958.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Is it in Korean?

Larry Seiberlich: Yes. It's about yo big, about that thick. It's a soft cover. In fact, Kwan Jang Nim called me and said "I think you're the only one that I know that has one of those." I sent him the book so he could have some pages copied for a special event.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh. Well, maybe we can get a picture of that then, that's special.

Larry Seiberlich: Oh yeah.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Wow. That's great. And he just gave that to you?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, each person, when they got their Dan Certificate and their Dan pin, received the book.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh. Oh, I see.

Larry Seiberlich: The Dan pin had your number on it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: It did? Oh, that's nice.

Larry Seiberlich: And the book had your number in it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, that is a treasure.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich: And it's the second book that Kwan Jang Nim wrote. He had written the Hwa Soo Do book previously.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And the one that you have, are there forms in it?

Larry Seiberlich: There are pictures of forms and Il Soo Sik Deh Ryun. There are many different areas; one on lifesaving and first aid training.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Like first aid?

Larry Seiberlich: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh my gosh. Ah. I never even knew there was a book like that. That's great. Well, we already talked about your remembrance of our Founder. Would there be any other favorite story you might want to tell about the Founder that you know or a favorite story about time you spent with him, other than what we already talked about?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, there's a number of stories that come up. I think I'll pass on that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay. How about Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang? You said when you first met him, you were telling me-

Larry Seiberlich: It was '74, at that meeting in New Jersey.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes. But you had never met him when you were in Korea?

Larry Seiberlich: No.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh. He was probably pretty young at that time.

Larry Seiberlich: Well, he's five to six years younger than I am. So when I was 18, he was 12 or 13.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Teenager, yes.

Larry Seiberlich: But he didn't train at the places where I trained.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When you first met him, what was your impression of him?

Larry Seiberlich: Well, I thought he was a great physical performer. I knew he had been in Greece, teaching there in a little dojang.

Sandra Schermerhorn: He was living there for—

Larry Seiberlich: A few years.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Years.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich: He came to the United States, and he was trying to deal with a new country, new social expectations and us. You could see all the responsibilities, he's the Grand Master's son, and all of the expectations. He had a lot of responsibilities and was just trying to get organized. He was a phenomenal martial artist, but definitely under stress. I felt sorry for him the first couple of years. I was talking to your husband this morning and said, "If I ever started a martial art, I'd get myself a Grand Master, and he'd be the guy, and I'd just sit back and watch it." And your husband said, "And pull the strings like a puppet, right?" I said, "Maybe, but I wouldn't be a Grand Master." Because being out there continually shaking hands is very trying for me. I remember one time there were 1,100 participants at one of our Nationals at West Point. Kwan Jang Nim decided to shake everybody's hand.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

Larry Seiberlich: And I looked at Master Hwang and he looked at me, Master Hwang new his role and pointed at me and said, "If I'm doing it you have to." I'd rather stand on the side and let the more outgoing personalities do it. But he has to do it now and he does a super job. I appreciate the man so much, because he takes all the stuff. Often I'm the second guy and all I have to do is stand back and observe and cut the main man's hair when necessary. Kwan Jang Nim is the consummate gentleman. He is a very caring and considerate human being. In 65 years I've met only a couple of people like him.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir. Besides our Founder and Kwan Jang Nim, if you had to choose the most memorable person that you've met during your training, who would you pick?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich: <laughs> I could pick the goofiest in a hurry. Let's see, the most memorable. You know, memorable is a strange word, because that means you record it in the memory. And there are just so many people that I find to be memorable. But people that I really appreciate and I'm close to, I think Master Martinov is another special person in my life. He endures and he goes along, and he just does it. There are some "memorable people" from the past but maybe not for the best reasons.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Martinov Sa Bom Nim, how long have you known him?

Larry Seiberlich: I met him in 1972.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Mm-hm. So, a little over 30-

Larry Seiberlich: 34 years.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes, Sir. How would you describe him to somebody who doesn't know him?

Larry Seiberlich: A nice, honest, intelligent, straightforward guy that can really mix it up. He knows the art, he knows life, and he's got a handle on what he's doing. He has been very successful in many facets of his life and knows how to be physical and mental and spiritual.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh. Do you have any stories or maybe traditions that he's passed on to you that you might pass on to other people?

Larry Seiberlich: Well I don't think there are any that he passed onto me. I think we created traditions together.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh.

Larry Seiberlich: And you have to realize that we've always been the seniors.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

Larry Seiberlich: And so there's Seiberlich, Hanke, Martinov, Ahpo, you know, the senior group of folks were there together. And if you look at the people that are still with us, charter folks– Shipley's another one. Now, Shipley hasn't been around that much of late, he's been out of the country. And then Fred Kenyon, you know, he was a strong player too. So we were pretty much the folks that were Senior and came along together. Ahpo bought us all blue underwear briefs, with red stripes. Late one night, after some intense social training, we were up in the room, the four of us, Shipley wasn't there. They wanted me to teach them the knife form, Tanto Hyung. Obviously, there were beds and tables and other furnishings in the room, but we didn't let that bother us. We just stepped up on the bed and on the table while performing Tonto Hyung wearing our Ko Dan Ja briefs. Some of us had knives but Ahpo was using an electrical hair curler and someone else a comb.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Sure.

Larry Seiberlich: Someone opened the door, and we were standing there. I don't remember who it was. But he said, "Yeah, this is something I'll never forget." It was probably either Masters Donnelly or Shipley.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir, yes sir.

Larry Seiberlich: That was a tradition.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You created a memory.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Larry Seiberlich: Well that was a tradition because it was repeated, and we've created a lot of those over the years. I could probably list ten of them, but I won't, for a number of reasons.

Sandra Schermerhorn: All right. Okay.

Larry Seiberlich: One interesting time was when the TAC met at Kwan Jang Nim's home. After the meeting, we all played the traditional "spin the egg" game. We had done several hours of training prior to the meeting. This was a Korean custom. You spin the egg, and if the small end of the egg points to you, you either sing a song or shoot your whiskey. Well, after a while of course, there's not much singing, there's just a lot of shooting. The Founder had retired for the evening, and during almost the entire game, Mrs. Hwang was sitting on the arm of one of the player's chairs, with her arm on his shoulder, kibitzing in the game. She looked like she was having the greatest time enjoying watching the young men at play. Knowing she had seen so much suffering during the Korean War made me feel so happy for then. I have a couple of pictures of that somewhere. It was really an important thing for her I think, to be part of this. Everyone was having a good time. So that's one of the great moments I remember.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's great, that's great.

Larry Seiberlich: So that was a tradition that we did. It was a positive tradition. The first one I mentioned, it was kind of a neutral tradition; no one got hurt.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay, up to the present time. Now, what area do you derive the most satisfaction from in your participation in the Moo Duk Kwan, whether it's training or teaching or doing the things that you're doing with the World Moo Duk Kwan, what do you get the most satisfaction out of?

Larry Seiberlich: I think I can tell you.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay.

Larry Seiberlich: I'm satisfied teaching classes. I like to help people and see them learn the Art I am committed to. But I've taught all my life. I've taught at the university for 25 years, architecture. I've taught, you know, many different things. So teaching is something that's really easy for me, and it's enjoyable to see people learn. My students are all Senior people, so it's very easy, there's a 3rd Dan in the class, and that's the junior in the class. But then I always train. Every day I do Hyungs, and some Neh Gung. So, I mean, that's training. That's my training. I was just fighting with the Region 7 Dan team that's going to do the team sparring. I was training them. So I get out and do that. And we're looking for a three-peat now. So if they can win it for the third year in a row, they're going to be even happier. Not a big deal but a goal, and we all need goals.

Sandra Schermerhorn: All right.

Larry Seiberlich: There's working with the international now, The World Moo Duk Kwan, and I think that's really important. International is what's going to allow this Art to grow throughout the world. And the discussions we had with the Founder 17 years ago leading to the Mission 2000 Statement, and the ongoing discussions with Kwan Jang Nim, I can see that that's a very important area, and I want to give as much as I can time-wise. I like Ko Dan Ja just because of the teaching and learning process like Moment with the Masters.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: What do you like to teach best?

Larry Seiberlich: I don't know. This last time at the Hyu Kyun In (Guardians of the Art) Seminars, I taught the application of energy. How to use energy as a Weh Gung, Neh Gung, and Shim Gung, and introduce it into those aspects. Many people think it's kind of a mysterious thing where you go "Ah ha," and do a lot of funny things and this energy comes into you. Well, it's an application in everything you do. So that's kind of a theme that I'm bringing forth now, because it's been a mystery and it shouldn't be a mystery. It's the Natural way — the DO.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see.

Larry Seiberlich: In the dark past, 30 years ago, (it was) the jump-spin kicks. Now it's different.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir. We've been looking back a lot, talked about a lot of things. Looking back, is there anything you would do differently?

Larry Seiberlich: Sure. Lots of things. Wouldn't we all?

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's right sir, yes sir.

Larry Seiberlich: But I don't think that there's been anything that I did that has seriously negatively altered the course of things. I mean it isn't like I made a serious error. It's just that given the chance again, I probably would have proceeded a little differently.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How do you feel about being one of the seniors in the Moo Duk Kwan?

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Larry Seiberlich: I always have been.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, that's right.

Larry Seiberlich: Even when I was 30, I was.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see.

Larry Seiberlich: And I haven't been as Senior as I am now. People have left and fallen by the wayside. But I've always been here. Of course loyalty is an important concept in the Asian martial arts.

Sandra Schermerhorn: As a senior, what's something important you feel you can contribute to your juniors?

Larry Seiberlich: I've already spent a lot of effort assisting in developing organizations that provide to them, and perpetuate, their chosen martial art. I can show them technique. But a lot of people can show them technique. They can look at the pictures of me performing the Art and say, "Well, that's nice." But maybe they can decide.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir. So maybe you'd like to elaborate on this, but how would you like to be remembered?

Larry Seiberlich: As someone who has enjoyed life and training in Soo Bahk Do, and has enjoyed as much if not more, passing what I've learned from life and Soo Bahk Do, on to others. The key is to enjoy doing it, having fun, making it fun, or it won't last.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you would like people to know?

Larry Seiberlich: Just that, well, because of what I last said, martial arts have been very important to me. I live what I've learned. I apply it to business, I apply it to my family. I apply it to my spiritual needs — I'm a spiritual person, not religious but spiritual. That's about it. I fail at times and succeed at others, but I try to follow the way, my Do.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, this is very moving. I appreciate your time. This is what people need to know, what people need to hear. It's great.

Larry Seiberlich: The Moo Do Chul Hak is the philosophy book written by the Kwan Jang Nin the Founder, and it was originally translated approximately four years ago. Since that time, the Kwan Jang Nim, H. C. Hwang and I have been working many hours to assure that the founders' meanings were appropriately expressed in the wording of the book. It's a very complex book, expressing a novel philosophy of the moo do. And it is our feeling that this book is as much a philosophy book as it is a moo do text and we would like to expose it to the greater circulation of philosophy. My vision is that the Kwan Jang Nim was a philosopher, a phenomenal philosopher, and he used the moo do as the vehicle to express his philosophical opinions and position, and this book captures that very well. Today marks the point where Karen Mead, a student of Jang Sa Bom Nim, who has been working arduously to rewrite some of the areas for us, will meet with us and will finalize the document, so that it can go into publication and the final piece will be ready for our members and for the greater community.

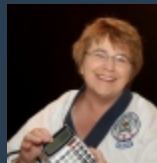
Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, great. I didn't know about that. Wonderful.

Larry Seiberlich: It's coming forth.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, good. The above is an addendum to Seiberlich Sa Bom Nim's Oral History.



Oral History

Sandra Schermerhorn, Sa Bom Nim initiated the oral history project to capture and preserve accounts of authentic Moo Duk Kwan® history from various active senior members.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

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Russ Hanke , Sa Bom Nim, Oral History

Posted by Oral History on Dec 11th, 2016 in [USA](#)

Reading Time: 51 minutes

Russ Hanke, Sa Bom Nim, dan bon #4137, 9th Dan, Oral History

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Russ Hanke and Fred Messersmith are mixed and need to be separated

SS: This is Sandra Schermerhorn, It is August 12, 2006, and I am in San Diego, California, USA . I am talking with Russ Hanke Sa Bom Nim. Sir, could you tell me what town and state you currently live in and your Dan number?

RH: I live in a suburb of Detroit, a city called Dearbourn Heights, which is about 12 miles away from downtown Detroit. My Dan number is 4137.

SS: Who is your current instructor?

RH: Kwan Jang Nim H. C. Hwang.

SS: Do you have a studio right now?

RH: Yes I do.

SS: What is the name of that, sir?

RH: Russ Hanke Soo Bahk Do College.

SS: Where is that?

RH: That is in Wyandotte, Michigan.

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Russ Hanke, Sa Bom Nim, SAC, TAC, and Charter Member of the US Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan Federation, Dan Bon 4137

SS: Could you tell me just a little bit about yourself? For example, employment you've had, education, hobbies, just a little profile.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

RH: Education, GED education. Hobbies, I attempted golf, but it has gotten the best of me. I will never be a golfer. I have been involved in many different things. Mostly martial oriented things: Archery, shooting guns, spear chucking, knife throwing, ax throwing. I have dabbled in just about every sport. I have never gotten proficient in anything. Work, throughout the years I have been a “jack of all trades”. My first employment job was a pinsetter at a bowling alley. My second job was a file clerk, before they had computers; it was called Peoples Outfitting Company. When people came in and paid the money they didn’t have computers and someone would have to run and get the file and bring that back. I worked in the steel mills for 4 years as a laborer and then an electrician’s apprentice, then I got into selling life insurance, vacuum cleaners, Kirby vacuum cleaners, baby pictures, and one thing or another off and on and wore that out. I got married and worked at the Ford Motor Company on the assembly line, for a while and then switched to selling life insurance and then switched back to working at the Michigan Truck Camp, where I worked again on the assembly lines. Utility Inspector was my title, but none of these jobs lasted long. I would only work to get enough money to do my training, if I had enough money or my work had any kind of a hindrance to my training, that was it. Most of the work that I had done and I still do is security work, so I still do that off and on to help pay the bills.

SS: Sir, could you tell me what motivated you to start training in martial arts?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

RH: Yes. All my life, even before martial arts was even known, this is from 1945-46, I was born in 1940, so since I can remember I was always with the cowboys and the guns and that kind of stuff, and I was always small for my age, and people I ran with were always big, so I always had a reputation that back in "them days" it was who could beat up who, that was your status. If my friends wanted to establish themselves as "the man" or if they had a fight with their girlfriend and they were just frustrated, and they wanted to take it out on somebody, they knew they could come to me, because I would "fight the fight" and once they pushed me, I would immediately start fighting. I couldn't hurt anybody. I was like a punching bag, and I was like that up until I went into the army. I was in the army when I was 18 and they made me a tank driver, that was interesting. When I was out of the army in 1960, I was 20 years old and the only thing I knew about martial arts back then, was in the man's magazines or there might be some article about judo. Karate was unknown. I decided that I was going to learn judo, because the little guy could always beat the big guy and I was going to take care of myself. I went to a local YMCA to learn judo. The class was taught in the basement. So, I went in to watch a class and sign up, I thought. I was watching the class, the judo instructor's name was Jim Whomsley, he was about my size, a little heftier, and he was called a 2nd Dan, 2nd degree black belt, which I had not known what a black belt was, much less a 2nd Dan. I was observing his class and in this particular class, at the time I got there, he was working with a brand new beginner. This guy had lesson "zero". He was a white belt and about 6 foot, a little bit less, and weighed about 300 pounds. He was as wide and round and he was tall and had an "attitude". Mr. Jim Whomsley, the judo expert, he was really doing everything in his power to throw the big guy down, and he couldn't do it, he could not move him

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

It broke my heart, I'm looking, I'm thinking I don't know what a black belt is, but this is the expert and this is that Japanese stuff that "the little guy can take the big guy" and here is this expert and he can't even move a blob, so I was disappointed. As I said, the room was downstairs, so I went upstairs to leave, I heard a bunch of yelling, being very curious, I looked up and I wondered what was going on in that room, and it said Tang Soo Do, and I didn't know what Tang Soo Do was either. So being a curious guy, I walked down, and it was in a room like this that they were training in, and I seen my instructor who is smaller then me and skinner then me, his name was Mr. Dale Drulliard. Mr. Dale Drulliard was the first non-Korean ever to be promoted to black belt in the Moo Duk Kwan. He studied in Korea under Kwan Jang Nim, and he is the very first non-oriental to ever be promoted and his Dan number is 757.



Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Mr. Dale Drulliard was the first non-Korean ever to be promoted to black belt in the Moo Duk Kwan, dan bon 757

So, I just walked in again, I don't believe in coincidences, they happened to be free-sparring and he was on the floor and he was fighting two guys at one time. One of the guys he was fighting, his name was Jim Young, he had a green belt on, I didn't know what a green belt was, but he was about 15 or 16 at the time and small framed, typical 15 or 16 year old. The other gentlemen was another green belt, his name was Rick Abrahams, and was bigger then I was and maybe had about 30 or 40 pounds and he had an attitude, it was very obvious he had an attitude. I am watching this little skinny guy, smaller then me and Mr. Drulliard, what he would do is when the little guy came at him, he would just do some punches and kicks and very nice and the big guy came in and tried to overpower him, he would jump up, very quietly put the side of his foot on the guy's hip and straighten out his leg and throw him into the wall. Then when he was picking himself up off the floor, the other guy would be attacking, and he would be just like a father treating his little son, and then the big guy would come in, he would jump up, put his foot on the side, straighten out his leg and throw him into the wall. I don't know what Tang Soo Do is I don't know what anything is, but this is what I'm going to do, and that is how I got started, and I've never looked back.

SS: Before you started training, was there any family tradition of training in martial arts?

RH: Martial Arts was unknown back then in America. Like I said earlier, you might see them in a man's magazine, or see a small article about judo, but other than that, Martial Arts, at least in my era, was unknown, other than boxing or wrestling.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



SS: What was your early training like? What was the class like?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

RH: Again, I was very fortunate, everyone has their own personal qualities and nature, Mr. Drulliard, he was a true martial artist, he was only interested in techniques, and perfecting perfect technique. It wasn't about fighting; it wasn't about anything, except perfection of form and of the basic motion. We had classes two days a week at the YMCA. In the YMCA in the basement, they had a room and they used to call it the "mirror room", Mr. Drulliard was only a 2nd or 3rd Dan at that time, and I knew he would be in the room in front the mirrors practicing basic motions and basic kicks, so I would always get to class a half an hour or forty-five minutes early, because if I would go in the room, I would stand side by side and he was just meticulous about technique, almost like a classical ballerina. He was that meticulous about perfecting technique. In the beginning of the class, a typical class, we would do a warm up then after that you would stand by the wall and you did so many front stretch kicks, so many side kicks, so many this, so many that, and you would always use the wall to support you, it had no bars. We would then have a regular class. After, when the class was over, I would immediately go back into the mirror room, when everybody else was going home, and whatever he taught me; I would do in that mirror room by myself, trying to perfect my technique, like he did.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



At ,1974 Greenfield Village Michigan Left to Right Dale Druillard 2nd Dan, KJN Hwang Kee, Russ Hanke 1st Dan, Eli Wynn.

SS: How long did the class last?

RH: The classes were only about one and a half hours. So I went almost an hour early to be in the mirror room and after class go back to the room until they closed.

SS: That was twice a week?

RH: Back then yes.

SS: Who was in the class? Was it men, women?

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

RH: Back then, women weren't in martial arts, women weren't even considered to be in martial arts. It was just all men, the average age I would say (they never taught kids back then), it would be like 15 to 35, was the average age, all male.

SS: Did they wear a Do Bohk to train in?

RH: The Do Bohk was exactly the way we wear it.

SS: Anything else about the school experience that you can remember? How about a fond memory of a training experience you had?

RH: With Mr. Drulliard? (incredulously)

SS: Yes, sir.

RH: At that time, nothing really stands out. The one thing again about Mr. Drulliard was he was very regimented. You could almost set your clock when you were done with your basic motions, and you were done after the basic motions, the kicking, after the kicking the forms, after the forms we had 3 step fighting, we did not have 1 step fighting back then. It was originally 3 steps. Your challenger would come in and he would punch once, stepping forward and you would step back and he would punch twice and there would be another step back, and on the 3rd punch we would side step and block and counter. Originally it was 3 steps. You didn't even know about 1 steps until after 1974, when the current Kwan Jang Nim came to the states.

SS: Do you remember any of your early training partners? Not necessarily back then, but early training partners?

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RH: Other than the two I mentioned, there was two other ones, but again they were only green belts and there was no affiliation, you came, you trained, you left. None of them were meaningful.

SS: The two that you mentioned, did you know what happened to them?

RH: The one that did stay around was Jim Young, and that was the young kid I observed when he was fighting. He continued on, we made our Dans together and then when he became of age, he went to Ann Arbor, which is about 20 miles away from us, a college. Of course, after his four years of college, he started teaching at the college and picking up a few extra bucks for about a year and then something happened, at that time that completely discouraged him from martial arts. It turned out that he graduated from college, he became a lawyer, he moved up north, he became a judge for a little city, and every time he comes to town, we still have communications.

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In 1962 Dale Drulliard sponsored over from Korea a man named Sang Kyu Shim.. At that time he was sponsored over by Mr. Drulliard on a 3-month visitors visa. Mr. Drulliard has always been very naive as far as politics and he had no knowledge of the visa regulations. He thought if he sponsored over this Korean on a 3-month visa, after that 3 months they go back. The reality was, once a Korean came over to the United States, it was forever. So when he had to go back, he lost face in Korea. All the Koreans thought that he was in the United States and he was very embarrassed about the whole thing. So right after that, he was being drafted into the ROK army, (Sang Kyu Shim). Around 1962-63 Mr. Drulliard took ill, he had a nervous breakdown, which was caused a lot by this Master Sang Kyu Shim, because he kept writing him, and kept pressuring him, you got to bring me back, you got to bring me back, and he even had him talked into flying to Korea to bring him back and there was a layover in Japan, and he had a nervous breakdown and had to come back. So, Sang Kyu Shim started zeroing in on me, because when Mr. Drulliard had the nervous breakdown, none of the other students wanted to teach, there were four senior to me but none of them wanted to teach. We had a membership of over 100 students at the YMCA, and none of them would take the responsibility, so that is how I became an instructor. Saying that, Sang Kyu Shim started writing me that I should bring him back. So I wrote to the late Kwan Jang Nim that I wanted to sponsor Master Shim back to the United States. I got a response back that the late Kwan Jang Nim really preferred to send someone else. I was married at the time, I had my wife and 1 child, and he was going to be living in my home. So I wrote back to the Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee that, "I know Master Shim and would prefer him over a complete stranger." The late Grandmaster went along with my request. I was being manipulated by Master Shim. Master Shin was given the position of the Ambassador, as the very first Korean that was designated by the Late Grand Master to come to the United States

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When he came to the United States, there were about 115 students, and he actually lived with me at my home for 9 months. The man had a very devious character, which I did not know, so while he was living there, and I had him on a visitor's visa, he enrolled in the Wayne State University so that he could change his visa to a student visa and not be under my control. Once he got a student visa, then he started showing his true colors, which was to come here and start to build his own empire, which he did, Tae Kwon Do. He died, he was killed in an accident, 15 years or so ago, but while he was here, he was what we would call the spiritual guru of Tae Kwon Do and Tae Kwon Do Times. In the early 1970's, 1980's or maybe later, in any of the Tae Kwon Do magazines, there was always one or two pages in the magazines, of Shim Gung, the spirit of Tae Kwon Do, the spirit of this, the spirit of that and he was really one of the highest Koreans of Tae Kwon Do. Like I said, he lived with me for 9 months, and once he had a student visa, then he wanted to get out of the YMCA, so he could have a storefront studio. He opened up the first storefront studio and then after that, he really changed. He moved out and from that time on, it was attack, attack, attack. Discredit, discredit, discredit. Me personally and anybody else because he wanted to be "king" of Tae Kwon Do and run all the karate throughout the Detroit metropolitan area.

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SS: What happened with the school at the YMCA?

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RH: That was interesting. I was young and I was always like from the streets. The harder you made it, the more I liked it. When he was ready to make his move, our classes started getting harder, physically harder. Physically more demanding. So much that if during any one class, at least two or three people did not drop out of the class, to throw up or just physically strained, he would think that it was a good class. Now of course being young and naive, I am not leaving, I'm just going. I remember one particular time, he had me doing multiple free fighting. He had me fighting three opponents. You know in multiple fighting, 30 seconds, may be a minute, I was fighting three guys for I would say four to five minutes with continuous attacking. I was so exhausted I would have my back leaning against the wall for support and I would see the punches and kicks coming in and I could not even lift up my arms and that was a typical type class. What I didn't know, because he knew I would always go to the mirror room, because that was my habit, after class, whatever I learned I went to that room. He was going to all the students that were saying "I can't do this, I got a wife, I got kids, I got to work," and he would say "Gee, that is because we are at the YMCA. I have my studio, it is only five miles from here." He took my club of 115 students down to about 30 students. It was intentional attrition by burnout that was his nature.

SS: What did you do after that?

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RH: Of course he started the Tae Kwon Do and Mr. Drulliard recuperated, he was never a federation man. It was probably 1964, I knew he was better. All the time I taught at the Y they would charge a fee, part of the fee would go to the instructor. All the time I taught, in my mind I was just cheering the club on for Mr. Drulliard. It wasn't my club, I was just taking care of business. Things got to the point of 1964-1965 that financially, when I was working at the assembly line at Ford Motor Company, I was bartending and bouncing at night, and still taught the two classes and of course I had the wife and the children, finances got tight to where I needed either to cut back, especially like on all the bar work. One, because it wasn't a good way of making a living and two, I was exhausted. I knew Mr. Drulliard was well again, so I went over to his house, this was in November and asked him. Mr. Drulliard, "When are you coming back?" He said "I am not coming back.". He can't burn out again from the bad experiences that he had with Master Shim. I said all I have been doing is running for the last few years, running the club for you. He says that's ok, but I am not coming back. I said all the money that was ever paid through the time of his illness; I just put it in the bank. I didn't think that was my money. So I said to him, "Well I've got a little bit less than \$1,000 and it is in the bank, thinking that it belongs to you." and of course he is a beautiful person, he said, no, no that is yours. Again, in my mind, up to that point, I was just covering for him. Well I can't live with that money. I happen to have it in my pocket. I just gave it to him and from that point on I considered myself the instructor.

SS: Was there anything else in your training, major changes that affected you, such as illness, or you had to stop training for a chunk of time?

RH: No. I had my first major injury was in the late 1980's, where I was hit by a car and my knee was hurt, but I never stopped training.

SS: During the early years, what was it like to be in a tournament?

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RH: Dangerous. My first tournament I was a first-degree black belt. The first tournament was in Toronto, Canada. There was no age difference, or size difference, or rank difference. You could have been a green belt fighting a 3rd degree black belt. I was a 1st degree black belt. I remember my very first match. I went out on the floor and back then, what they called the point, if you knocked him hard enough to knock him down, you got a point. If he couldn't get up, he was disqualified. That is just the way it was. In the martial arts, the history of martial arts in the peacetime was called "flowering of the arts", because you could work more the culture and essence. During wartime, the training was not in the artistic direction, it was in survival. Korea was occupied by Japan for over 35 years. The Koreans back then, they took martial arts to survive. It was what you would call "Navy SEAL" training, blood and guts and that is just the way it was. All the other martial arts pretty much had the same nature. It wasn't competitions back then, even in the United States, it was dangerous, you had to knock the guy down and hurt them, otherwise you would not get scored. If they knocked you down, you got disqualified. It was just a matter of survival. I remember I was in Chicago for a tournament, we were in a big auditorium, I heard this distinct sound of bones breaking, and all the way across this gymnasium, I see this guy jump up and do a jump round kick, I don't know his style or anything about him, it was full contact and noise I heard was the guy's jaw breaking. He was disqualified because he couldn't get back in. I had a student there, and again these are just coincidences, the guy was the smallest guy there, he only stood maybe 5 foot maybe 110 pounds soaking wet. In his first match he was fighting a guy 6 foot 4 300 pounds. I will never forget the guy he was fighting, he was Okinawan style. It was full contact. Okinawan stylists, they never kicked above the belt. The Japanese /Okinawans, all their kicks were from the groin down, they didn't learn high kicking until the Koreans started teaching

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My particular student was kicked in the groin so hard, picked him up off the floor and he landed, and when we were driving home, his testicles swelled up to where it was almost the size of a football, but he lost the match because he was disqualified, cause he couldn't fight. That was an average tournament. That was the way it was.



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At 1962 Master Dale Druillard Master Russ Hanke 1st Tournament in Toronto, Canada Master Hanke was a 1st Dan and won a 3rd place in sparing .

SS: Did people back then, when they were in tournaments favor hand techniques or foot techniques?

RH: Until the Koreans entered the picture, it was all hand techniques. Okinawans used all hand and no kicks above the belt, and Japanese, same way. Back then it was mostly the Moo Duk Kwan Koreans, you had on the tournament circuit. Chuck Norris, all the major players that were in the national circuit, most of them came from the Korean background. What made them so devastating was that no one knew how to fight with feet. Back then; the Koreans did not know how to fight with their hands. The hands were part of the culture. The legs are stronger, but if you've got a busted toe or a shin, that was no problem. If I lost my hands, then I could not do my work, I could not farm. The Korean culture or style back then was probably 90-95% foot, in all other styles; there were about 95% hands. The Koreans dominated the tournament circle. I am trying to think of the one guy, super foot Wallace, and Fred Raymond, all these names; they were all from a Korean stylist. Then the Okinawan/ Japanese started mimicking us and of course we were becoming more proficient with our hands. Through the years I've made the change.

SS: Anything else about tournaments you think people might like to know?

RH: Just like anything else, in the beginning it was blood and guts and how much you could take and how much you could give. I'm glad for the experience, because it made me tough, but it was completely a very dangerous, a very detrimental thing. A lot of lives were ruined from injuries and such.

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SS: What were people's attitudes towards the martial arts? Just the general population.

RH: To the general population, it was mysterious. If you were known as a black belt back then, in the neighborhoods or anywhere, people were in awe, mystified, and scared to death of you, because it was of the unknown. Now, you can be an 8 or 9th Dan, people say you're only an 8th or 9th Dan because it is just the nature of man, especially Americans. You've got more Grand Masters now than ever before, they don't know anything, they don't do anything they just decided I'm going to open up my own school, have my own style and now I'm a Grand Master, you know a lot of "our people" that have done that. Names, I won't even bring up.

SS: When you were training in the martial arts, what were your ambitions?

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RH: To be the best martial artist I could. As a fighter back then, for me it was perfection of technique, which was from what I had from my basics from Mr. Drulliard. I was always motivated to learn “the mysticism, the secret powers”, we know it now as ki. We can now explain what it is. Back then, it was this mystical power, you know if one finger touches a piece of wood and I remember reading stories about Master Ueshiba, who was the founder of Aikido. By just a scream you could knock a bird out of a tree. When Master Ueshiba demonstrated in Japan, the army was kind of wanting to know what this aikido stuff was. Master Ueshiba, again was a very small man, very thin man. So the demonstration was that Ueshiba did was that he said give me 10 of your mps (military police) but please make sure that they have some kind of a background in falling techniques, like judo or something. The army, as the story goes, they had two rows of five along the room. Master Ueshiba said what I am going to demonstrate is, I am going to walk in here out that door and as I do that, your people are free to try and stop me. He literally, like taking a casual walk, as the story goes, walked through as these big guys came in. He walked to the other door and turned around, he asked, “Any questions?” So the army was convinced that martial arts was something more than just physical because he was a very small man.

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The same story goes with Master Funakoshi. He was an Okinawan. He was probably smaller than me. Of course that was during the Japanese occupation. If you lived in Japan, Japanese hated everybody other than Japanese. The Koreans were the garlic eaters and they were hated. If you know anything about the Japanese occupation, you knew how they treated them. Back then anyone other than Asians were just trash. So when Master Funakoshi went to Japan, to teach them karate, because there was no such thing as karate in Japan back then. When he went, as small as he was, he was taking on the judo experts, the jujitsu experts, and the sumo champions, and that is why Japan adopted karate, because this little skinny runt went in and beat their best, we are not talking tournament, we are talking “best fighters”. They were so impressed with Okinawan karate. That was how karate was introduced to Japan. Japan’s history in karate wasn’t before then. It was those kind of stories, it’s like these guys were smaller than me taking on guys that I would never dream of fighting you know, we are talking fighting, not tournaments. I knew there was some kind of a power or something they were doing and that has always been my prime motivation. That is why I took Moo Pahl Dan Khum like I did. In 1984 when the late Grand Master first introduced it, it was ah, here is the key to the door. It wasn’t a matter of super power, it was just the knowledge and experience, so that was my specialty. I was never a gifted martial artist. Some people are flexible, some take to fighting naturally, the only thing I had going for me was my tenacity because I was small. I was never a gymnast, I could never kick above my knee until who knows when, and everything I could do, is because I was in that mirror room, and when I wasn’t in the mirror room, I would be out 4 o’clock in the morning, kicking at trees, and training, it was just “blood and guts”.

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Hanke SBN 1965 Basement of the YMCA

SS: Dan testing. When and where was your Cho Dan Test?

RH: That's an embarrassment, but I will share it with you, to let you know how it was. This was a time when Sang Kyu Shim was here for the first time, on that three-month visa. When I started there were four gentlemen that were green belts. These gentlemen were always my seniors and so I went from white belt then to green belt, 6th and 5th, I don't even think I did the 4th, and then made red belt. I wasn't a red belt more than a matter of months. This whole time from my beginning to my first Dan is only 1 year. That was because Sang Kyu Shim wanted a lot of black belts so that they would open a lot of schools. I wasn't a red belt more than 2 or 3 months and he needed black belts, so I was promoted to black belt.

SS: Did you have to do anything?

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RH: Basically we would go out and do a form. No formal test. He just wanted black belts. It was one of the reasons I broke away from him. Because he explained to me his philosophy in why people made black belt. It left a stigma in me. I was always embarrassed that within a year I made black belt. I knew in my mind and heart I didn't know anything. Because of that it took me a year or two before I actually felt comfortable wearing the blue belt. Because I was the head instructor at the time, as the instructor at the time, my students' testings were so hard. You not only had to do everything, like we do now, it is an endurance thing, that you do every basic motion, every form, every kick. You had to do the three steps. We had to fight one person, you had to fight two persons, you had to fight three persons and by then you were usually physically and emotionally exhausted and then you did Kyok Pa. You had to do every kick breakings, side kicks, round kicks, pivot kicks, every kick you had to break.. With the hand techniques upper body, you had to break with the soo do, you had to break with the front kicks, you had to break with backfist. My tests were so severe; one of my students back then his father came and watched the testing. After the testing, his name was Rich Howard, he said his father was ready to come out of the audience and kill me. That was how hard the test was. When you made your black belt, or your 2nd Dan, you are going to know you are at least 6 months overdue, because I didn't want to put the stigma I had because of the early promotion. Actually, the reality in Korea that is the way it was. Mr. Drulliard was only in Korea for a little better than 2 years from a white belt to a 2nd Dan. That was again, you would have to understand it was then the Korean war, at the end of the Korean war, and just like any other nations, all the Koreans knew was that the U.S. was the land of good and plenty, they would be working with all these American soldiers, so this is in all of them. They weren't interested in quality, they weren't interested in anything but making them black belts so that the Americans could sponsor Korean soldiers in the United States so that they could be rich in things? Promotions was not even a political tool, it was economic. That was in the mid 1960s.

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SS: What happened with E Dan testing and Sam Dan testing? Who was involved with that?

RH: I tested for my 1st and 2nd Dan under Master Shim. For the 3rd Dan test there was no one local, so I drove out to Maryland with a Master Lee, who was supposed to be Moo Duk Kwan. Again, he was one of those typical blends. When I went there, competed in this tournament, gave them the money and got my 3rd Dan.

SS: Do you recall how old you were then?

RH: 21 at 1st Dan, 23 at 2nd, 25 or 26 at 3rd Dan. Mr. Drulliard started teaching again actively in 1967 and so I still had a rapport with him, but Mr. Drulliard wanted nothing to do with the beginning of the Federation. His nature again, all he wanted to do is teach Tang Soo Do. Even to this date. I tested under him then, it was basically before 1974, so the Federation wasn't born. So I tested for my 4th Dan under Jae Joon Kim. He did the promotion. Mr. Drulliard married a Korean woman. One of her relations is this Master Lee, that is now running one of the world federations and one of the biggest. I think Mr. Drulliard is caught up in family. All he is hearing about the Grand Master and the Grand Master's son is all this ugliness that these Koreans are throwing at him. So I tested actually with his wife, we both tested for 4th Dan.

SS: What was that like?

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Hanke SBN with some of his senior students

RH: You just had to go out and do the two required forms. Mr. Drulliard didn't know that there was a time requirement so he sent the promotions to the Late Grand Master and it was difficult back then. Maybe 3 or 5 months before you got the results from Korea. I remember him calling me one day and not sounding too happy, so we met at a restaurant. He said when are the promotions coming in? His wife was testing for 3rd Dan. He said my promotion did not come through. I said I don't know why, because back then you didn't question. I didn't know why, and he couldn't give me an answer. So about 6 months later he gets my promotion, with no correspondence. What it was because I was 6 months short of the time element for my 4th Dan, again nothing was explained, and so after that time period was over, then the Late Grand Master sent my promotion for 4th Dan.

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SS: So your Dan number was always registered then?

RH: No. It wasn't. My original Dan number was 4140 and it was issued by Sang Kyu Shim. I thought when I made my 1st and 2nd Dan, then my 3rd Dan, then that it was registered. But Sang Kyu Shim was making his own certificates, forged the stamp, forged the Grand Master's name. That didn't come out. Master Seiberlich was caught in the same thing, because he trained under Master Sang Kyu Shim. The certificates had everything, you couldn't tell the difference. I can't remember the year; it was somewhere in the 1980's and all of a sudden it came up. So the late Grand Master is caught in the quandary, because there is me, Master Seiberlich, and quite a few others I am sure that had these numbers that belonged to Koreans, so that late Grand Master had to readjust, and that is how I got my Dan Bon 4137. It is only a three number difference, but it wasn't until I was passed the 4th Dan that it was addressed. [55:09]

SS: When did it happen that you started to be under the Grand Master.

RH: I was always under the Grand Master, I thought.

SS: Yes, I see.

RH: I never met the man until 1972. But again, there was this connection, spiritual. I just always knew that this was the way. He was the way. Again, there was no communications. The communication for that was from Koreans that were here, and later were lying, lying to the people and caused a lot of problems. It took a lot of years to work that out.

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From the beginning of the 1960's on I was fortunate enough to have Mr. Drulliard until 1962. When he left and Sang Kyu Shim left I was kind of left on my own. This would be the history of just about all of them. Again we continued training and learning things we would start what is known as cross training. I made affiliations with someone that was teaching judo. I tried judo and we had a very good relationship with them. I got into aikido, had a good relationship with them. Kendo, good relationships with them. Basically in my area, we had some Japanese stylists in Isshinryu which is an Okinawan style. We would do things like I would visit their studio with my students and we would line up all his students in one room and all my students on the other and then would just get together and we would spar, just for the experience and that is how the Okinawans and Japanese started learning kicking and that is how we started. Mr. Drulliard is becoming active again, he sponsored over Jae Joon Kim, Dan Bon number 38, who was in the Detroit area. I looked to him to be an instructor, but I couldn't connect. There was something missing. Master C. I. Kim, probably the most deadly, proficient fighter in Tang Soo Do, he had the reputation, and it was the real thing. Every Korean that ever came over was a national champion. In Korea he would walk into a situation, it is almost like being the God father. If anybody had problems they would see him and he would walk in and it could be anybody, and they would back away because that is how awesome Master C. I. Kim was. So he was teaching in the Detroit area. I tried to train under him, again there was something missing, I couldn't connect. So in 10 years I did a lot of cross training. I was never interested in rank but like in judo I wanted to learn how to throw and fall. In aikido I wanted to learn the rolling and falls and joint grips. I wasn't interested enough in training in these arts like a regular student. I was getting together with the instructors because we were all 2nd Dan and I was like the stylist and artist and back then it wasn't so bad, as far as relationships. We were all friends

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We would all get together, all of us instructors, all these styles, a couple times a month and we might be doing some jujitsu, this or that and we really had a nice thing, before everything started to be a competition everything. I tried Jae Joon Kim as an instructor. Although as fighter, or whatever you would want to call it, with all my cross-training, that was growing, but again, there is an emptiness, because I didn't have an instructor and I wasn't learning the Moo Do, of which I know now. But back then I did not know, especially Moo Do Shim Gung. I wasn't disheartened, but was never happy. All these other arts, they all have their beauty and their quality and their proficiencies and whatever, but it really wasn't fulfilling to me, and I wasn't interested in other than learning the basic fundamentals, so that I could be a better fighter in case I ever went up against one of these guys.

In 1974 myself and my area sponsored the late Kwan Jang Nim for the very first tournament in the United States and it was held in our area. Actually it was held at the Lincoln Park Recreational Center, which is now Master Joshua Lockwood's studio. We have pictures in the book. It shows all the people from all over the United States that came to this particular tournament. The late Kwan Jang Nim didn't speak English, so he came and was accompanied by Kwan Jang Nim HC Hwang. It was the first time I had seen him then. Then again when I think back then, wow the Grand Master's son, he's got to "walk on water" and you know he's going to do all these kind of things. You had no idea. Again Moo Do Shim Gung skill- fighting skills, kicking skills and whatever. He was the interpreter for the late Kwan Jang Nim. Master HC Hwang was going to demonstrate a form and I am thinking to myself, "Wow, I am going to see some spectacular thing that I have never seen before". The Grand Masters son, he's a Master. When he went on the floor and gave his demonstration was Kicho Hyung Il Bu... but by the time the man hit his first ki hap, I knew I had found my instructor. It was his spirit. By the time he got to technique #8, "Ki Hap!", I knew in my heart that this was who I was looking for. So I went to him, and said, "Would you be my instructor?"

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SS: Where did he live?

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RH: He was living in New Jersey. From that time on, he fulfilled everything, plus, things I couldn't imagine back then. There are significant tests as you go through your ranks. The first big test was making that black belt, it's a big deal. The second big test is making that 4th Dan, that red stripe, big deal. There is an interim one there. A 4th degree especially back then, you never referred to it. The culture was 4th & 5th degrees were considered Junior Masters. The 6th degree was considered a Senior Master. The way I learned that is back then there was a big conflict between Koreans, especially with the Americans. All of us have been burnt by someone, the Sang Kyu Shims and the Jae Joon Kims. Any of our seniors can tell you the same story, different names, and we didn't trust, didn't like most of them. That was because we were judging on our experiences. The Koreans that were over in our organization, I always felt they were kind of stand offish, when I was a 4th Dan, I was an American, didn't mean diddly, when I was a 5th Dan same thing. When I was promoted to my 6th Dan, Master H. C. Hwang had some event in New Jersey, I went there and all these Koreans that were so far, so distant and had that wall, all of a sudden were coming up and hugging and back patting, and I'm going what the hell is going on here? The Administrator Natalie D'Alessio said, "Master Hanke, you look confused," and I said "What is going on here? I'm being set up." She said no. Of course, she worked with the Kwan Jang Nim. When I made that Senior Master, I was now accepted by them. That is one of those invisible laws. But again, going back to the beginning, your 1st Dan, your 4th Dan, then the next most significant is your 7th Dan, because that is your last physical test. When I tested for my 7th Dan, in Springfield, New Jersey, I tested under the late Kwan Jang Nim. Because you are a Ko Dan Ja, you know you have requirements and you have to do this and you have to do that, attending the Ko Dan Ja is never a problem with me, because I was at every one from the very beginning. To me, that's the highlight of the year. It has always been that way

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So we were at the gym or at the studio for my 7th Dan test and I was the only candidate, actually I was the first to ever be promoted to 5, 6th or 7th by the Kwan Jang Nim. So when I went for my 7th Dan test, I knew that I didn't have to do the basics, the forms and like that. The Ko Dan Ja test got to the point where it was my time for my presentation. I got up went on the and then did my bowing, to Kwan Jang Nim and to Kwan Jang Nim. What would you like to demonstrate? I said "I would like to demonstrate Kicho Hyung Il Bu." So I did Kicho Hyung Il Bu. When I got done I bowed and I was done, and that was my presentation. After that the late Kwan Jang Nim was talking to our current Kwan Jang Nim in Korean. Our current Kwan Jang Nim said to me, "The Kwan Jang Nim wants to know, why did you do that, why did you do that form?" I said, "Sir that is how I met my instructor."

That was followed by the Late Kwan Jang Nim and his wife at their home they had a special dinner for myself. That is probably one of my most fondest memories.
(1:09:44

SS: Ohh...and how it came full circle. Perfect.

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I'm blessed. I've always felt I've been blessed. A lot people don't understand and never understood me, my history back in the beginning. Like the Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa, like I was the meanest ugliest...I mean people came in terror of me because I was helping and I was the senior, and I was at every one. What they didn't understand was that one, there were no criteria, there were no scripts, the first Ko Dan Ja was only like 3 days, and that was the end of it. There was no sitting down and we are going to do this and we are going to do that. We had a class at 9 o'clock in the morning and after the classes were over the Kwan Jang Nim would go back and I would be living with the people but there was never any verbal guidance. The Kwan Jang Nim of course was the Senior, and so someone had to be... in the army they call it the DI. When you go to basic training, your officers are always respected people. It is that first Sergeant that takes you through basic training and beats you over the head with the pipe or whatever. That was my position. It was never my nature. Because I never really had guidance, you know from your experience in Ko Dan Ja, things would come up, now in the later years, the Ko Dan Ja candidates come, they come with a different attitude. Back then, the attitude was not a good attitude. If class was scheduled for 9:00, they might still be in the locker room at 9:15, 9:30, in street clothes. I had to be the DI. I had to take that position. The Grand Master didn't, and I did it. My rule of thumb has always been that when the unexpected came up and decisions had to be made, if the Kwan Jang Nim was there, and then after he left if he wasn't there, I would make a run of things a list, this is going on, or that's going on, or I did this or I did that, hoping that I did the good thing and not the wrong thing.(1:12:45

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Attending the Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa in Ramona, California

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My guiding and my motivation, because again, there was no instruction. Even the Kwan Jang Nim, we were all ad-libbing. We were just creating this new thing. There still is, with some people, a lot of resentment because they misunderstood who I was and what I was. Whenever I had to make a decision, like I remember when Master Boussalaa came for his masters testing, he couldn't speak English. He had a gentleman or one of his students with him that could speak English. Back then there was no observation of any Ko Dan Ja Class, no outside participation and even the final presentation, it was closed. We are hitting the wall in the middle of the week, the third day in Master Boussalaa came. I will never forget this. He came at 2 o'clock in the morning and said I am leaving. I said "why?" He said, "I don't understand English, I don't know what is going on out there. I don't understand, and I think it is a waste of time and I can't stand the politics." Again, we had a lot of members that have recently left and some left long ago that were really not good people. Mr. Boussalaa said "I don't know what is going on, I don't understand what is going on." But he could see and feel the politics. He was going home. He was quitting. Now it is about 2 o'clock in the morning, and I had to make one of those decisions, what will I do about this? Do I call up the Kwan Jang Nim and see he has left. All I said to Mr. Boussalaa through the interpreter is, "Don't worry about it, I'll take care of it, and you be there in the morning." So then it's, ok, now what do I do? (1:15:19)

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Poor Master Kris Poole and his motor lodge. He happened to be walking by it's about 3 o'clock in the morning now. I said Master Poole, can I talk to you? I said I had to run some things by him and I explained the situation. I said I have a choice I can call up the Kwan Jang Nim and ask him what to do at 4 o'clock in the morning, I had three options. I could just let him go, or I could make a decision to keep him. The decision I made in that what I told Mr. Boussalaa before he left, you come tomorrow and you have your Dan come with you to the Ko Dan Ja, so that when all the talking is going on he will be there to interpret for you. (The interpreter was not in the room. He was picking up only with feelings.) (1:16:40)

What I told Mr. Boussalaa that tomorrow morning your interpreter can come into class with you. We are talking about a 2nd 3rd Dan coming to interpret. I threw those three options at Master Poole. I asked him what would he do? Oh I definitely would call the Kwan Jang Nim. I definitely wouldn't let an outsider come in. I guess he is going to do whatever he is going to do. I used to sleep at headquarters.. I never stayed in a hotel. I stayed at the Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa. I just loved sleeping on the studio floor, or I used to have my van outside. So I went back to the studio. So now it is about 5 o'clock in the morning and now at 9 o'clock the Kwan Jang Nim is going to come walking in and his 3rd Dan is going to be there. I was meditating in the steam room. Ok Hanke, your either going to be ok or you are going to be a white belt. Because the tradition was.(1:18:05)

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That is how I spent the night. What I've always used for my guiding, because again all I do is previous Ko Dan Ja. So it's never we are making it up as we went. You never had to make a decision. I had a little simple trick I used for cleaning my mind. What would be the newer way. When I made my decision, it was ok Boussalaa would have his interpreter with him. Now I am faced with what is going to happen with the Kwan Jang Nim comes. At 9 o'clock in the morning I was ready to greet (the current) Kwan Jang Nim and of course Mr. Boussalaa was going to leave because he didn't understand anything and.....I had invited an "outsider" in. The Kwan Jang Nim just looked at me and says oh, ok. That's is exactly what I did. That was what all those previous Ko Dan Ja were.(1:19:34)

Whether I make wrong decisions or harsh decisions, there are things now that I wouldn't do even if it was the same old days. But now we are living in a whole different world. Everybody is real. Back then, one or two out of 15 or 20. The rest were egotistical, self centered ugly people. (1:20:00)

So that takes us up to the 7th Dan.(1:20:06)

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SS: Can I just go back and ask you about your Sa Dan Testing? The Sa Dan Testing was under _____. I just went to his studio and I did one or two forms and that was it. The O Dan was the first one. The first testing under the Kwan Jang Nim.. Again, back then we all got up to about 4th Dans, one way or another. I am talking about the “old timers”. The Ko Dan Ja Shim Sha experience started, I don’t even know what year. Maybe the late 1970s or something. We would have to check the date when the first one happened. Even in Korea, once you made 4th Dan, you never had to test again. Your 4th Dan six years later, you were a 6th Dan. For those even our senior Koreans, there was no such thing as testing after you made 4th Dan. Being that I was at all of the Ko Dan Ja experiences and when my time was up, to me it was just another Ko Dan Ja thing, I’m there. All of a sudden it became required to physically attend Ko Dan Ja for your 6th and 5th Dan. Of course 6th Dan come rolling around and I am at them all. I got my promotion and then all Ko Dan Ja had to physically test, not for your 6th Dan. (1:22:06).

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I think the late Kwan Jang Nim was kind of like “good idea.” So that was established up to the 6th Dan. So now there is a 7 year period which went by and of course I’m on the floor and I’m elated with what I did, other than that it was just like everything else. All of a sudden if you wanted to be a 7th Dan, you had to physically attend. I got a lot of resentment from the seniors. I understand. Up until then it was different. Now they were required to go on the floor, we are talking about the Ah Po’s and the Ferraro’s. We have to physically do the test. Oh I see. Yes you do. Why? Because that is tradition. It was only here in the United States, it wasn’t in Korea, it was because I did it, so hey, now I got a lot of resentment from our people. Of course the 8th Dan, that is not like you automatically made Dan, that is a very special thing. There is no physical requirement for that. Eventually honorary, because that means that it is not the same as earned. I see. There is a difference there. So you make your 8th Dan and then at the Kwan Jang Nim’s pleasure, whether he would give you that or not. Ah Po, he actually came and knew that there was no test for the 8th Dan. He came to the one Shim Sa up in your part of the country, and he actually came with this application for testing and all that. It was like he was trying to bully the Grand Master. Even now, if you’ve got your 8 years in, that don’t mean anything. If you don’t get the 8th Dan until either the Grand Master decides that he feels that is what should happen, and then his practice has always been, he will sit down with the SAC and ask all the SAC members. That is how Master Martinov made his 8th Dan. That was the cutting rod that made Andy split. Even though he tried to intimidate, buy it and enforce it, if you didn’t measure up to the Kwan Jang Nim’s standards. (1:25:24)

SS: What offices you held in the Moo Duk Kwan? You were a charter member?

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Photo at the special clinic taught by the Founder, Hwang Kee at the first National convention at the NY JFK Hilton Hotel in 1975,

RH: I started as a charter member and was appointed to the Board of Directors when it was first formed, I was appointed on the Board and then the TAC was formed. I was appointed on the TAC and then the SAC was created, I was on the SAC. (1:25:59)

SS: Any especially challenging times when you were in any of those offices?

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RH: In the old days the Board of Directors was always challenging, because that's is when we had a Board of 30 members, and a lot of them were Koreans, and they were all these people that eventually are gone. The Board of Directors meeting wasn't a one hour conference on the phone once a month, or 2 or 3 hours in the afternoon. It was 14 hours on Saturday, things would get so heated, and I was caught up in one with a Master Lee from California, where they would be lying, doing things that we would literally be ready to go across a table and tear each others heads off. Then we would go back Sunday, for another 7 or 8 hours just to try to accomplish something. It was horrendous.

SS: Where were they held?

RH: Usually at headquarters, in Springfield, New Jersey. The workings and the structures and all that, I've done what I've done because of the request by the Kwan Jang Nim and my rank and status, but for me it was Ko Dan Ja and summer camps, that was what I lived and breathed for. Everything else I took in. (1:27:53)

I sat on the Board of Directors, and I've stood on the Board of Directors when we've cut down 15 people, 5 appointed. Being that I'm not a politician, I speak straight, and that kind of goes completely against my nature, by nature I'm living out in the woods, so that whole structure to me is mind boggling stuff. We were at that time in a sticking point. There is a conflict what is the Board and what is the Tac and there is conflict between territory, we couldn't get anything accomplished and I wasn't qualified to be a politician. So what I did was I talk to the Kwan Jang Nim and said I would like to resign, because we all know Master Johnson, this is his specialty. I would like to resign and wholly recommend Master Johnson to fill my shoes, because that is what the Board needs, and that's what I need. I need to get out of it. So that is when I left the Board.(*1:29:11)

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The TAC, I was there until it came to the time where we had to open up to I call it, the original Tac, first generation. But, there came a time that we had to let the younger generation come up. So that was when Tac Sac was formed. Then we had second generation of Tac. Then in the last couple of years, we've created the Hu Kyun In, so we could take all those senior members, move them out of Tac. Sac is a very exclusive thing. It is very important to the Kwan Jang Nim who sits on the Sac. When Sac was formed that made room for the second generation, which was of course your husband, Master Mason, and all like that. Then it was time for them to move on, for the third generation, and right now what we now have is the third generation. What they are accomplishing is, whatever we are, the quality, whether it's an event, a function, teaching a class, anything, the third generation is putting out a quality that it at least 500% better than the first generation Tac accomplishment and at least 100 or 200% more than the second generation, and that is the current Tac that we have now.(1:31:34)

As nature takes its course, already looking at whose is going to be in what kind of accomplishments is this fourth generation going to come up with? We have a beautiful future. In this particular event, I am watching the rings and I am watching everything going out there, it is like I'm just so happy. I can almost see perfection. Master Bartolacci says, no no, we can do better than that. It is just so well worth. It gives us so much to look forward to. I am watching little 5 year olds, and 7 year olds doing forms that I couldn't do technically as good when I was a 1st and 2nd Dan. I am watching teenagers that are red belts and 1st Dan doing techniques, whether it is form or sparring combinations, I couldn't do when I was a 5th Dan, nobody else could either. No matter what they think. It is just that growing, I am just so excited to see what the fourth and fifth generation of Tac going to create. It is just a beautiful thing. I am a very happy man.(1:33:01)

SS: What was your best time in the Moo Duk Kwan?

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RH: I couldn't answer that, because one my memory isn't good enough, and we could probably write 2 or 3 books, there's been so many, on something maybe so small an insignificant, to things that are mind boggling. I couldn't do it.(1:33:44)

Just being here and seeing the fruits and being able to be with the Kwan Jang Nim and his wife and the family, and see all of our children. I am living in heaven.

SS.: Do you have a photograph or remember a photograph of a special moment for you? I have none. I was trained with Sang Kyu Shim back in 1962, I was a flyer. One of my specialties besides fighting, I call myself a flyer a "jump kicker". When I was in high school, the only sport I got into was swimming and I was not good, but I was on the freshman diving team. So I knew how to jump. In 1962 or 1963 I got a picture of me doing a side jump kick against this Jim Young that we were talking about. He was throwing a punch and I did an E Dan Yup Podo Cha Gi, I got the picture hanging on my wall. That is my fondest memory, because I'm over his head kicking down. People still think it was trick photography. When I look at that picture it is like, hah, that is my most meaningful picture.(1:35:18)

SS: How about do you have a treasured item from your training?

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RH: A treasured item. I have never been like a collector of too many things. I can't think of anything that is really special. You get so many different things. Most of the treasured things I have are my plants. The inside of my house the inside of my studio, is nothing but plants. I don't really know much about plants. I can't tell you the names of them, I have a rough idea. Like in my studio, in my office, I have two ferns, they go up the wall to the ceiling and front of the studio and the front of the window, is just the hanging ferns. Those are my Keiko Mason plants. Whenever I would visit, when I was in Carlsbad visiting Master Mason, I was in her backyard, of course she has this beautiful Japanese garden, you ever wanted to see. In back of her house was just covered with this beautiful fern, so I would take cuttings wherever I would go, and I started from a cutting and now the front of my house is covered with a red honeysuckle. That is my Lisa Donnelly plant. I can't tell you the name of my plant, but that is when I was in Florida visiting Master Donnelly. I took a cutting from her house and those are my treasures. They are living things and whenever I look at them I say, "that's Keiko, that's Lisa." (1:37:50)

If you go to my studio, you wouldn't think it was a karate studio. That is the front window and I have like a reception desk, and just like a little booth for my office, it is open. Across the wall and ceiling I have philodendrons and I love plants, to me it is living art. I've got about four or five philodendron plants and they are hanging. They are all along the walls to the floor, this is all you see. If you go to my house, you won't see a picture on the wall, you will see philodendrons. You go into the bathrooms, philodendrons, you go in the laundry room, I have my plants, to me this is living art. Whenever I walk by there is nature. To me that is my living breathing art. That is my family, means life. (1:39:37)

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Even at the Ko Dan Ja experience, you always see me somewhere during the training you will always see me going outside, a lot of people think it is for one thing or another, but actually it is for emptying my cup. For the pressures or whatever is happened, all I have to do is go outside and like I always did, walk along the building once and listen to some birds and see the rabbit and the trees or something, and then it's just like one walk around the building and it is just like I had 20 hours sleep and I am all ready to go. That is what keeps me going. (1:40:14)

SS: I remember you liked Phoenecia.

RH: Phoenecia was very special , very strange, the witches (not our people) were having the coven and they were burning the candles and doing their ceremony, there were memories there that were unbelievable. That is why Ko Dan Ja and summer camps were some of my favorite times. In Ko Dan Ja I am in “Hanke Heaven” as I call it. Because that is all we are, we got the best of the best, the leaders are the best of the best and that is all we do for eight days, as you well know, 20 hours a days and in summer camps it is shorter, but it is always out in nature. Second heavy, if there is a “second heaven”. (1:41:20)

SS: When you first saw our founder, or met him what was your impression of him?

RH: The late Grand Master?

SS: Yes sir.

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RH: Because I didn't see him personally until after my bitter experiences with these other Koreans, I really didn't know what to expect. As you know, he carries a charisma with him. When I first met him at the airport, it was the first time I seen him, it was like you know, I could almost see the love energy radiate from his body and he was so humble and there are no words to explain it, as you well know. He just carries as does our current Kwan Jang Nim. It is just beautiful. That was my impression, I was seeing this energy of love and whatever, and that kind of like made it all worthwhile, given all the negative Korean experiences we had. All of us had at that time. (1:42:58)

SS: Do you have a favorite story about you and our Founder or any time you spent with him?

RH: Yes I do. I last time I was with him. The last time I was with him was in Korea in Korean Shim Sa. Of course, I'm sitting at the table and I happen to be sitting on his right, the Kwan Jang Nim was on his left. As the Shim Sa was going on, we are sitting there, he reached over and took my hand and for half an hour he just held me hand. That was the last time I was with him, but it wasn't a hand squeeze, it was just he held my hand under the table, and for half and hour he just held my hand and looked over and smiled once in a while and it was like moving, you can see. Don't tell the other people, they think I'm "hard as nails", if they see the tears, they will loose respect for me. (1:44:53)

SS: Besides our Founder and our current Kwan Jang Nim, if you had to choose a memorable person out of all the people you have met who would you pick and why?

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RH: That question is almost impossible to answer. I could talk about Master Martinov, I could talk about Master Mason, I could talk about anybody just name them. I just couldn't. They are all so special, because they are all such individual entities, and they all have their special charisma, their special thing. I would be hard pressed to add anyone other than the Kwan Jang Nim to stand out. With most of them we had the good times and the bad times. The bad times were at the beginning of the Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa formation and I had to carry the hammer. There was a lot of confusion and a lot of hate. The things flashing through my head right now, is like Master Kenyon, Sr. I remember when he was trying to do what he could do in California, which was under Master Ah

Po and he (Ah Po) was like attacking him in anyway that he could. On more than one occasion, he was almost ready to go and hand master Ah Po his head. Daymon has always been that special. At an event at the old school, we are not talking about this is when he was on Mountain Ave, his studio. I remember, I don't think it was a Ko Dan Ja testing, but I knew Daymon's father quite well, as a few others, Kwan Jang Nim was teaching a clinic and it was time for free sparring—"any volunteers". I think my hand was up one second ahead of Fred Kenyon so the both of us stood up, of course all I knew about Fred Kenyon was that he was from California. We sparred. Later he took ill, passed on and I always considered Daymon like my little brother. As of course he was under the Kwan Jang Nim's wing, the Kwan Jang Nim was doing a lot of traveling, especially out of the country, and I wasn't there. I knew Daymon was going with the Kwan Jang Nim, I was very comfortable. Daymon would bring so much back then, I was just like, "I am blessed because I can't answer that question."(1:49:48)

SS: What is your favorite area to teach?

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RH: Moo Pahl Dan Khum that was given to us by the Kwan Jang Nim in 1984. When you are young, you are physical. As I said before, I was always looking for that hidden key-Nirvana, if you want to call it that. Then as I learned, because there are no books on this subject, I have only had one or two comments from the Kwan Jang Nim over all these years, as far as what it is and what your teaching. So I would practice and nature would teach me. Whatever nature taught me from that experience, it would just grow and grow to where it is now. I am at a place in my life now where after all these years I call it “in my world”. In my world, inside of me, the Moo Pahl Dan Khum is the most significant. Whether it is to learn basics, I’ve had a couple of knee surgeries and I had the motorcycle injury, it is not all that many years ago. I had 6 major ribs, the top ribs and scapula, fractured. I had to go to the doctors and all that. With the knee and I would go to the specialists. I would go in and usually you don’t see him until 2 or 3 weeks. After you get out of the emergency you have to go to your doctor. The doctor would be expecting a 62 year old man coming in that was about to crash and all humble and all like that. I would go walking in and the doctor says “Are you Mr. Hanke?” He is looking at the x-rays and he’s showing me. “Let’s see your range of movement” and I can do this and I can do that. The doctor was so overwhelmed with what I could do and what is already healed, he says you just had this accident a couple of weeks ago, and I can see the bones are mending. Well what do you do? I said I do Soo Bahk Do. He said what is that? He wanted to joint a club, but because he was a doctor, he was on the other side of town it never happened.(1:52:59)

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This is tangible proof of the power of the self healing and the longevity. You've got to remember, what is the purpose of the martial arts? Rejuvenation, prolonging life. When I went to my second set of xrays, a month or two after the first set, you could look at one that he said was advanced here, I didn't know. I just saw the pictures. Then he put the second picture up and the injury was gone. He is saying well what can you do now? I could do everything. The prognosis on my knee, because I had the major surgery, I got pins, they did the whole thing. I said to the doctor then, what is my prognosis. He says may be in 2 or 3 years you might get 70-80% of your range of motion, and then as you get older, you've got to remember I'm going on 66 in a couple of weeks, you will have to look forward to arthritis, bursitis and all like that. So when I was going for physical therapy, in a very short time I went to the doctor, I'm going to the physical therapist. They are saying I can only do this, I can only do that. He knew I was doing Tang Soo Do at the time, so he said so you just do whatever you want, don't worry about my physical therapist. Then then there is a period of time and the last time I went to see him I went into the office. "Mr. Hanke how are you doing?" I said fine sir. On the wall he had the coat rack. Well sir my right leg I can only do this, (demonstrates his flexibility), I can do this and this and with the left leg I can only do this, and only do this. He just looked at me and said hey, if you ever need me give me a call. (1:55:29)

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In the training of our healing art, I have had these doctors just look at me and be completely blown away from all their medical knowledge, the healing and all that. Moo Pahl Dan Khum, that is great. Whether I'm 66 or may live to be 100. That is a little bet I have with the Kwan Jang Nim, because we know in time the Kwan Jang Nim, as we all do, we pass on. We hope the 3rd generation of TAC. If something would happen with the Kwan Jang Nim, God forbid, what would happen to us? What would happen to all the work? History, from the beginning of time-When the leaders go, the style goes. This had happened in all your Okinawan and all your martial arts. When the leader goes the organization splits apart, falls apart. That is the biggest concern the past and present Kwan Jang Nim have. We know where we are at now, but the reality is, it is going to take another generation or two to learn if we are going perpetuate. In the history of all martial arts, when the senior goes or the creator goes the organization splits apart, the system goes. So we know at least 20 or 25 more years of the Kwan Jang Nim's presence and guidance in our growth. We used to say the last 200 years, but lately we have it up to 1000 years. I made a pact with the Kwan Jang Nim, he is my junior. He is only going to turn 60. I am 66. Kwan Jang Nim let's make a pact, I'll stick around until I'm 100, and I made this pact a few years ago, we will just round figure it. I'll stick around God willing, until I'm 100 to help support and grow the art so you can't die before me because I am older than you and I'll be here until I'm 100 and once I turn 100, with the way the world and chaos and the ugliness of the world, and it is really getting ugly, then when I turn 100 I will look around and decide is there an after life, because I am curious about that. Is there a heaven or hell? Is there reincarnation? Back in the 1970s I was studying religions and theologies. My thesis was comparative religion through history. I can give you the history of how every kind of a church or a religion started, that was what my thesis was. It is all done in faith. Once I turn 100 maybe I might decide to see if there is another world

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He can't die before me. So that gives us another 36 years of the Kwan Jang Nim's guidance, otherwise I'm going to be real mad at him, if he goes before me. He broke the pact and I'll be real mad at him. (2:00:36)

SS: As a senior, what do you feel the most important thing a senior can contribute to the juniors?

RH: As we said when the late Kwan Jang Nim would walk into a room, or whenever he did anything, this was the epitome as our Kwan Jang Nim, is the epitome of what our art is. I feel that myself and everyone else and the higher their rank the more it is their requirement, to demonstrate by our actions the epitome of what it is to be the Moo Duk Kwan.(2:09:48)

SS: If you were going to give advise to a practitioner, what would be the best advice you would give them?

RH: If they are children they would be white belts.

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Children by age, children by art. Keep it very basic and simple. If they are Masters, Senior Masters, then my expectations or hopes for them is to naturally grow from the physical to the internal Neh Gung to the spiritual. It is all inner related. The Neh Gung and the Shim Gung for us seniors, our future is in our physical abilities or our presence. You look at Master Seiberlich. Have you ever seen a healthier looking 70 year old than Master Martinov? You look at Master Seiberlich, he actively plays handball , national competition. I don't think I look so bad myself. The reality is now I spend probably 90% of my training time-I literally try to train 24 hours a day-my major focus is in the Neh Gung Shim Gung. The Neh Gung Shim has taught me Moo Pahl Dan Khum, they are connected. The last because both of my knees, I was never known as a kicker. I never had the flexibility and I never had the range in motion. In the last 3 months, my legs and my kicking as I just demonstrated, are effortless. I couldn't do that 6 months ago. So this rumor, this fallacy, that as you get older, just accept that your body is going to deteriorate, is not true. My legs, my kicking, my personal techniques, again as it is already written in the Song of the Sip Sam Seh, if it is done correctly all will appear effortless. Again, I have the living proof. It is just so highly motivational for me. I am actually a recluse. I go home I don't visit, I don't shop, I don't go anywhere, except to meet with the Kwan Jang Nim. But other than that, I am a total recluse. In the old days, I would be one of the guys living up in the mountains. People and negative energy distract me and and upset me. If I am upset, you know, it disturbs the pure energy. I will not allow a negative energy in my house. I just won't allow it. At the studio I have to deal with the students and parents and all that, but I am the most happiest at my studio, when I'm there alone. It is my second home. (2:05:39)

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Because I have Master Zickafoose and Master Lockwood and Mrs. Lockwood, they do most of the teaching, when they come and the people start coming, I go home. I go into my yard, I go into my cave, because my world is the world of pure high energy and love. Anything negative from other people you say you grew a thick skin, my skin is getting thinner. Because I am so attuned with nature and love, that anything that is contrary to that, it just like the emotional or physical trauma for me. So I just stay in my world and pursue this road I am on, and I don't know where it is going. I don't know where the end is. I don't know. But I know that every day I am learning so much. In Soo Bahk Do, the people really understand and have the time and dedication. When I say that, what I mean is people have jobs, they have families, obligations and interest, I don't-I am totally focused on the Neh gung Shim Gung. I was pushing Shim Gung for awhile, but I found that I am not ready for it. For me, to obtain wherever that direction goes, again, you literally you have to live in a perfect environment with no negative energy. I am not ready to leave friendships. Even coming to these events is a big trauma for me. To have me go to the airports and even being at the events. For a day or two I am fine. Ko Dan Ja too, for a day or two I am fine. But after that, I start having this magnetic draw, go back to your world. I am not ready to give that up. It is really hard on my personal relationship with my lady, because thankfully she is understanding. I live in a whole different world and the world is inside. It is hard to explain. I was talking to Master Pryor just yesterday. We were talking about professional studios and how my studio it barely pays its own way. Most of the time I work side jobs to pay the rent and pay my personal bills. I am lucky I don't need the money, other than food and clothing. There is no way. Even with the Kwan Jang Nim, I can't explain it. It is that personal and private so you can call it selfish. All I know it is my world and I'm going to stay in it every chance I get and let it show me whatever it is. I'm at my best when I don't think. I just respond

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Then you go into a little psychic, psychic energy, premonitions, and all these different things, I studied all that. I used to teach mental telepathy and all these psychic things. You come to me with something, what I realize is that I don't think, I just respond. If I think about it, I would probably give you the wrong answer. If I just spit out the first thing that comes that comes into my mind, and as I leave you will be saying, oh wow, this or that. What you don't know is I'm leaving and replaying it in my mind, and it is like wow. That was neat, that was profound. I'm a good student. I love it. It is only when I think that I get in trouble. (02:10:30)

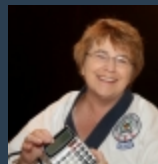
SS: Just a kind of final question. What would you like people to know about you or how would you like to be remembered?



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RH: Years ago, at one of the Ko Dan Jas Shim Sa, when Kwan Jang Nim took out the first volume of the Kwan Jang Nim's book, where it has a picture of all those new students. We were sitting and he was going over the pictures and I forget what the guy's dan bon number was, the Kwan Jang Nim's comment was "he was the most loyal dedicated student the late Kwan Jang Nim had." That is how I want to be remembered . (2:11:55)



Oral History

Sandra Schermerhorn, Sa Bom Nim initiated the oral history project to capture and preserve accounts of authentic Moo Duk Kwan® history from various active senior members.

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Victor Martinov, Sa Bom Nim, Oral History

Posted by Oral History on Dec 11th, 2016 in [USA](#)

Reading Time: 49 minutes

Victor Martinov, Sa Bom Nim , Dan Bon 10189, 9th Dan,
Oral History, (1936-2015)

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Sandra Schermerhorn: This is Sandra Schermerhorn. It's August 11, 2006. I'm in San Diego, California, USA, talking with Vic Martinov, Sa Bom Nim. Sa Bom Nim, I was wondering if you could tell me where you live now and what your Dan number is.

Vic Martinov: I live in Santa Ynez, that's y-n-e-z, Santa Ynez, California, and my Dan Bon number is 10189.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And your current instructor?

Vic Martinov: Who my current instructor is?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes.

Vic Martinov: My current instructor- that's interesting. I never thought of that. I would have to say that Kwan Jang Nim is probably my current instructor.



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Vic Martinov and H.C. Hwang

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes. And do you own a studio now?

Vic Martinov: No, I have a studio at my home and I am involved in– well in most of my career I've been involved in the studios in the Los Angeles area. So, that was sort of what you might call my following, that I was involved in; the people, the students and the instructors, studio owners and the studios in the Los Angeles area, that was my base.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see. And did you have your own studio in the Los Angeles area?

Vic Martinov: No, I just trained and taught at the various...

Sandra Schermerhorn: Various studios.

Vic Martinov: ...studios, yes; most particularly in the South Bay Moo Duk Kwan.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Sir, could you tell me what motivated you to begin training in the martial arts?

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Vic Martinov: Well I- when I got out of the service, the army, the U.S. Army- and let's see, that was 1957. So, in 1958 I- well I was looking for some physical fitness mostly and I was very- I felt I was a practical person, and I looked for the best use of my time, which was to say I'd like to not just go to a gym and work out, I'd rather get involved in a fitness program that also developed other areas. Like in martial arts I always felt it was physical fitness, mental training and self-defense, in that order; and the order has never changed, it's physical fitness, mental conditioning and self-defense. So, that was- so I studied actually Aikido, and I started studying Aikido just about in 1959, 1960.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And where did you study that?

Vic Martinov: That was in the city of Lavita [ph?], California. Virgil Crank was my first instructor, and from there, there were other Japanese instructors, from Japan, that came over- Akimata [ph?] and (Sensei Mits) Yamashita [ph?] and some of the other instructors that we had. So, I studied Aikido for several years and then I got interested in- I was always interested in other forms of karate. And so, when Chuck Norris opened up a school in Torrance, his first school, as soon as he opened it up I joined his class, and that was- I think that was about 1962, as I recall.



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Victor Martinov standing next to Mr. Chuck Norris and his students second from the right 1967



Chuck Norris presenting Moo Duk Kwan certificate from Hwang Kee on behalf of his authorized American Tang Soo Do Association in the USA.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Black belt magazine 1967, showing Victor Martinov as a Red Belt during a photo shoot with Mr. Carlos (Chuck) Norris at the Norris Karate School in Redondo, CA.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews



Black belt magazine 1967, showing Victor Martinov as a Red Belt during a photo shoot with Mr. Carlos (Chuck) Norris at the Norris Karate School in Redondo, CA.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And was that Tang Soo Do?

Vic Martinov: That was Tang Soo Do.

Sandra Schermerhorn: At that time?

Vic Martinov: It was, yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And how old were you when you started training?

Vic Martinov: Let's see, I was 25 I believe, 25.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: 25. One thing that I forgot to ask you, just as a little introduction to yourself, that if you don't mind we could fill in here, if you could tell me just something about your hobbies, your education, your employment history, just a little bit about yourself in those areas.

Vic Martinov: Well my employment history is not- I was a real estate developer, syndicator, just-. You know, I went to school- when I got out of the Army I went to night school and it took me 14 years to get a 4-year degree, but all nights. And I studied martial arts. In martial arts I was studying Aikido and Tang Soo Do, and I was going to school nights for those 13, 14 years, and I was studying real estate on the side. So, I was very, very busy. I remember that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I bet.

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Vic Martinov: That's all I did. But in that path of my schooling was a lot of years of developing a lot of different aspects of business and law and engineering and public law; all these things I wasn't really sure where I was headed with, except that I was trying to get educated more than a degree. And when I got into developing, building, syndicating, everything I ever studied it seemed like I was using every day. It was amazing. So, that was just a little background of the way my life went. I did all the studying and then I used it, and it was perfect for me. So, dealing with conceiving development projects and acquiring property and raising capital and dealing with engineers and architects and stuff. And I had to work in my father's construction company for years when I was younger too, so I had a little background in that. And I did work for L.A. County electrical codes for 17 years and I got a lot of public works, construction background. So, I was equipped for the business that I got into which was, as I say, development and syndication and so forth. So, that's my— from there I developed just a property management capital and to manage my own properties. That's where I'm kind of at right now. So as far as the martial arts are concerned I started studying aikido and studied the karate and I never stopped, never once; from 1962, Tang Soo Do, I stayed with it and still all I want to do is work out. I'm not interested in the politics and the administration and all the stuff that we all went through, and necessarily had to, in order to try and develop something that was going to endure, and have lasting life beyond any one of ourselves.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Before you started training was there any tradition with family of martial arts?

Vic Martinov: No not really. My brothers studied a little at the same time. No, I would say there wasn't.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And you've always been in California?

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Vic Martinov: No, I was born in New York.

Sandra Schermerhorn: You were?

Vic Martinov: Yes. I was, in New York City. I lived on 177 West 83rd Street when I was a little boy, when I was a little guy. So, but at about the age of 7 or so I came to California. So most of my life has been in California.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes. Oh okay. Your early training, what was training like in the early years?

Vic Martinov: training was ah...You see, we didn't really have the secrets of the art as we thought that they may exist. We really didn't have a lot of technical guidance but we made up for it by training hard, and we thought that we could overcome anything if you just worked out hard. And so, we worked out hard, and we fought hard. And in those days, you had a Friday night class and they'd call it Destruction Derby, and that was not- that was the people from other arts that had come to train with us. And I can think of one individual in particular, a gentleman by the name of Wayne Lamb, he used to build surfboards in Redondo Beach and he was one of Nishiamas's [ph?] students that had took fighting. But he'd come in on a Friday night class and he gave- coined that phrase, Destruction Derby. We trained hard. And then in those days the tournaments started, started getting into vogue between the different schools. So, they were all open tournaments. You'd go to any school and put on a tournament and get anybody you could get to come.

Sandra Schermerhorn: In the tournaments, did they do, forms and sparring, or did they start out to be just sparring?

Vic Martinov: Just sparring, started out to be just sparring. There was no distinction with the weight classes or ranks it was a blood bath.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Or rank?

Vic Martinov: Yes, and rank, and pretty much the dans would spar with the gups, but they got to spar pretty much. It was a while before they separated green belts from red belts. But you could— and then for grand champion, a red belt, you win a grand champion of the whole tournament, where there was dans and everybody else. So, it was an interesting time and the rules were—. You know What we have, as I see it here, is the— really a frontier of martial arts that is taking place in the United States over the last half a century, and before then it was almost like there was none. And today we have full-blown, very visible styles that have all evolved, not from zero, but from what came to this country, what was imported into the country. But it just is interesting to me to think that here we have 50 years of martial arts, how it grew and how it developed and how its expressions changed in the United States, and that's taken place by a lot of different organizations that have followed similar paths to try to understand what the arts were about, and to try to establish those arts and to define them and interpret them, and people making livings and things like that. So today, you look at what we have today it's unbelievable.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So back when you started training did people have full-time schools and did they make a living from it?

Vic Martinov: Some of them did, yes. Most of them didn't but some of them did. Yes, there were a lot of different styles, and talking about that, that were not Tang Soo or even— that might have been from Okinawan styles, Japanese styles or Chinese. But they all started out small, everything started out small. It was just a matter of opinion.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Like when you went to class at Chuck Norris's school, about how many people would be in your class?

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Vic Martinov: Well when we started there might have been three or four of us, starting. But over the years that I was there– well his particular case is another story because clients and financiers came in and they promoted his schools and started to build his schools into what they considered like state of the art, tech, Tang Soo Do schools. And then they started running it like a Jack LaLane business, selling programs and all this, and they advertised and they had program directors, and it started immediately getting away from the old traditional instructors trying to teach, to business people trying to sell programs. And so, to answer your question how many people? Toward the end of the existence of the chain that was Norris schools, there were large classes and a lot of students, and it was quite big. Some classes could have 30 or 40 students.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So it grew at that time.

Vic Martinov: But at the beginning it wasn't like that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And in the beginning, even when it was bigger than 3 or 4 people, a little bit bigger, were there women or children training, on their own?

Vic Martinov: Yes, that's– there were, but they were way in the minority, children. That's another thing that evolved and over time it was– you know what we thought was that martial arts was all about punching and kicking, that's what everybody thought. And then fortunately we came onto the founder of our art who really showed us the way, and that was a good thing for us.

Sandra Schermerhorn: In the early training years did you train at a studio?

Vic Martinov: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: It was actually a building studio.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Vic Martinov: Yes, yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Where you trained.



Victor Martinov in shirt and tie with Chuck Norris at his school

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Vic Martinov: Well Norris opened up a studio in Torrance. We called it Five Torrance. It was five buildings all came together and this was like a fishbowl right in the middle of this school, and people used to peek through the windows and watch us train, and it was kind of fun, interesting. But that's where we started. And then- there's a lot of history here. I mean, I don't know how to put it all together. But it started out- for me it was an interest in developing myself and I could see that Soo Bahk Do or Tang Soo Do, at that time Aikido, helped me to organize some parts of my life that were otherwise maybe a little bit difficult to get a handle on, and that would be toward the discipline and the internal/external spiritual development that goes on from, just from the training. So, it had a definite value for me. And also, it felt right, it felt good; you know, this isn't the only way that you can develop those parts of the human being, spiritual, or internal/external, is through this. It could be through a lot of ways that require discipline, and it just depends on what fits to your nature, what feels right for you. And this felt good for me. And so, I enjoyed it a lot. And we trained hard, we fought hard, and that's what we believed in. Then you know, this history of these schools built up and then it had its societies [ph?] and came apart a little bit. And there's a lot of history about what happened, in the Los Angeles area in particular, because in the heyday of these schools there was a system, a corporation, that ah...an umbrella corporation. This was a financial group that had a lot of corporations, one of which was the Chuck Norris Karate Studios. And in that area, they were in business to sell programs, to make money and to promote the martial arts; that's what they did. But what I did, along with four other people- and Chuck Norris is one of them- was to form an organization in 1968 that was called The American Karate (Tang Soo Do), in parentheses, Association. And that organization was not for profit. That organization was only for history, tradition, philosophy, certifications and credentials

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And so, it was to monitor what was being taught in these other schools, to see that to the best of our ability that we were being true to the founder and his intentions, as we understood them. And so, at that organization I was the president, and Chuck Norris was a member of that, he was the Chairman of the Board of Directors there. There was five of us total, and we were the association and we were the testing board, and that was our job. Somewhere along the line you had a big business going on, in one respect, and you had this little group here that were deciding the certifications. And so, for whatever reason the business felt that they didn't really like to be constrained by this watchdog organization

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And so, it was like this, it would be like somebody would say, “Okay, I’m a member of this, of the board, but I think it would be nice if all the dans were members of the testing board. Let all the dans be members of the testing board, even though I employ most of the dans, because I have this commercial operation going on here, five or six schools, and we pay dans to conduct classes and stuff like this. I have all the dans and over here I’ve got some people that are not part of my teaching staff that are controlling the history, tradition, philosophy”– all those questions having to do with the Moo Do part of it. So, then I do, I start my own organization, and I was pulled out of that. And that’s kind of what happened was the Norris schools moved away from that. And at that time my concept was in the interest of keeping it all together, because I wasn’t looking or tearing anything up– in the interest of keeping things together I felt that a good thing would be that we would build the Norris schools, and the name and everything that goes with it, but in return we would have to keep the credibility, in the way that we saw it. And so, one way to do it would be having your own organization, give out your own certifications, give out your own, but allow the students that go through the process that want to be internationally recognized, that would like to be with the Korean Soo Bahk Do Association, give them an opportunity to get two certifications. See, that was the idea that I put forward, to save this whole thing. I said I’d be willing to continue working– because I did a lot of work, and it was just to give back to the art– and I would continue doing that, and you could have your own organization and do what you want with it, but if you’d like to help we could certify both Korea [ph?]. And so, that was a good thing. But there were other political things going on, and other maybe uneasiness in certain areas where the Norris schools pulled away from the Association.

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Grandmaster Hwang Kee visits California in 1974

Sandra Schermerhorn: Did it actually occur that people would test under the Norris schools and then come over and get the second certification?

Vic Martinov: No.

Sandra Schermerhorn: They did not, chose not to do that.

Moo Duk Kwan Historical Interviews

Vic Martinov: No, it wasn't that they chose not to do that. That was a proposal that I had advanced as a way to continue on; because actually they wanted the Association to continue on, they just didn't want to be controlled by the Association. And so, at some point they felt well we don't even need Korea, we don't need anybody, we can do our own thing. And I said, well you could do your own thing, because at that time it was growing. I said, well, you could get across the United States, you go on to the stars, but let's keep— all I cared about was let's keep the legitimacy of the art pure, as pure as I could understand it. And so, this was just— these are just my thoughts and it's the true history of what happened in my life. And so, they elected, I'd say Chuck and his advisors I guess, elected to go with their program. See, what happened before that point in time was— well anyway, we had that organization and I took the position with the people who stayed with me, or stayed connected with that organization was that we weren't leaving the Norris schools, they were leaving our organization. And I have the charter actually still today that's signed by these five people that formed this American Karate (Tang Soo Do) Association, and I still have that charter, and I have the date and the time and the people's signatures saying that this is the way we're going to vote on whether somebody should pass a test or not pass a test or what we believe should be passed on as far as our traditions are concerned and our history. So, it was the real thing. And when he left, he left that real thing, for whatever reason; that was his business. But he was strong and he didn't really need us. All we had was the art, and our connection with our founder. And so, that went along like that for a while. And well actually before the split, before the split took place, the Grandmaster, Hwang Kee, our founder, came to this country with one of the high-ranking Koreans.

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Gerry Taylor, Vic Martinov, Chuck Norris, Hwang Kee, and Pat Johnson

Sandra Schermerhorn: About when was that sir?

Vic Martinov: That would've been about 1968; well it was, it was 1968 or '69, because we had formed this board, we had formed our board. And so Kwan Jang Nim came to California to visit, and with him was a gentleman by the name of Jae Joon Kim, who- there's a lot of history here and there's things in between bridging over and missing there was- there was our organization and then Norris went back East and tested for his 4th Dan, and when he came back apparently he represented to the people back there that they were forming another organization; it's part, I guess, part of not recognizing the organization that we had formed.



Hwang Kee, Vic Martinov, Jae Joon Kim and Chuck Norris

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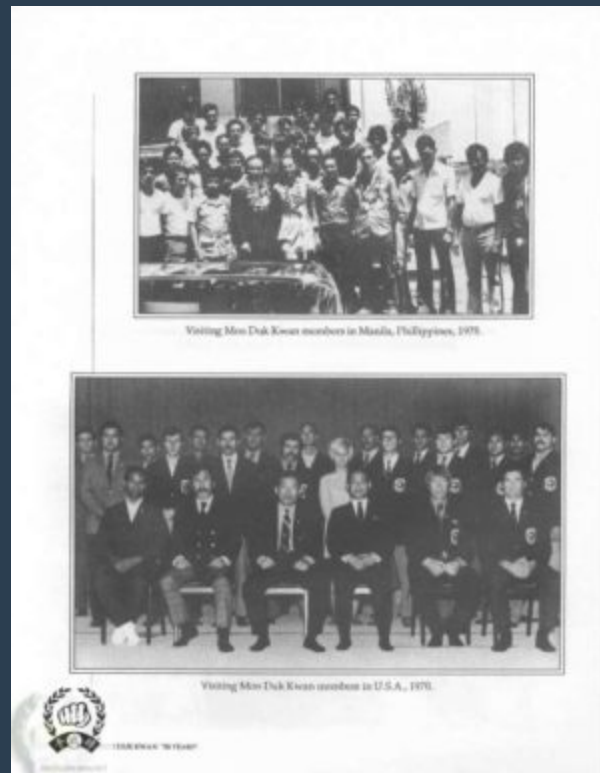


Hwang Kee promoting Chuck Norris and Pat Johnson in 1970, standing next to Master Ahn



Chuck Norris during his 4th dan testing in 1970

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Hwang Kee's visit to USA in 1970

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In other words, it's like one member, one-fifth of this organization goes somewhere else and starts another organization with other people, and then comes back with his 4th Dan belt, and then- but not telling us. That's what went on. So, we're still fat and happy, we're doing our thing. And so here comes the founder of the art, 1970- that was in 1972, with Jae Joon Kim. Jae Joon Kim says okay, well he's now going to take all the testings. And if you can imagine this, we're sitting in a restaurant, four people at the table, our founding grandmaster, Jae Joon Kim, myself, one other person- I'm drawing a blank on right now but I will have to remember that, who was interpreting for us. And so, they're telling me that Jae Joon Kim is going to now receive the testing forms and in other words, the money. And somehow it was connected with this promotion of Norris that whatever deal he made back east or something- it's a little bit vague right there but-. So, I said- I happened to have with me a resolution that our board passed, and I explained to the founder, we have an organization here- which he knew about because I was writing letters like that- called the American Karate (Tang Soo Do) Association. I said, "We have this and we passed a resolution just last week." I said, "And I'm going to read it to you." And I read the points, and the points all had to do with the fact- except one- with the fact that we would always respect our history and tradition; we would always give proper protocol to any high ranking member of our- of the organization; we would follow all the rules to the best of our ability, and so forth, with the exception of one- all testings that we processed are going to go to Korea, to headquarters in Korea, we're not giving them to anybody else. And that was like a slap to somebody. Jae Joon Kim was not taking that very well. So, after that- and we had taken them around to all the five schools, that were all Norris schools, and they were all flourishing and doing well and students were training hard, and I was proud to take the Kwan Jang Nim to those schools and show him around

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And he told me, which was his first, one of his first clues that he gave, as to where he was really going with this thing, when he talked to me after and he seemed really– he really appreciated it, such a fine person– was really appreciative of going around to the schools and seeing the students training, working so hard. And they did, they put on a real good show for him. But it was a little more punching and kicking probably than he was– hoped to see. So, he says, “Americans need to exercise more their minds.” And I said, “Oh?” And so, it gave me something to think about, you know? And so, it, it really gave me something to think about and I took it serious, what he said. And he gave me another little insight to his thinking, I guess you’d say, or his soul

When we took him into a school in Long Beach and I took him into the office, the owner of the school’s office, and I– he had a nice big plush chair there and I asked him to sit, he wouldn’t sit in that chair; he said, “No, that belongs to Master Dolby,” that’s the owner. And he went over and sat on the bench here, you see; and he wasn’t doing that except for one thing, to give a message to us and to tell me this. He coupled this with exercising your minds; and here he’s being considerate of somebody else’s premises and office, and no matter that he’s the founder of the art, that everything it’s built on, and all– everything we’re doing, had to show us there–, Tang Soo do on the wall and certificates that he signed, that came from him on the wall, everything– he’s not going to infringe on somebody else’s rightful place, to respect, you know?

Sandra Schermerhorn: Yes sir.

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Vic Martinov: So anyway he- we were seeing him off, and I had a big package of testing forms that were filled in, with the money and the forms and the applications, everything, with a big address on it, that big, that said Seoul, Korea, Headquarters; it was the address that we had always sent everything to, that I just got through telling him the night before, that's what we're going to- that's our resolution and we're going to continue doing it. So, I handed it to him, and I didn't see it but somehow Jae Joon Kim ended up with that envelope I guess. Because the people whose certificates were in there, or applications were in there, recommendations were in there, all got like bogus certificates. They got certificates that looked just exactly like the ones that we had, except you had an A number, for America I guess, after the number, and they weren't entered into the Dan Bon book. So, these people were not really from the founders' lineage, at that point, because this person, Jae Joon Kim went to Detroit, started his own situation there and kept the money and cranked out some certificates and was ready to start business as usual. But I saw that that was not right and so I- this went on for several cycles that certificates were going to him; not from me, they were going to him from Norris's schools. But remember Norris broke off with us. So, there's no reason for me to question what he was doing, except for one thing. I knew everybody in his organization because I had tested most- almost all of them, myself. So, when he had a testing board and they promoted somebody I could feel confident in my heart that that person met our standards, that were good. I wouldn't say that he's not- he hasn't done the standards, just because he was tested by another board. I didn't have to be there, I knew those people. So, there was a number of them went through Jae Joon Kim; they would rather work with Jae Joon Kim, who was the organization we had that I continued to send them directly to Korea, Headquarters, Korea

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And so what happened was a number of cycles went through, and so I gathered all the people that I could get together, for a meeting, and I said that I realized that a lot of them had certificates that were not registered or they're not valid as far as the Moo Duk Kwan was concerned, and that I would, for a two-year period, offer qualifying workouts for anybody that would register, and if you registered or set up a workout night, then all you had to do was come and join in a training session, together, and then I'll process your application and get you a proper number. So, during that two-year period I did a number of qualifying workouts and a number of our guys like Master Moonitz, who's- got- would never have had his number; but he tested before that, and he was legitimate but he just- his certificate went on for-. And there was a number of people like that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So did these people who got the certificates realize it, or they didn't realize it until you told them?

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Vic Martinov: No, they didn't realize- no they didn't realize it till we figured it out. And so, then I found out that the founder wasn't aware of it either. So, this is not something he said, "Well I'm giving you a franchise to go over here and start your own numbering system." That wasn't the case. And so anyway that's what happened, and then we kind of got back on track again. It probably meant that a number of students, a number of members lost time because they lived with the wrong- at the time we perfected their numbers. [ph?] So, they lost some time, but they salvaged their roots and their lineage _____[ph?]. So, after that- oh after that I went to Korea in 1973 and met with Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee- it was really a nice trip, it was really a nice trip- and the founder of the art, Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee met me at the airport in his beautiful suit, and it was spectacular. He was there and he asked me- well we had a lot of time together and we had a lot of time too, at dinners and he took us-. First off I told him that I was there for three reasons, primary reasons. Number one was to be with him; number two was for training; and then number three was cultural and that. But I wasn't fledgling, I really wanted to train, I wanted-. Because before that time it was like we had the Soo Bahk Do Dae Kahm book that was written all in Korean. And so, we had that and we used to do our hyungs, and everybody would be arguing about the right way to do it, and then we'd be digging into the book and we'd look at the illustrations to say this is- no. And so, I felt well I want to go to where the secret is, I want to go to the origin of this whole thing and find out the truth and then I'll have it settled once and for all. And so, a friend of mine, a dear, dear friend of mine, Victor Guerero [ph?], who's a student of mine and was a training partner for many, many, many years, many years. And it was hard, we believed in training hard. And he was a guy that would drive you ruthlessly

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He's one of these guys, you get a training partner, and he invents different things to do and he always wants to push you a little farther and stand on your knees and jump on your back to get the flexion moving. And he was a great guy. So, he went with me to Korea. He was so good, as a matter of fact, that the Koreans we dealt with, kicking- training, they called him Thunder Foot. They couldn't hold a target for him, he was- in this particular sequence that we were doing, it was like spinning around, hooking, heel kick, and they couldn't get past a round kick. Well he did the round kick on the target. You couldn't hold him. It wasn't just them, nobody could.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Was he a big guy?

Vic Martinov: Yes, he was a big guy.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Who used himself very efficiently?

Vic Martinov: He was a big guy but he used himself very efficiently too. I mean, he was big and flexible, with heavy legs, and he just knew how to do it, with that guy. And we had a great time. And Kwan Jang Nim had set up two training sessions a day for us for just- at the Army Base there, Yongsan. And that was for forms. And then in the headquarters we had a training session in the afternoon, in Seoul. And so, we had a good time training there. But anyway, we were in the headquarters in Seoul. It was a hard, terrazzo marble floor, and they're putting us through all the forms, and we got low. And so, Victor Guerro and I are in some stance, in the middle of one of the forms, and all of a sudden, we hear all this talking going on. And actually, it happened to be Yong Ki Hong.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh yes, I know.

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Hwang Kee visit to USA in 1974

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Vic Martinov: Yong Ki Hong was heading up the school, and so- at that time. So anyway, it was a great trip. But anyway, so he was arguing with somebody in the back there and we turned around and he had the book, the same book open, the Korean version, looking at the pictures, pointing at them and trying to figure out what we were doing, what was right. So, it occurred to me that that was one mystery. It was the same in the U.S. as it was in Korea, what we were going through in trying to learn. And the truth of the matter was that what you needed to learn wasn't in that book. The truth of the matter was that it had to do with something other than those- we like pictures. It had to do with the balance, direction, and deliberateness and proper balance and stuff. So, like I say it was pretty interesting. But anyway, we had our trip and we were there in '73. And one of the critical questions that Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee asked was how he could organize Tang Soo Do in the United States? And I said, "In my opinion there's only one way, and that's for you to come to the United States, period; I don't see another way." Because I'd had all those experiences, the experiences that led me up to saying- the resolution that we had in our organization to say that we will process our testing only through headquarters, because we had so many representatives- not really representatives but claiming to be representatives of headquarters- that they are the technical advisors of the Western states, and different names that they put on it, and kind of taking us for a ride here. And so, we finally said, "It will go to nobody, except headquarters." And that's kind of where we were, you know? So, I figured that the only way he could really do it was to be there personally. And so, he came, and the rest is the history that you know. In 1974 in Burlington and in '75 at the Charter Convention, and down the road with that. And so, I was there in '74, at the Burlington meeting, and it was the beginning. It was good.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Can I ask a little bit about your trip to Korea, when you trained? How long were you there?

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Vic Martinov: I was there for three weeks.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Three weeks. And when you trained were you just in Seoul or did you go to any other areas?

Vic Martinov: Oh I did go to Seoul yes, that's right, yes. We trained in Seoul most of the time, twice a day, like I said. And then we took some trips. We went to Osan Air Base, and in Osan there was- they had a school in the town and one on the base, and we trained in both of those schools. And then we did take trips out of the country and around- segued around a little bit; but mostly it was in Seoul.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And when you trained at the schools did other teachers train you or was it our founder who trained you?

Vic Martinov: Oh no, no it was other teachers; yes, there were other teachers.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh, so you got to meet a lot of people while you were there.

Vic Martinov: Yes, it was interesting. Yes, there were other people. But one thing that I always think back on now is at the headquarters in Seoul, several of our training sessions, it was our founder personally that worked with us. And it didn't occur to me then but I realize now that- how the members must've felt, for somebody coming in and they'd get- and especially we were just people trying to train, that's all. And to get the treatment, the special treatment they gave us, it was really great.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And what rank were you then?

Vic Martinov: I think- oh, let's see, I was- Sam Dan, I think I was Sam Dan. I was Sam Dan, yes.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: When you had your Cho Dan test, was it like we do now? Was it like a several hours test where you do forms and sparring and all different things? Or what was it like?

Vic Martinov: I'll tell you what it was like. The test was conducted by Jong Lee; Lee, from San Diego, was the developer of Tangsoology and taught it in one of the colleges there; and more I think it was in San Diego. His name was Jong Lee, and he was one of the guys who came out and claimed to be the western representative of whatever. But he organized the testing for us. And at that testing I think there was nine candidates, and one of them was Mariano Estioko, who was testing for 2nd Dan I think. And there was- Chuck Norris was testing for 2nd or 3rd, I'm not sure right now. And then there was Jerry Taylor Junior and Dennis- oh not Dennis then- but myself and there was- I have the list but I can't give you the names of those people- and I have a nice photograph of the whole group, for the Cho Dan test. Yes, I have a photograph of that day.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That would be- if this project, we get to the point where we use photographs, is that something you think we could get a copy of?

Vic Martinov: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh that would be nice. Now I know the name Estioko but I'm not sure why.

Vic Martinov: His number is something like 400-and-something. And he was a low number, high ranking. Anyway, he came down from Sacramento. But Andy Ah Po was in that group too.

Sandra Schermerhorn: That's probably why I know his name.

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Vic Martinov: And he was Andy Ah Po's instructor.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see. So, that was your Cho Dan test?

Vic Martinov: Yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How about your E Dan test, where was that?

Vic Martinov: That was in South Bay area also, and that was conducted by our testing board. We had a testing board of five. Let's see, I'd have to look at the date on that test, but my Cho Dan was 1966. So, that would have to have been '68 probably- yes, maybe '68, I think, yes.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Is there anything memorable about your Cho Dan or E Dan or Sam Dan test that kind of sticks out in your mind?

Vic Martinov: Oh yes, Lee; Lee was interesting. He tested us, and to answer your question, it was pretty much the same. You'd get up and do your forms. And when we used to conduct tests you did all the forms; you didn't do just a couple of forms you did all the forms. But anyway, Lee had us do the forms. And then on breaking we had to do a- everybody had to do a jumping round kick, and the holder of the boards was standing on a chair and you had to walk under the boards, two boards, standing-.

Sandra Schermerhorn: The bottom of the board had to come to the top of your head.

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Vic Martinov: Yes, you had to walk under it. So, the person's standing on a chair and he's holding the boards, and then you'd walk up, see if you could get your head under it. That was one-. And then he did- he brought a big box of rocks and an anvil, where you put it, angled it out and handed it to us. And none of us had done any of that type of breaking before. So, he had this big box of rocks and he- I'm thinking to myself how do you squeeze a rock? How do you pick the best rock? So anyway, two of us broke that rock.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I don't understand how you broke it.

Vic Martinov: Well what you do is- you have this anvil, it's a piece of heavy steel, and you put the rock in your hand and you lay your hand on the anvil, like that. Or you put the rock flat and put your hand on it. So, you put it this way. And then you- like that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh. Oh.

Vic Martinov: But there's a secret to it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What is that? Can you tell us that sir?

Vic Martinov: So long as we're not being taped.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I can turn it off.

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Vic Martinov: No, fortunately for me I had read a book written by a Korean martial artist, Oyama, who taught Japanese style, Mas Oyama, Okinawan style. Mas Oyama has got a book and he's got a section on breaking, that breaks everything from bricks to locks to beer bottles to anything, boards, whatever. And so, it's a matter of picking the tip of the rock up so that when you strike the rock it moves down a little bit and gives you just a little inertia, gives you a little inertia. I mean that isn't going to help you a lot but it's better than trying to put it flat; it's not going to work like that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So that's why you held it.

Vic Martinov: So I held it.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see.

Vic Martinov: Or, in my case, I put my hand on top of it and I squeezed the rock so that it came up- it raised up off of the anvil, and then when I took my hand up to strike I raised the tip, like that.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I see. It broke.

Vic Martinov: And so the funny thing is that of all the years, I had a reunion with Jerry Taylor Junior who tested with me, he was second, the only other one that's broke the rock. And all these years I didn't know that he knew the trick. And he didn't know that I did. So, I've been thinking, boy, he really did some marvelous, miraculous thing. And just last week, on the 29th of July, at my home, we had a gathering as kind of a celebration.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Oh your celebration party, yes sir.

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Vic Martinov: That celebration. He was there, and he told me, he says, “You know,”—because I was saying, “Your nature Jerry is that you’re always calculating everything.” And I said, “I go around, I just do what I’m told, and you’ve got it all wired,” because we used to spar in the tournaments a lot and he was always checking out who the next guy is going to fight and he’d make sure that I got the one he didn’t want to fight and stuff like that, because he always figured things out. And so, I was reminding him of that. And he says, “Yeah, another thing I never told you,” he says, “that Lee, Jong Lee, that tested us, he gave me some lessons on breaking.” I said, “What?” I said, “I don’t believe it. So, he told you how to make the break.” And I said, “And I fortunately read Mas Oyama’s book and came there with a little bit of knowledge.” We didn’t know- I didn’t know; he knew we were going to break but to me walk in there, there’s a box of rocks and I’m trying to squeeze them. So anyway, that was kind of a funny thing, that two of us had an idea that there was some physical principles involved here, not just magic. That was that. And it was a long, comprehensive test. But nobody, I don’t think, gave tests any harder, that I’ve ever seen, than well the tests that we used to do; not that we tried to fail people but that they were just comprehensive. They did all the forms, they did all the one-steps. We did three-steps, we did jump kicks. We did the basics, hand techniques, feet techniques, combination techniques. We did attacking techniques and we did sparring and we did two-on-one sparring. We did it all. And then just as necessity, with the sheer volume of people that you have, you had to streamline the operation and come down. I will tell you the excellence is better now than ever, ever before.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Is that, right?

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Vic Martinov: Yes, there's no doubt, no doubt about it. And kids are doing things that I could never dream of, the techniques, which is the way it needs to be. It's the beautiful way of growth. So anyway, we had the meeting in 1974 in Burlington and then we had the Charter Convention. And then we went through the agonizing ordeal of hammering out the charter and bylaws. That was torture, to see what Board of Directors meetings are like, in those days when everybody's looking at every word and analyzing every word and what it means and going over it. And then a red line, highlighting it and getting it changed.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How many people were at the meetings?

Vic Martinov: Oh the meetings. Well one of the geniuses of our organizational structure is the balance between elected and appointed directors. And I would say that, however it happened, it feels right and it has worked and it's been working and it feels right, and I think that it was good fortune that we arrived at that balance, which is 2 to 1. And we started out, it was a total of 30 directors. There were 20 elected and 10 were appointed. And, of the appointed directors, I was one of the first; I was one of the 10. And so, I started in as a director in the organization, when the organization was founded. And I stayed with that, two of us. And then there was a gentleman named Charles DiPierro.

Sandra Schermerhorn: DiPierro.



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1975 charter convention group photo at JFK Hilton NY



Martinov SBN sitting next to Kenyon SBN and Moonitz SBN at the NY Charter Convention 1975

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Vic Martinov: DiPierro, yes, Charles DiPierro, and he was actually elected the first Chairman, and I was the Vice-Chairman. And he had a real problem with the five-the one-third appointed directors. He had some- I didn't know him real well but what I knew of him was I- my senses told me that he was a very honorable man and that he had very definite ethics, and so much so that he was constrained from participating in an organization that was not 100% democratic, elected, because of this idea that somebody would be appointing a certain amount of votes just-. And he talked to me about this and he told me he was turning it over to me and- because he was going to withdraw from that spot. And he did withdraw. And we went along with the two-thirds, one-third appointed; because he was not long in the martial arts, Charles DiPierro. And I'd have to check on this but I think maybe he may have been a green belt or something like that; or maybe red belt, I'm not sure. But he didn't really have the same orientation, I don't believe, of the Moo Do part of our whole structure, of our whole structure necessarily includes business and art. And so, I personally feel that the balance was a stroke of genius. I mean it seems like it's the right thing. So, we went along with 30 for a number of years. And then it was expensive to transport people around and, of course, we did everything in person. And so, it was changed and our charter was changed to- from 20 and 10 to 10 and 5 so total 15, which is what we have today.

Sandra Schermerhorn: When you were working on the charter, sir, what was the rationale behind picking that? Do you recall how that came to be?

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Vic Martinov: Well, it had to do with the fact that since it was a Moo Do organization there were certain things that had to be left to the founder on the art- had to be left to the art part of the art. You couldn't tamper with that. You know, so you couldn't change history or tradition there, philosophy or standardization or certification requirements, things like that. So, somebody had to- by that concept then that Moo Do should have reach a little bit into the Board, into the business matters too. So, I would say that there's no real rationale other than it was arbitrary but it was a delicate balance that had to be met because you couldn't have it all business to run the art. It doesn't work. And we know that all the arts fall apart. They have all tried it and they all go out and they get into business and they're self-proclaimed artists and they're mixed in, there's no structure all in together and everybody goes off and does their own thing. And this I'm talking about other martial arts all over the world. But when we started this organization- I told you earlier that I consider myself a practical person and I like to get more for my time and therefore I went into martial arts in the first place because it was more for my development for the expenditure with time. Same thing here. I asked myself this question, "Am I going to stay here, be a part of this giant organization and dedicate a lot of time and my life to this, for what?" I mean what- under what conditions would I do that? And keep in mind up to this time I had wanted to get involved in monitoring the art and the legitimacy of the many students that we were connected with. That was kind of my giving back for what I was receiving from it. Now, we're facing a larger matter here and why would I- I had an organization here, a karate Tang Soo Do association. I may not- I really- as I said, I'm happy here too, you know, But, now we're going to all come together in Burlington and a lot of people from all over the country are saying, okay, we'll consider forming a federation organized in the States and that's what the founder want- wished to have. And he was there to do it

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And I was sitting there, asking myself, under what conditions would I give my life to this thing? And there were two things that mattered to me. One was that it would be the only way that any person in the United States could receive the certification from the Korean Soo Bahk Do Association, would have to be a member of this federation. So, nobody else could be in this country and communicate directly with Korea and get numbers in this historic lineage. That's number one. Number two, is that I wanted a higher good, a higher place for my students to look to other than me so that I don't have the responsibility, for one thing, and secondly, I'm not going to be around forever and so to find- to be able to connect with a legitimate, historic, traditional martial art that's founded by a person who is of the highest ethics

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If that could be accomplished, then I would be happy with that. And that's the way I feel it's gone exactly. I mean in the charter it says there's no other organization in this country and that's in the charter, you can rely on that. And I lived through that with the times that other Moo Duk Kwan Tae Kwon Do practitioners are trying to do- come to Kwan Jang Nim our founder when he was alive and say, come to our tradition, we're going to make life wonderful for you and we- you know, we're really your-we're worthy, the real roots of yours and but he never- you know, he never, ever had a hidden agenda, it was always on the table and he let everybody know it. This was an American organization for Americans he said. And that was the promise he made and that's in writing and that's what we have today. Secondly, from knowing him, at the time that I knew him, really reconfirmed to me that he was a pure and just person. And as I said, I mean I never, never seen any agendas from him other than just his conscience and his words really were committed to us. And he was always did. So, like I said, to me and- this organization what's most important in this organization, most important, is that it has endurance that it can go on, that it doesn't fall apart because none of us would want to feel that we're inherit- contributing and being a part of it and then someday it splinters off and goes the way of a lot of them. And I think that's why our charter and by-laws are so good because they're like a constitution of the United States. You know, they're so complicated you can't change them if you want to sometimes and, you know, that's the danger of expedience trying to change your governing documents so that you can do things easily and then you destroy yourself. So, I think my conclusion, that when get to this point, is that we have the right talents, and we have the documents and we have good people. And that's to me like I can go in peace.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Well, a lot of hard work went into it and a lot of thought. Not just hard work but a lot of mental thought. How long did it take to get the charter in place?

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Vic Martinov: I could- you know, I could find those dates in my records but I will say at least a couple of years.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Couple of years. And it was people from all different parts of the United States working on it.

Vic Martinov: It was the board of directors that were working on it. And as I say there were 30 of them.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Thirty?

Vic Martinov: Yes, and we had some marathon sessions until your brain feels like it's been squeezed, you know. And our founder was present at every one of them.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Every meeting?

Vic Martinov: Every meeting he was there. And sometimes it would look like he was far away and when- and you'd figure that he wasn't understanding what was going on but he'd have to step back a few- that often to go an area that he realized was, you know, way off base. He'd snap to it right away and become a part of it. He knew what was going on.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So, he was there, he would step in and give directions sometimes but mostly he left it up to you?

Vic Martinov: Absolutely. Most- almost entirely left up to us. He- but he was there and he was aware of what was going on and he was consulted with things that- particularly things that pertained to him like section 4 of the charter, giving the veto to the president, Kwan Jang Nim Hwang Kee.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: When the charter was done did he tell you anything? I mean did he say if he liked it, or it was acceptable?

Vic Martinov: No, I don't think that was the kind of discussion that would have happened or that I recall happening. It was a question of we needed the documents; we needed the documents to get behind us so that we could go on with the business of- that we were all there for and that was training, into the training. And to talk about all the Moo Do aspects of the art and talk about clinics and different functions that we were going to have. And getting excited about maybe some kinds of scholarships and things like that, you know, that would be a joy, instead we're stuck with this administration. You know wringing out charter and by-law documents it was just- it was more- that's something we had to get past. And beside the charter and by-laws were the articles of incorporation. They were filed. And then there was the whole business of just when you think you're about done, what are we going to do about trademarks and all this. And then we got to talk to the lawyers and accountants and what about the bookkeeping. And what about an administrator to- can we afford to pay for an administrator? I mean, we can't do it voluntarily because nobody will do anything, you know. Or one poor devil will end up doing everything, you know, until he drops and then we'll find somebody else. So, we had to make those decisions but in making it was a lot of discussion. It was tough. But, anyway, it was to get past it, to get past it, lay the foundation so we can go on. And not to get past it so fast that you don't have a proper foundation either. So, that was- and everybody understood that, that's why we beat it to death because they were- it was- and I would say- you know, I'm tell you my history, what I was thinking, and I would say everybody- every one of those 30 people were thinking the same thing, how it- you know, their time's probably just as important as my time. And so, they were there and boy, it was tough. It really was a meeting that you want to do once.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Sir, looking back, what was your best time in Moo Duk Kwan?

Vic Martinov: I suppose my best time really was- my best time had to be with friendships and people and... One of the things that I think about that makes me very happy was meeting the founder and the occasions that I had to do that in '72 when we- and then Korea, yes '72 and then '73 and just getting to know him over the years. I think it's just like the philosophy book that he has written that hasn't been transcribed completely yet but for me when I look through that and read it it's like a conversation with him. And it's just- it's a nice feeling. It's like having your friend back again, you know. And so, that's a nice feeling to have but when it comes to friendships and the connection with human beings, I have been blessed in that regard. I mean I'm so blessed and I think the best time I don't know how I can- how I could single out a best time. It kind of was one long connection with friends.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And did you have a worst time?

Vic Martinov: No, I don't think I have a worst time. It wasn't a cakewalk, I mean...

Sandra Schermerhorn: But there were some difficult times.

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Vic Martinov at Masters test (Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa) in Springfield NJ

Vic Martinov: There were a lot of difficult times and still a lot of difficult times but the- in the art and the training taught me more than it ever hurt me. So, I would say that it- my times- my rough times in my life that I absolutely got more help and assistance from the art rather than a bad time in the art. A bad time in the art for me is like a broken bone and I can't do what I'd like to do right now. But I'm staying there so I'm- I haven't had any bad times.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have a photograph that you remember or that you have that had special meaning for you?

Vic Martinov: That photograph that I was talking to you about has special meaning to me. The day that we tested for our Cho Dan, that was special.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And do you have any treasured items from training?

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Vic Martinov: I have a lot of items and I wouldn't- I don't know, I can't think of anything right now. That's a more- that has more significance to me, I can't think of anything right now.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Ko Dan Ja testing? Where was your first Ko Dan Ja test?



Vic Martinov training

Vic Martinov: First was in New Jersey. I had a Ko Dan Ja test in- my first Ko Dan Ja test was with our current Kwan Jang Nim H. C. Hwang in New Jersey and I'm trying to think of the- that was for sa dan and then after that it was still in New Jersey every time. For me that's when we started the tradition of a weeklong...

Sandra Schermerhorn: Was your test the first one?

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Vic Martinov: No, the first one was not- it wasn't- my first one was not a week's long test. Then the tradition started in- at a time after that so then for fifth, sixth, seventh, Dan examinations were all in the new tradition of the week long (test).

Sandra Schermerhorn: What was your Sa Dan test like?

Vic Martinov: It was a test in front of the Kwan Jang Nim. It was the full test.

Sandra Schermerhorn: So, it was more like the Sam Dan test?

Vic Martinov: It was like a one-day event. It wasn't for a week.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you recall who tested with you?

Vic Martinov: I tested by myself. SS: Oh you were by yourself...? VM: by myself...

Sandra Schermerhorn: How about your O Dan test...

Vic Martinov: Yes, that was- yes, I had a full test in class that time [ph?].

Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have any special memories from any of them?

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Vic Martinov: Well, I do from all of them actually. It was- it's the same- it's the connection with everybody and it's- well, I started getting to a level that it was more of helping conduct the test than it was being tested. And, of course, at all of those our founder was present during the last- the final day of the test. And one of the things that I remember- I mean I was testing at a high level. Sixth through seventh Dan at that time was the very, very high level and, in fact, they only say in the Korean culture that the number seven is- has a special- it's a special number. It's as high as you can go. Our ranking used to go to 7 and that was to reach the- that place. And then the organization grew and that's how- swelling at the bottom that it had to move the leadership up and so to accommodate that it's a natural way, it's the way of growing without saying I'm going to have so many ranks and then we'll someday fill them up, it's that you develop the foundation that grows and swells and you have to accommodate it and in the normal- in the right way. And so, I was testing and our founder, Hwang Kee, he calls- it was like he was interviewing but when he called me up it wasn't an interview, it was like- almost like a discussion- like he was talking to me. But, it was not a discussion, it was a one-sided discussion, for he was talking to me. And he told me that he felt that I needed to be more spiritual and less physical and I thought that what he was saying was I was getting old. And as usual I took that information with me and I thought about it for a long time until I realized that what he was really saying was that material things and spiritual things are mutually exclusive. You can't have access to spiritual power if you're chasing material things or if you're bound to focus on material things. You have to be in balance, you have release. You have to release from something. So, that would be to say if you're too physical, and I prided myself of being physical. I can tell you that I loved to jump and twist and wrench and- because that's the way I was brought up in this art, it was hard work. The training work for me

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So, he was saying that really and truly you have to learn to release, you have to learn to go with the flow, to submit and allow yourself to be open to the powers that are available to everybody if you can tap into it. And that was his message for me. And it was a good message that I didn't understand at the time but I grew to understand. That was a very memorable time for me. And then having the opportunity to demonstrate for him. He always asked if there's- well, he always asked the higher-ranking candidates if there's anything that you'd like to demonstrate, that you'd like to demonstrate to do it. And having those opportunities on several occasions I took advantage of that and even thought about it even if I knew he would be asking me, I thought about what I would really like to be able to show him that I'm doing, you know. And it was beautiful. You know, that's a nice- that was a great opportunity.

Sandra Schermerhorn: What was your favorite area of training? What did you like best?

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Vic Martinov: You know, all the areas of our training have kind of value and a troop [ph.?] will specialize in things- in some areas, one area or another. I like sparring. I liked sparring techniques: attacking, the sort of initial moves. And what I really like the most of all now is to try to develop an area that makes our Soo Bahk Do effective. Effectiveness in technique that's what I call it. And you can say it in many ways but I developed my own language in which to kind of understand it. And it has to do with mobility, direction, penetration, and power: how do you make your techniques effective? And mobility has to do with footwork. You have to be able to move about, not just linearly but circular, circular movements. And direction has to do with where your center of mass is outside of the base. So, if you have a base and your center of mass is outside of that base, it's going to- you're going to topple over in that direction. And so, what I call it is dynamic equilibrium. It's instead of being at equilibrium at rest, your equilibrium in motion, in moving. It's moving balance is what it's called. And that's direction. And so even if you're moving backwards, if your body's moving backwards, as long as your center of mass is outside of the base in a forward direction, your direction's forward so that you can retreat and still have complete power going forward. So, if somebody's chasing you, backing you up, they're not backing you up, they're coming into your _____ [ph.?] and so that's direction. And penetration has to do with adjusting — always adjusting. You need to adjust all the time because if you're not adjusting— and this is something that I see a lot of practitioners, young practitioners still do that, they'll step forward with their front leg and leave their back leg nailed to the ground, you know. They leave you strung out. Instead of just moving naturally and allowing your body to adjust continually so that when you need to be effective, when you're finally in a position to have an opening then you can make it work because you're not out of range. You can't lean and break your posture and do everything and be effective, it won't work. So, you're constantly resisting

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And then power, this is simply twisting the waist and shifting the mass. That's all you need to know. When you twist your waist and then shifting your mass and that will develop the power, explosive power that's in you. And that's my area of interest. This is what interests me. And then the fifth one that I've added to that is you make your opponent do what you want them to do. So, and that would be like fakes. You get your opponent to get in a position that you want him to be in and then everything else now, mobility forward, direction, penetration and power. And so, that's kind of what I like to do

The other thing I like to do is I like to understand that those are physical principles and coupled with physical principles those are the principles, concepts, there are certain truths that we have to understand and one of them is that energy flows through us continuously just like it says in the Sip Sam Seh. It flows through all of us continuously. It doesn't come from us, it comes through us. It doesn't wander, it belongs to the universe. But we have to not restrict that flow. And that comes back to this point-release- that the founder talked to me about be a bit more spiritual, you have to learn to release, you have to learn to accept. You- and if you do that then you can move with slow energy like moving with the waves in the ocean, you surf with, not against it. Drive the freeways at the right time, you know. Don't get on there in rush hour, you know. This is what this is all about. And so, if you couple those physical principles with these truths of energy flows through us and we release and we don't restrict it, that altogether makes effectiveness in the way that we live and the way that we apply our techniques. That's what important to me. That's- in a nutshell pretty much that's what my training has taken me to. You know, in a physical standpoint.

Sandra Schermerhorn: And that's what you like to teach too?

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Vic Martinov: Yes. And I like to teach Ho Sin Sul. Ho sin sul are self-defense techniques. I like to teach that too. So, I would say there's a lot of things I like to teach. I like to teach and I used to concentrate very, very heavily on power kicks, power kicks. Almost entire training sessions from- for long periods of time would be power kicks. Stretching power kicks. That's why I feel that I- for me I've come up with these concepts of direction and penetration and power is because I worked on power kicks before. Fronts, round, side, heels, you know. So, that's from years of doing that. This is these truths that come, at least my truths.



Vic Martinov demonstrating power kicking

Sandra Schermerhorn: Going to change topics here a little bit. Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang, when did you first meet him?

Vic Martinov: I met him in Burlington in 1974 for the first time, but I had written to him. I had written to him from 1968 on continuously and I think I have some letters from him when he was in Greece.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Just before he came here?

Vic Martinov: Yes.

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Sandra Schermerhorn: Do you have any favorite stories about him and your training with him?

Vic Martinov: I do but I wouldn't- I don't think that liberty to share. I will say that we have had- we have- my thing with our current Kwan Jang Nim is I feel such a closeness and a genuine friendship. I mean a genuine friendship. And I believe that he feels that way too and it's- it says a nice thing and he has- we have been together and trained together just the two of us. We have done a number of things just together the two of us. And so, all I can say for you- to you is- and to me is that he's a very dear friend and I have a very loyal respect for him from me. And my feeling is that his father- his father's dreams and his vision and his suffering that he endured and the tremendous patience that he had, as I said, coming to this country and finding guys that thought punching and kicking was what it was about and he was trying to teach world peace and there was a large gap there between that and he never once told us that he took us a long way. But his son, our current Kwan Jang Nim, made his dreams a reality. His son was the one that implemented the dreams. His son is the one that did all of the hard lifting for the curriculum and to make this into an institution of learning. And so, I think that in my view of things, that we as federation and as an art, we're so blessed because I- and I don't believe in the right of a divine right. I don't believe in divine right or inheriting positions. But in this case- and follow- we follow the procedure in the charter too in having the successor named and the whole process. But, besides that he- our Kwan Jang Nim was absolutely the right person to follow his father. I mean right from every sense of the word right because he dedicated his life to it, he implemented those dreams.

<break in tape> Time Stamp?

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Sandra Schermerhorn: You were talking about Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang, about inheriting, but being the right person.

Vic Martinov: He was the right person. I mean and that to me I always feel is a blessing for our organization because here we have a vision and a dream and here we had an implementation of a vision and dream and a strengthening of our foundation with the that endures... From this point on it's like a university. We have a board of trustees. Anybody can- legitimate person or group could continue on that institution. But we definitely would be nowhere without the founder and we wouldn't have an art in my opinion without the son. So, we're lucky. So, I was a member of the board of directors. And then I came to a place where I really felt- and I have a letter that of resignation that I hand carried to our founder, Kwan Jang Nim, in New Jersey and I spent some time with our current Kwan Jang Nim discussing that and he presented it to his father. And then from there the- they contrived the fulfillment of the Technical Advisory Committee which created a slot that again they- that I could be appointed to.

Sandra Schermerhorn: How long were you on the board?

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Vic Martinov: I'll have to check those dates but it seems forever. (laughter from both) And so, I thought I was going to move on. Then they- so we had- our documents did provide for a Technical Advisory Committee although there had never been a committee. It always had only been the chair. I'm sure a chairperson- H.C. Hwang was the chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee. And so, they expanded that to a real committee and then somehow, I was appointed to the Technical Advisory Committee. And then that went along with the duties responsibilities of the TAC which were also- and we had- at one meeting, I don't remember the date, but it happened to be held at my home and we had- I remember, we had the big round table and all the TAC members were there and we talked about all the issues, the latest issues and I brought up this issue that I felt that I really was leaving the TAC and it wasn't the case of what I wanted to do, it was that my life had already gone in that direction. It's like- it just was a natural thing. And so, they came up with the SAC. There's no place to run.

Sandra Schermerhorn: There's no place to run, they keep giving you something else to do.

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Vic Martinov: It was great. It was great. And I'll tell you, it was the most beautiful thing in my life to be a member of the SAC because a member of the SAC was served at the pleasure of the founder of the art and was available to consult with the founder, and that's it. There is nothing else. There's nothing else. It's just to- and to be, you know, available as you are available to the functions and support where we can and all that. But it was mostly- and if we looked at the description of the SAC it is at the pleasure of the founder and to serve to consult with the founder. And so now I came after all these years to a place- oh, and I will tell you that probably one of the most significant things to me, one of the most significant things that I'll never ever forget, was when- this was in the presence of the founder of our art and I- we had all the standardized techniques and all this curriculum and all this stuff that we were- and I was teaching clinics that were getting off into mobility, direction, penetration, and power and different flow of energy and Neh Gung exercises and things and I said I need to discuss this with the founder, with an interpreter and the other members of the TAC were present, and I said, "I am teaching things that are not exactly the..." And before I could even finish saying what I was saying he said, "Whatever you teach is Soo Bahk Do." And it just set me free. It was so beautiful. That to me was one of the most profound memories I have. And also, gives you a little sense of where his spirit was. He was a real, real person. So anyway, from the SAC, I'm still there. I'm trying to figure out another organization we could develop for me to move into.

Sandra Schermerhorn: I think if you don't decide on one that somebody else will be able to find you one.

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Vic Martinov: No, I'm very, very happy to be where I am and I'm very, very happy to be where I am and for- where I am to be what it is. I couldn't ask for anything more in the organization as comfortable. That's the truth of the whole thing is that this- that comfortable is the right word. And everybody, ever person here seems to be comfortable. I mean that's obviously to me more significant, more important than any other thing. It's good. So, what else?

Sandra Schermerhorn: What do you think the most important thing is that a senior can contribute to juniors?

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Vic Martinov: We're all trying to develop the individual. I mean the starting point has to be within the individual: self-development. In order for any person to be of any value to anybody else, to their family or society or the world, they have to deal with themselves first. And I think that it's always an example that a teacher has to set for his students. And which reminds me incidentally of the- my definition of an instructor and a teacher. An instructor is someone who shows you what he's been taught. A teacher teaches things that he has no way of knowing and he's never been taught because if- because what happens that teacher develops insight and learns to believe in his insight. It's like you were talking about don't resist, accept it. And when you have the proper foundation and it connects with what our founder said to me: whatever you teach is Soo Bahk Do. See he knew that. That if you're a teacher then there's something inside of you that you can let and not question but let it come out. Not that you're making things up as you go but that you are- and this is what you give to your students. I'll give you an example that was interesting. I have John Ferguson who trains with me and he comes on Tuesday and Thursday and so we have sauna after the training. And when he first started with me he said- so I went in and the bucket wasn't full of water and I went and I got some water, he said, "Well I guess if I was a good student that bucket- I would have filled the bucket." I said, "No, if you're a good student you'd recognize- you'd likely be aware that the bucket needs filling." He says, "Well, that bucket is never going to be empty again." And I said, "That's not a duty, it's an opportunity." And that was all that was said. And so, this is what I'm getting at is what's the best thing the instructor can give their students is to share with them and to try and develop our philosophy in trying to get that person to understand themselves and to want to learn and develop the awareness that we teach. To set an example I guess is- but can't do it first, you can't order somebody to do what you think they should do, got to come from within yourself, the same as you hope they'll get that lesson like I'm not going to sit in this chair, it doesn't belong to me.

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Students from South Bay Moo Duk Kwan training with Vic Martinov

Sandra Schermerhorn: Practitioners today, students today, what would you like them to know about you or how would you like them to remember you?

Vic Martinov: Well I'm serious. I take things seriously and I cherish friendships. And, you know, I know that I have a reputation for maybe being hard to know. People that- I know this because I've been told it a lot of times but once- because see I have a philosophy, when you come into train if you have any questions, don't ask them. I don't want to hear them, nobody in here wants to hear them, we're here to train, don't take up so much time. When you're here for three or four years you can ask all the questions you want. That's my philosophy. And I'm going to train with you and we're going to go through this thing together and that's what I believe. So, what I want them to know about me is that from whatever I've done or whoever I am my opinion it's been honest.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Thank you. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Vic Martinov: Yes, a lot but, you know, I don't- I can't think of it right now. I have a feeling that you want to see a manuscript and it'll kind of jump <inaudible>.

Sandra Schermerhorn: Okay. All right, well thank you very much.

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Vic Martinov with his senior students and Kwan Jang Nim H.C. Hwang year ????



Vic Martinov and H.C. Hwang lifetime friends



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Vic Martinov students attending a memorial training session at South Bay Moo Duk Kwan in 2015

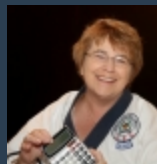
Added footnote:

[Victor Martinov Sa Bom Nim passed away in 2015](#) and there are several memorials from his senior students from South Bay Moo Duk Kwan, click on this link to read this [special tribute](#).

12/18/16 edited, added photos, r.bonefont

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Oral History

Sandra Schermerhorn, Sa Bom Nim initiated the oral history project to capture and preserve accounts of authentic Moo Duk Kwan® history from various active senior members.

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