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TKD *TaeKwonDo*
TIMES

2009 Hall of Fame

U.S. Grandmaster of the Year
Kenneth P. MacKenzie

International Grandmaster of the Year
Klaus Schuhmacher

Master of the Year
Robert J. Ott

Man of the Year
Leong Wai Meng

Ambassador of the Year
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Female Martial Artist of the Year
Ronda Sweet

U. S. Grandmaster of the Year Kenneth P. MacKenzie

Grandmaster Kenneth P. MacKenzie is the President of the World Sin Moo Hapkido Federation. Under the direct tutelage of DoJuNim Ji Han Jae, the founder of Korean Hapkido, Grandmaster MacKenzie has become the first American-born martial artist to attain the esteemed rank and level of ninth-degree black belt in Sin Moo Hapkido. As DoJuNim Ji prepares for semi-retirement in 2010, Grandmaster MacKenzie has been selected for advancement and, in addition, is among a select few chosen as successors who will guide Sin Moo Hapkido into the new millennium.

A student for life, Grandmaster MacKenzie has been training in traditional Korean martial arts since the age of eleven. He continues to train, research, and document all aspects of Sin Moo Hapkido directly from the source. In addition to operating his five full-time and professional TaeKwon-Do & Hapkido dojangs in New Jersey, serving nearly 1000 active students, Grandmaster MacKenzie helps to spread the martial arts throughout the world. Leading the World Sin Moo Hapkido Federation, Grandmaster MacKenzie has taught Sin Moo Hapkido to instructors and students in 16 countries. When traveling the globe, Grandmaster MacKenzie respects his role as both martial arts leader and ambassador for his native country, the United States of America.

As a community leader, Grandmaster MacKenzie is active with local business groups, local schools, police departments (DARE), and various charities. Understanding the power of mentorship, Grandmaster MacKenzie's award-winning and trademarked 'Champions in Life' program, aimed at getting young people to set positive goals, achieve excellent marks in school, and avoid drugs and violence, has impacted tens of thousands of children in recent years. In addition, his schools have donated over \$50,000 in scholarships to local families annually for each of the past ten years. Grandmaster MacKenzie's dojangs, first opened in 1983, have often been referred to as "pillars of the community" by area leaders.

Moving forward, Grandmaster MacKenzie is committed to maintaining high standards of excellence personally, professionally, and in the Korean martial arts. In addition to his dojang's regular and busy class schedules, he continues to train and teach his staff (both volunteer and professional) weekly. Via his leadership of the World Sin Moo Hapkido Federation, the Hapkido community-at-large will be supported in growing and maintaining the highest degree of excellence. This will be done while preserving the true art and traditions as per the founder.



International Grandmaster of the Year Klaus Schuhmacher

Klaus Schuhmacher grew up in Frankfurt, Germany. His martial arts career began as a little boy with Jiu-Jitsu and Judo under the legendary Grandmaster Heinz Guenther, who was after Great Grandmaster Erich Rahn, the second highest ranked Judo and Jiu-Jitsu expert in Europe.

GM Schuhmacher is certified, recognized and officially registered by over 90 different martial arts organizations as the holder of several ranks in multiple styles and systems worldwide. Additionally, he is the founder of the self-defense system, Progressive Hapkido, which grew out of 34 years of learning, practicing and teaching the system of Hapkido. He learned from instructors such as Song Il Hak, Sou Bong Kim, Yu Un Son (direct student of Soke Choi), and Yang-Seung-Woo (Europe's highest ranking Hapkido Grandmaster at that time).

Since 1981, GM Schuhmacher has taught members of the CIA, FBI, Special Forces, Army, Presidential Bodyguards, Navy, Air Force, and the police and has given seminars and private consultations all over the U.S., Europe, Caribbean, Asia, South and Central America. He is a former World and European champion in Soft Style Weapons (1986) and a 22-time Grand Champion in Kata and Weapons. Between 1983 and 1987, he performed in over 270 demonstrations in Europe and won three professional Thaiboxing fights in Thailand. Additionally, he introduced original Hapkido in Thailand (1983), Costa Rica (1996), Yemen (2006) and Bangladesh (2008).

He also is a Philippines certified Instructor for Stickfighting (Minos-Perez Kali), which he has practiced since 1983, and a certified Military Close-Quarter Combat Tactics Senior Instructor from his many years of teaching U.S. Special Forces, Army and Air Force personnel during their overseas tours stationed in Germany.

He studied Chinese martial arts under the supervision of the great Sigung Wong-Ying-Kui of the Wong-Gar-Kung-Fu style. He has continued to study Chinese medicine, philosophy and martial arts for the past 32 years in Europe, Asia and the U.S. He is currently working to complete his first book, *The Complete Chinese Martial Arts Fact Book*.



Since 1995, Grandmaster Schuhmacher has been the International Chairman of the World Martial Arts League and the founder of nine different international non-profit martial arts organizations, including the International Council of Higher Martial Science Education, a worldwide institution working for better control of higher martial arts levels and ranks. He believes in fighting for human rights worldwide and standing up to injustice.

Master of the Year Robert J. Ott

At the age of six, Robert Ott's mother introduced him to a U.S. Marine Corp Soldier. The soldier enjoyed spending time with young Ott and took his mother and him to see a movie. It was a classic Kung Fu movie with its standard delayed dubbing. It showed warriors fighting and using techniques that young Robert never thought possible. His eyes were stuck to the screen and when it was over a new concept of confidence and drive flowed through his little body. The marine, a first-degree black belt in Okinawa Karate, soon gave young Ott a gift of a traditional gi (Japanese for dobok.) From that point, Robert Ott never stopped being a student of martial arts.

By the age of 11, Ott began to study Tae Soo Do, Chung Do Kwan under Master Richard M. Kenvin. During his study under Master Kenvin, he earned his first-dan in Tae Soo Do, Chung Do Kwan and Tae Kwon Do, Kukkiwon. He also won first place in the New Jersey State Championship in junior heavyweight Olympic TKD and first in the junior heavyweight division for the Fight for Cancer Championships.

In 1985, he left the Tae Kwon Do Association of South Jersey and spent a year traveling, studying, demonstrating and competing with a fellow martial artist, Kenneth P. MacKenzie. Little did Ott realize that MacKenzie was to become not only a good friend and fellow martial artist, but a brother who would walk by his side through the happiest and saddest times of his life. In 1986, Robert Ott sought out Grandmaster Goh Chae Tok, whom he learned of by reading *TKD Times*, and began training under him. While studying directly under Grandmaster Goh, he earned his first-dan in TKD, Mun Moo Kwan, second-dan in TKD, Mun Moo Kwan and also second-dan in TKD, Kukkiwon; and became the Head Office Manager and Chief Instructor for GM Goh's headquarters, Dragon Gym in Exton, Pennsylvania.

In 1989, Ott returned to New Jersey and opened up the Traditional Martial Arts Institute in Somerdale. He earned his second-dan from the North American Hapkido Association. Toward the end of his first year at the dojang, his life was changed forever. 19 years ago, a man put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger. The assault would leave him forever blind, but not broken. He would go on to write an amazing biography, *Certain Victory*, documenting his astounding recovery. He credits his nurse, Fran Orth, and Dr. Louies Cervantes to his survival.

Since finding his new vision in life, he has earned his third-dan by the Kido-Hae in 1993 by Chairman Grandmaster In Sun Seo and was awarded the Martial Arts Man of the Year by the World Martial Arts Association. In 1995, he moved his entire life with two gym bags and \$500 to the Great Northwest. It was this change that allowed him to find his purpose. He found that his story had the power to bring such positive spirit to all walks of life.

In his first 10 years in the Northwest, he held countless seminars. He was the owner of the Modern Day Café, which did the food services for the Western Regional Center of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration. Here, he taught others who were blind or visually impaired. He went on to earn his fourth, fifth and sixth-dans under such men as Ji Han Jae, In Sun Seo, Rudy Timmerman, Kenneth P. MacKenzie and Michael De Alba. He also designed the logo that symbolizes the art that he now teaches, Kidokwan or "family with the way of power."

In 2004, he opened Certain Victory Food Services, Inc. He went from a business of four people to one with over 500. During the five years of operating this business, he has written his biography and filmed a documentary on overcoming great obstacles in life. He is currently finalizing a special edition to his book, featuring a Part II, which focuses on appreciation and admiration of the martial artists who have become part of who he is today.

Today, he is the proud husband of Kimberly D. Ott, father to Savannah Alexis Ott and Robert J. Ott, Jr., and seventh-dan by the World Sin Moo Hapkido Federation under President Kenneth P. MacKenzie and Founder Grandmaster Ji Han Jae. He is the Chairman of the Washington State Business Enterprise Program, President and CEO of Certain Victory Food Services, Inc. and Flowering Warrior Enterprises, LLC, as well as the Chief Master of the Temple of Certain Victory in Olympia, Washington.



Man of the Year Leong Wai Meng

At the young age of six, Leong Wai Meng was introduced to the martial arts. From there, he only continued to flourish under the light that martial arts cast upon him. He was a strong competitor in the late 60s and early 70s, winning top awards in tournaments, including the 1st ITF World Championships.

He began teaching TKD in Sweden in 1975 and soon made a trip to Greenland in 1976 to visit a friend. It was on that trip that he would be set on the illustrious path of being a TKD pioneer to the country of Greenland. But it all began with an odd stroke of luck. The weather was bad, and since there are no roads in Greenland to travel from town to town, the customary travel by helicopter was not permitted. So Leong Wai Meng was forced to take a boat. It was on this boat that he was approached by a man in a tuxedo and asked to dinner, as it was rare to see an Asian man in Greenland. This man was the Prime Minister of Greenland. That evening, Leong Wai Meng ate dinner with the Prime Minister, Speaker of the Parliament, the Minister of Sport and the President of the Sports Council. It was this dinner that started Leong Wai Meng's incredible journey to establishing TKD in Greenland.



By 1979, Leong Wai Meng formed the Greenland Taekwon-Do Federation (which celebrated its 30 year anniversary in November 2009). That same year, he organized the 1st Greenlandic National Championships and hosted a visit from General Choi Hong Hi, Grandmaster Khang Suh Jong and Master Rhee Ki Ha. Since establishing TKD 30 years ago in Greenland, Dr. Leong Wai Meng has set up 24 schools, with over 1,700 active members (about three percent of the population of Greenland today.)

In 2009, Grandmaster Meng was awarded the title of Dato, the equivalent to a Sir in England, by the King of Malaysia. Dr. Grandmaster Leong Wai Meng was also honored with a Professorship in Pyongyang, DPR Korea, by the Academic Degrees and Titles Awards Committee. He was awarded a Doctor's of Sports Science Professorship by Mr. Kwak Pom Ki in September. Also a Vice President in the ITF, it is easy to see why Grandmaster Meng's accomplishments, both in Greenland and the world, make him the *TKDT* Man of the Year.

Ambassador of the Year George Vitale

George Vitale has been fascinated by the fighting arts since childhood. He started organized boxing in the early 1970s. In 1972, he began wrestling. He then learned Tang Soo Do and switched to TKD a couple of years later, joining ITF Main Dojang #21 in 1974. In those days, the school also used the name Korean Karate, as few had heard of TKD and it was only the second TKD school in all of Brooklyn. It was run by Master Kim Kwang Sung, who relocated to Brooklyn from West Germany, where he was a pioneer. Mr. Vitale was promoted by Master Kim to first-dan black belt in 1977 and certified by the legendary TKD pioneer Kwon Jae Hwa. He was promoted by Grandmaster Charles E. Sereff and the USTF to fourth-dan in 1986. He has also been a certified International Instructor, Examiner and Class "A" International Umpire since 1987. In the early 1990s, Mr. Vitale served as the Vice President of the USTF. Additionally, he was one of 32 members of the ITF Board of Directors, nominated for that position by General Choi Hong Hi himself.

Mr. Vitale was also a defensive tactics instructor during his 24-year career as a police supervisor with the New York State Troopers Bureau of Criminal Investigation. His assignments included executive protection for numerous politicians, including personal bodyguard to Governors Mario Cuomo and George Pataki, undercover roles in sensitive organized crime investigations and heading the Governor's NYC office state police response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He has authored numerous academic graduate research papers on the martial arts and juvenile delinquency, on both the Master and Doctoral levels. As 2002 came to an end, Mr. Vitale attained the rank of seventh-dan, being honored by the ITF.

He has traveled for TKD to some 40 countries, most states in the USA and several provinces in Canada. His deep passion for TKD and vast experience have contributed to helping him become a master teacher. Over the years, he has produced and contributed to the success of many world and international champions. Since 2006, Mr. Vitale has also been an associate producer and research director for two feature length documentaries on Tae Kwon Do. These films document the history of Tae Kwon Do and the historic Goodwill Tour of the U.S. by the North Korean team.

In 2009, Mr. Vitale was recommended for eighth-dan to the ITF by several esteemed Tae Kwon Do leaders. Mr. Vitale is most proud of never making money from TKD. Never realizing a monetary profit, he has received so many other rewards from helping people learn TKD over the past 36 years. The joy of the numerous thanks from students and parents is all the riches this TKD teacher really needs.



School of the Year Sang Koo Kang

Sang Koo Kang was born in Seoul, Korea in 1966. As is the case with many Korean children, Sang's early childhood was a hard existence and his only escape from the harsh realities of life was his introduction, at the age of five, to Tae Kwon Do. Through his dedication to Tae Kwon Do, young Sang discovered immediate success and excelled.

In his teen years, Sang relocated to the United States and continued his martial arts training in Tae Kwon Do. Always driven to succeed, he worked hard to distinguish himself in the dojang while struggling to make ends meet for himself and his family. Sang survived those early days by immersing himself in the daily rigors of training, going to school, playing football and teaching Tae Kwon Do classes to elementary school children.

As a football player, Sang's on-field accomplishment's attracted the attention of Jimmy Johnson, who was the head football coach at the University of Miami. Sang was unable to attend the University due to his perilous financial situation and a need to be near his father. Instead, Sang enrolled at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, where he played as a walk-on freshman, eventually earning a position on the team for the next four years.

In 1990, Sang opened his very first martial arts school in Miami Beach, Florida. With a progressive attitude and a strong emphasis on compassion, patience and self perseverance, Sang opened a second location in the community of Pembroke Pines. Sang's popularity soared and he spread his training program to the masses by adding three more training locations in communities throughout South Florida, most recently in South Beach.

Master Sang also specializes in custom training to provide individualized private lessons to many busy executives and working professionals, as well as to dignitaries, famous actors, and professional athletes. Among these are local politicians, the Saudi Prince and Princess, Wimbledon Champion Boris Becker, NFL Hall of Famer and actor Jim Brown, and their families.



Three South Florida communities, Miami Beach, Pembroke Pines, and Surfside, have bestowed the tremendous honor of awarding Master Sang with the "key" to their cities and proclamations of an official "Master Sang Day." He has been recognized in multiple martial arts publications for his outstanding accomplishments and community efforts. In addition to appearing on local radio and television programs, Master Sang has appeared in three major Hollywood productions, *Rush Hour 2*, *Rush Hour 3*, and *Shoot Fighter*.

Master Sang Koo Kang has become an inspiration to the entire South Florida community and the many persons he has met in his travels. He is a sixth-degree in Tae Kwon Do (currently training for and qualified to attain seventh-degree in the near future) and he has designed a specialized "TNT" program that incorporates traditional Tae Kwon Do with Muay Thai Kickboxing.

Female Martial Artist of the Year **Ronda Sweet**

Ronda Sweet began Tae Kwon Do in 1973, the year of Bruce Lee, Kung Fu and martial arts movies at the drive-in. She had a boyfriend who was taking TKD classes at the local YMCA. Her motivation was not self-defense or self-improvement or anything other than her boyfriend simply talking her into it. 36 years later, that boyfriend is only a first or second-degree black belt, while Ronda Sweet earned her sixth-dan last year.

Her first class was a small class run by Joe Cook, a branch school of In Mook Kim, then of Des Moines, Iowa. Ronda Sweet studied in Sioux City, Iowa, and tested in Des Moines. She brought her brothers and sisters into the class, as well as her husband, for a short period of time. From early on, she was a dojang junkie. She did the books, sent bills, painted the walls and worked out with the guys. They didn't have protective gear back then and they wore their bruises and injuries with pride. Friday nights were class and then a trip downtown practicing flying side kicks over parking meters and doing forms to loud raucous music. During this time, she learned a lot about indomitable spirit and her own personal limits.

After a couple years break where her husband was transferred three or four times from city to city, state to state, and her daughter was born, she landed in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She had missed TKD and signed up with Grandmaster Dong Wong Kang. Like many transitions, off came the old belt and back came the white belt. That was ok with Ronda Sweet though, the style was different and she wasn't in a hurry for rank. She had a great school with lots of camaraderie and still has many friends from her years at Kang's. She even ran the school newsletter for awhile. It was there that she developed her passion for being a referee.

One night in class in 1993, Grandmaster Kang probably set her on her current path without even knowing it. For some reason that night, he singled her out and called her John Wayne. He commented on her dedication among other qualities, as well as her propensity to say what she thought. Fast forward to 2009. Since that time, Ronda Sweet has turned her service to TKD and its practitioners by attempting to improve the sport, the art and its governance; to make it fair for all and transparent for everyone.

She went on to be appointed by United States Taekwondo Union (USTU) President Sang Chul Lee to the USTU Publication Committee and later the USTU Publication Chair. He also appointed her as President of the Oklahoma State Taekwondo Union. She later won three more terms before moving from Oklahoma to Louisiana.

During that period, she served as editor of the USTU magazine, as well as Webmaster for the USTU Website. In fact, she spent so many midnight hours doing their own updates, the Web hosting company cut their monthly fee in half. Additionally, she earned her A1 referee status and spent many weekends refereeing tournaments all over the country, including USTU Team Trials. She lived and breathed TKD, even starting her own Website: www.Ladytkd.com.

During those years in Oklahoma, all junior competitors received state uniforms for competing in USTU Nationals and Junior Olympics. All senior competitors received monetary compensation and they used all the funds for the benefit of the athletes in Oklahoma. She, along with other USTU staff, worked to try to bring that philosophy to all of the USTU. She learned much about TKD outside the dojang from her then mentor, Master Guy Poos.

When it became apparent that there were even more serious issues within the USTU, she worked with many great people dedicated to the athletes and members of the organization to again try to bring transparency and a level playing field for all athletes.

When the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) took over the USTU and converted it to the USA Taekwondo (USAT), Ronda Sweet served first as chair of the Awards Committee, and then on the State Committee. She was asked to run for the Grassroots Director, which she did, winning that position and beginning her sojourn on the USAT Board of Directors. During the second year of her first term, she was elected Chair of the Board. Her students at Dunlap's Taekwondo in New Orleans weren't all that impressed; they were more interested in what she had to teach them, than the big wide world of Tae Kwon Do politics.

Ronda Sweet has worked on the Board and with the CEO over the last three years to re-establish the state organizations and their state championships. She has also worked with Grandmaster J.P. Choi and Hong Kong Kim to establish the Martial Arts Commission and to integrate them into the USAT. She has also worked to bring the poomsae program more to the forefront and to support the growing poomsae constituency. She is proudest of bringing bracket poomsae to the recreational poomsae members. Since instituting this change, they have seen poomsae numbers grow.

Ronda Sweet plans to continue to work to improve TKD as well as to work within the Board of Directors to grow the USAT in many ways.



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