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Karl Geis Martial Arts Resume

Karl E. Geis, 10th Dan Professor of Aikido, 10th Dan Professor of Judo, and 9th Dan Professor of Jodo has been a significant martial arts figure in the United States since the late 1950's. He began studying Judo at the Kodokan in Tokyo, Japan in 1955 while stationed there as a member of the United States Air Force and was introduced to Aikido the following year. Upon his return to the United States, Mr. Geis continued his studies, both at home and on a number of extended sabbaticals in Japan throughout the 1960's, 70's, and 80's, expanding his training to include Jodo as well. His extensive martial arts experience covers an impressive four-and-a-half decades, and for over 15 years he has headed an international association of martial artists nearly a thousand strong. His individual blend of Western analytical thought and Eastern understanding makes his technical styles unique and valuable to martial artists throughout the world.

Mr. Geis is known for his vast technical knowledge of Judo, Aikido and Jyudo, along with his ability to demonstrate this knowledge, but he is also known for his ability to teach the martial arts. He pioneered the positive reinforcement method of teaching the martial arts in the early 60's, long before the effectiveness of this approach was recognized and accepted. His work with children is a model for successful schools everywhere. Over the years Mr. Geis has touched the lives of literally thousands of people and is a living example of a generous and unselfish personality. Following is a brief autobiography of Mr. Geis' martial arts career.

Karl Geis

By Mr. Karl E. Geis

The significant milestones of my career began in 1955 with the study of Judo in the Kodokan in Tokyo, Japan. I had the great fortune of having the great Judoka Harold Sharp become my mentor in Judo in Japan. Harold Sharp introduced me to the following teachers of note; Mr. Kotani, Sumiuki Sensei 10th Dan, Mr. Osawa, Yoshimi Sensei 9th Dan and Mr. Daigo, Toshiro Sensei 9th Dan, who along with Mr. Harold Sharp have in one way or another guided my acquisition of Judo knowledge throughout my entire career. Mr. Sharp's influence in the Kodokan was extensive and he unselfishly shared it with me. Because of Mr. Sharp's influence I received a vast amount of technical information normally not available to foreigners.

Particular attention must be given to an American expatriate Mr. Larry Okuda of Yokohama. Mr. Okuda documented all of the grappling techniques of both great masters Shirai Sensei 9th Dan and Kotani Sensei 10th Dan. and unselfishly shared this knowledge over many

unselfish years with me. Mr. Okuda is truly one of the great repositories of grappling knowledge in Judo.

My principle training dojos were Waseda University Dojo, under the direct instruction of Mr. Osawa, Yoshimi Sensei 9th Dan, the Kodokan Main and Foreign Dojos under the tutelage and direct instruction of Mr. Kotani, Sumiuki Sensei 10th Dan , Mr. Osawa Sensei 9th Dan and Mr. Daigo, Toshiro Sensei 9th Dan, and in the central police dojo under Kudo Sensei 8th Dan and after his retirement Mr. Diago Sensei 9th Dan. My Judo competitive career was principally in Japan and was not extra-ordinary. It ended with the award of 4th Dan in the Kodokan in 1967. The last 30 years have been dedicated to the technical studies of Aikido, Judo and Jodo and the teaching of these arts efficiently to others. My tachiwaza (throwing skills) were developed principally under the direct tutelage of Mr. Osawa, Yoshimi Sensei 9th Dan at Waseda University and the Kodokan. I had further significant direct studies with Mr. Diago, Toshiro Sensei 9th Dan in the Kodokan and in the central police Dojo. I studied the Judo Kata exclusively under the direct and extensive private instruction of Mr. Kotani , Sumiuki Sensei 10th Dan in the Kodokan. I received extensive grappling training from Mr. Usejima Sensei 8th Dan, perhaps the greatest Japanese grappler of all time. In the middle 1950's Mr. Usejima Sensei was out of touch with the Kodokan. We had to go to his secret dojo in the old Nippon Bank building in order to get to study with him. I was introduced to him by Mr. Walker Edwards, a wealthy judo aficionado who always knew when one of us was out of money or in need of a good meal. He was a friend.

There were few foreigners in the Kodokan in the early days (1950's). The special ones to me were:

Frank Dando, Australia
Hadley Cook, USA
Bob Nishi, Hawaii
Dennis Bloss, Great Britain
Maurice Gruel, France
Johnny Hatashita, Canada
Dick Stewart (President-American Express Bank Tokyo)

Harold Sharp, USA
Larry Okuda, Hawaii
Dickie Bowen, Great Britain
George Wyman, Great Britain
Frank Hatashita, Canada
Colette Diot, France

During my studies in Japan I received significant personal instruction from the following Kodokan teachers:

Miyake, Tsunako Sensei, 7th Dan
Nakabayashi Sensei, 8th Dan
Shirai Sensei, 8th Dan
Takata Sensei, 8th Dan

Kobayashi Sensei, 8th Dan
Takagaki Sensei, 8th Dan
Ichinoe Sensei, 8th Dan
Shinojima Sensei, 8th Dan

My central Police dojo judo instructors from whom I received direct personal instruction were:

Ichinoe Sensei, 8th Dan
Daigo Sensei, 9th Dan

Ikeda Sensei, 8th Dan
Kudo Sensei, 8th Dan

I was briefly introduced to Tomiki Aikido in 1956 and acquired numerous films that allowed me to continue my studies upon my return to the United States. I was principally involved with Frank Fullerton in founding the first Judo Yudanshakai in Texas and was elected its' first president. I was very fortunate to be able to spend a large part of the summer of 1972 in Tokyo, at Waseda University in intensive direct personal daily study of Aikido with Mr. Tomiki Shihan. At that time Mr. Tomiki Shihan asked me to establish his Aikido in the United States. Mr. Tomiki Shihan noted at that time that our backgrounds were the same. We understood each other because we were both well founded in Judo. He made it clear that this Judo background and the understanding of off-balance from the Judo viewpoint was needed in Aikido in order to make Aikido a more effective throwing art, rather than an art depending on pain to achieve its goals. For this reason, in our system we stress the concept of off-balance and breaking the opponents balance before attempting a technique. I believe we have met and exceeded his goals for his Aikido.

I was a principle participant in the founding of the United States Judo Association in 1968 in Chicago. The success of my judo students in State, National, Pan American and international competition carried the competitive banner of the USJA for many years It was in fact the technical superiority of my competitors that proved to all of American Judo that the new founders of the United States Judo Association were for real in the Judo community.

The principals according to my memory who were present in that Chicago hotel room were:

Mr. George Bass
Mr. Robey Reed
Mr. Jim Bregman

Mr. Phil Porter
Mr. George Harris
Mr. Rick Mertins
and myself

My apologies to anyone left out. It was my association with these fine Judoka and the fine Judoka Benny (Night Horse) Campbell, John Osako, Gene Lebel and Jaques Legrand that kept the martial arts fire burning inside of me during those early bleak years when the Isei and Nisei (American Japanese) dominated Judo Black Belt Federation and exercised profound and destructive prejudicial behavior against all other Americans in Judo.

I was promoted to Judo 4th degree black belt in the Kodokan in Tokyo, Japan in 1967. A rank rarely given to foreigners in Japan. I spent extensive time spent with Miyake, Tsunako Sensei, 8th Dan and Inoue, Takeshi Sensei extensively studying Tomiki Aikido in the early 70's in Japan.

I particularly appreciate the numerous and extensive training tours taken by Miyake Sensei and Inoue Sensei to my Dojo in Houston, Texas. These visits greatly furthered the training of Aikidoka in the United States in Aikido and Jodo.

We were also fortunate to have Riki Kogure Sensei 8th Dan Aikido, current President of the Japan Aikido Association, teaching in my Houston Dojo on most Friday nights from 1970 to 1975. His presence during those early years was invaluable and really gave us a head start, here in the United States.

I was fueled by Mr. Tomiki's request at the time of my promotion to Aikido 4th Dan by Mr. Tomiki Sensei, to also develop a safe, free-style randori system for Aikido. Mr. Tomiki and I agreed that it would need to be a system like the randori system practiced in Judo. Before his death in 1980 Mr. Tomiki realized the complete martial arts development of his Aikido system. Strangely enough it happened in the United States rather than in Japan.

It took us eight years to develop a safe, viable, and real Aikido randori system. This I believe is a unique and significant contribution to the art of Aikido. Our randori system was completed in 1980.

My efforts were rewarded when I was promoted to 6th Dan in 1980 by Tomiki, Kenji Shiha in Tokyo, Japan. With this promotion I become the first, and only, foreigner to be promoted to this rank by Tomiki Sensei. Dr. Yoji Kondo was a great help to me in those days. He kept the lines of communication between myself and Mr. Tomiki open and the translation clear. Without his help things would not have worked as easily. In 1996 I received promotion to 8th Dan in Judo and 8th Dan Hanshi in Judo by the United States Judo Association and the United States Judo Inc. Then in 1997 I was promoted to the rank of 10th Dan Aikido by The Fugakukai International Association, in recognition of my significant contribution to the art of Aikido. During the period ranging from 1984 to 1992 I became partially handicapped by

extensive degenerative arthritis in both knees. In 1992 and '93 I had total knee replacements in both knees. This surgery has extended my career and ability to practice and teach the martial arts, as well as work in building our association.

In 1993, at the urging of, and after being bullied by, Mr. George Webber 7th Dan Aikido, I began to record on video tape my various martial arts technical ideas. George Webber has unselfishly born all of the costs of producing these tapes. Profits from these tapes go to the making of more tapes. Mr. Webber projects that it will take 100 tapes to hit the technical highlights of the three arts. George Webber is a true and remarkable martial artist from the old school, and I cannot even begin to give him the tribute he deserves. Karl Armstrong, a film maker did some fine video work of our system in the early 1980's. However, his untimely move to California and his assault on the real film industry prevented us from completing the project. Karl also bore the cost of the project and was outstanding in his contribution. He is a true martial artist of the old school.

In Recognition

There are a number of people past and present who have at times freely given significant necessary and extra-ordinary help to me. Without this help much of what we have achieved would not have been possible. I have been humbled by their various unselfish and unquestioned contributions and friendship in time of need. They are all true martial artists of the old school. They have my thanks.

The Future

The Future of our Aikido is for the most part in the hands of the above named teachers. The system is now completely viable and along with being a dynamic physical and mental culture it is one of the strongest self defense systems for anyone who expects to get older, slow down and be weaker than others. I look to the future with a great positive attitude and much expectation.

Karl Geis