



2019 Inductees

Te-Kachi Commendations

Te-Kachi is a Japanese term for “one who adds value”. The International Martial Arts Council issues this special commendation for those who add value to their instructor, school or organization. It is an opportunity to say “Thanks” to the men and women who often work behind the scenes to make their instructor and school run more efficiently and effectively.

Rob Larwood

Shotokan Karate and Fitness

Mr. Larwood has been the backbone of our dojo. Even after he was injured during sparring practice, he has not stopped serving in the school. He has automated many of the registration and bookkeeping services, adding the ability to receive tuition payments via bank transfer, online banking and credit cards. Mr. Larwood maintains the dojo and its vehicles, and in 2018 came to the aid of “Superfoot” Bill Wallace at the IMAC National Training Camp when his travel suitcase fell apart. He is always willing to assist in any way, and no job is too dirty or too hard to do.

Carolina Marie Requejo

Shotokan Karate and Fitness

A Junior Leader at Shotokan Karate and Fitness, Carolina has overcome shyness to become an outstanding support member of the dojo. She helps get the Tiny Tigers ready for class and stands ready to assist the students. Carolina understands she has a responsibility to help guide these young students before, during, and after class as needed. She is always kind and respectful, but firm and insistent of respect and discipline. Her instructor, Shihan Sandra Larwood, says she will be a great black belt one day, and is already cultivating the character traits of a black belt as she continues to work on her own personal and professional development.



2019 Inductees

Bronze

Zavier Miguel Atkins

Black Belt of the Year

This is Sensei Atkins' second time to be recognized by the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame. He has been training for 12 years under Grandmaster Eric Brandt in the art of Goju-Ryu, where he holds a 2nd Dan ranking and serves as an Assistant Instructor. He also holds a 1st Dan in Tae Kwon Do.

Shedrick Michael Atkins

Instructor of the Year

Sensei Atkins love for the martial arts grew out of a love for Bruce Lee and Power Rangers. He has been training for 12 years and holds a 2nd Dan in Goju-Ryu and a 1st Dan in Tae Kwon Do. Sensei Atkins was previously recognized by the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame in 2015. He serves as an Assistant Instructor at Brandt's Martial Arts Program.

Austin Jaden Baker

Black Belt Instructor

Mr. Baker has been training at the Inner Circle Martial Arts Academy for 7 years and is known for his incredibly positive attitude. He has a passion for learning and is always willing to help others. His instructor, GM Michael Peterson, describes Mr. Baker as a humble young man who has only scratched the surface of his full potential.

Emily Grace Baker

Competitor of the Year

18-year-old Emily Baker is a 2nd Degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do. She began training under her father, Jeffery Baker, at the age of 11. Sensei Baker found her love for competition when she began competing at the age of 12. Having earned her 1st Dan ranking in 2015, she began teaching 4, 5 and 6-year old students in her father's school. Sensei Baker says of her dad, "Many fathers raise their little girls to be princesses. My father raised a warrior. I live by that code."



2019 Inductees

Battle Rock Krav Maga

Martial Arts School of the Year

Founded by Master Todd Mills, a 7th Dan in Isshin-Ryu and Jiu-Jitsu, Battle Rock Krav Maga is a school established based on a belief that everyone should have the ability to defend themselves with confidence. Battle Rock instructors use a personal development system where students become coaches, and coaches then become instructors, all while learning technique, mastering technique, and leading others. The school is affiliated with the International Krav Maga Association and Master Mills holds an Expert Level certification with this organization.

Gabe Cohen

Intentional Living

A former convict, Gabe Cohen uses his past experience to help others make better choices in life. Mr. Cohen is the owner of American Krav Maga and has conducted self-defense workshops here and abroad. He is a member of the United States Krav Maga Association and the Israeli Krav Maga Academy. Mr. Cohen authored "Pitbull Bouncer" and provides VIP/Celebrity protection in Aspen, CO. He is a volunteer with the Garfield County Sheriff's Department and has his own jail ministry, Kings and Priests Ministry, teaching Bible studies with inmates.

Samuel Conver

Kentucky KFCI Instructor of the Year

Master Conver holds a 6th Dan in Ed Parker's American Kenpo Karate and a 4th Dan in Al Tracy's Traditional Kenpo Karate. He also holds black belt rankings in Tae Kwon Do, Tang Soo Do and Bu-Jin-Kan Tai-Jutsu. Master Conver has been teaching karate since 2001, and is a certified instructor through Karate for Christ International. He is also a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and serves as a speaker for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.



2019 Inductees

Kevin Carmell

Jun Fan Gung Fu Senior Assistant Instructor

Kevin Carmell first met Sigung Taky Kimura and Sifu Andy Kimura in 2000 and received a rare invitation to train under Sigung Taky Kimura at the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute of Seattle, where he also worked in Sigung Taky's grocery store. He became an Ambassador and serves as a guide for guests who come to visit from all over the world, and to this day volunteers with the upkeep to clean and maintain the gravesites of Bruce and Brandon Lee. He has assisted with seminars here in the United States, as well as in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and China.

Zach Cochran

International Instructor of the Year

Mr. Cochran is an Associate Instructor for Battle Rock Krav Maga. He has completed much of the International Krav Maga Association's advanced training, including Israeli Combat Shooting, Krav Maga Tactical Driving, Defensive Tactics and VIP/Executive Protection. Mr. Cochran has been invited to train in Israel with the IKMA and Israeli Defensive Forces. He will soon start his own school as an affiliate of Battle Rock Krav Maga.

Michael Dockery

Instructor of the Year

A 5th Dan Master in the Art of ChunJiDo, Master Dockery has trained under GM Robert Cutrell for 18 years. He has exhibited outstanding loyalty and dedication to the Arts. As a Master Instructor, he is committed to helping others achieve their goals and gain proficiency in ChunJiDo. As a leader, Master Dockery has led by example, challenging himself to live out the traditional values of the martial arts both in the school and his community as well as excelling in competition at the National and International level. In 2007, he won the Open Black Belt World Championships middleweight sparring division in Toronto, Canada and placed in sparring and forms at the 2013 Battle of Bahamas World Championship.



2019 Inductees

R. Blake Emery

Tai-ji Master of the Year

Sifu Blake Emery is the Chief Instructor and Curriculum Designer at Willow Moon Internal Arts in Renton WA. He first trained in traditional Yang Taiji from Master Raymond Chung in 1971. Over the years Mr. Emery has been fortunate to study internal martial arts from some of the finest Taiji instructors from around the world, including his current Chen style instructors, Master Hong Yijiao and Grandmaster Chen Zenglei. He teaches the principles of internal martial arts including Taiji, Xingyi, and Bagua. Sifu Emery was one of the first Americans to receive an official ranking from the Chinese Wushu Association.

Donald Engel

Black Belt of the Year

Sensei Donald (Doni) Engel, a 2nd Dan in Tae Kwon Do and Jiu-Jitsu, is an amazing individual with so many accomplishments already under his belt. He has been well taught by GrandMaster Dan Roberts and BJJ Coach Renato Tavares. He is with the CTX Martial Sports Headquarters in Texas, a very well known school. Very competitive, he has competed in Germany, France, Turkey, and Holland. He provides self-defense tactical training to Security and Police personnel and is well respected. Many systems under his belt including Kenpo and Kickboxing.

Connor Lee Estes

Outstanding Youth Martial Artist

A student of Grandmaster Pete Mills, Mr. Estes currently holds a 1st Dan Black Belt in the art of Isshin-Ryu. In addition to assisting GM Mills and Master Todd Mills with Kid's Summer Karate Camps, and continuing his own training, Mr. Estes is a member of the Beta Club and Carter Middle Band, where he plays saxophone. He is a member of Boy Scout Troup 58 and was recently named Quarter Master. He plays base for the praise band at Ebenezer Baptist Church where he is an active youth member. Mr. Estes also enjoys time with family, fishing and his dog, Kuma.



2019 Inductees

Al Farris

KY Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

GM Farris has been in the martial arts for over 39 years, holding a Grandmaster ranking in Shaolin Kung Fu and cross-training in Aikido, Karate, Judo, Jiu-Jitsu, Wing Chun and JKD. He has faithfully served his community as a law enforcement professional for 34 years and counting. GM Farris works as the Head Firearms Instructor and Head Defensive Tactics and Combatives Instructor for a large law enforcement agency, teaching over 1,000 law enforcement professionals annually. GM Farris is a member of the Christian Martial Arts Council and sees his work as a ministry and believes in helping people.

Milton Edward Ganz

Male Competitor of the Year

A Marine Corp veteran who honorably served the United States in Operation Desert Shield, Mr. Ganz holds a 1st Dan in Kajukenbo, a 1st Dan in Ju-Jitsu and a 1st Dan in Badders Combatives. He has also trained in Escrima and Aiki-Ju-Jitsu. Mr. Ganz earned a degree in Criminal Justice, serving in several law enforcement agencies. He has also served as an assistant instructor at the police academy. In competition, he has earned 2 Grand Championship titles, 20 First place, 6 Second place and 5 Third place finishes in Escrima and has also excelled in ju-jitsu and grappling competitions. He is also an assistant instructor at The Dojo Martial Arts Academy.

Amado Garcia

Martial Artist of the Year

Master Garcia, a 5th Dan in Kuk Sool Won, has led a full and distinguished career, honorably serving in the Air Force as a non-commissioned officer for 24 years. He began training in the martial arts in 1992 and has been teaching for over 25 years. Master Garcia is a member of the World Kuk Sool Association and has successfully competed at the international level. He has promoted over 50 students to black belt over his distinguished career.



2019 Inductees

Mark Greene

Instructor of the Year

Known by his peers as a walking encyclopedia of ITF Taekwondo techniques, Mr. Greene holds a 5th Dan in the Art of TKD. He teaches students at a local church and gives all the proceeds from his classes back to the church. Mr. Greene teaches for the love of the Art and focuses on helping his students become the best they can be. His unselfish and untiring pursuit of martial arts excellence is evidenced in his student's continued success in and out of the school.

Kimberly Hafey

Honorable Martial Arts School Owner

Growing up in Los Angeles, Kimberly Hafey has been actively involved in martial arts her entire life. Her step-father was a student of Guro Dan Inosato and Sigung Richard Bustillo. Over the years, she continued to train with Guro Inosato and GM Bustillo, as well as with GM Ramiro Estalilla Jr, Sigung Taky Kimura and Sifu Andy Kimura. In 2011, she opened Emery Academy of Martial Arts with her partner, Sifu Matt Emery. In 2019, she was instrumental in coordinating the first-ever Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute of Seattle Instructors Conference and Sigung Taky Kimura's 95th birthday celebration. Her greatest joy is her son, Kiji.

Leonard Harris Jr.

Instructor of the Year

After a successful career in El Paso TX as a law enforcement officer, Chief Harris moved to Cairo, IL where he currently serves as Chief of Police. In 2017, Chief Harris founded a martial arts outreach program through his church. Through the support of his church and local civic groups, he is able to teach, encourage and mentor at-risk youth at no cost to the students. Chief Harris is a 1st Dan in Art of Goju-Ryu and continues to serve his community with distinction.



2019 Inductees

Chris Hawkins

Distinguished Law Enforcement Award

Master Hawkins has over 30 years experience in the martial arts and holds the rank of 8th Dan in Isshin-Ryu and Jiu-Jitsu. He is a staff instructor for the Monroe County Sheriff's Department in TN where he trains and instructs every phase of law enforcement work. He is a member of the International Krav Maga Association and has attended their Tactical Training Options Defensive Tactics course 3 times. Master Hawkins has traveled extensively around the globe with GM Pete Mills. He has helped train special forces in the Dominican Republic and was part of a training team in Russia where he worked with civilians and students at local malls and schools. Master Hawkins also serves locally, volunteering many hours in his church and community. He is a man who truly gives of himself to benefit others.

Lucas Wayne Heaton

Black Belt of the Year

At the age of 15, Lucas Heaton holds the rank of 1st degree Black Belt under GM Pete Mills. He assists in leading classes for Pete Mills School of Karate and has traveled many miles to further his training with the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame. A firm believer in cross-training, Mr. Heaton also trains in Eskima, Ground Fighting, and Boxing. His form is exceptional. He is an excellent coach. Mr. Heaton is a hard-working, dedicated young man.

Randy Hegstad

Wushu Instructor of the Year

Sifu Hegstad began his martial arts training while attending college in New York. He received a black belt in Tae Kwon Do under GM Duk Son and the World Tae Kwon Do Association. After college, Sifu Hegstad began training in Wushu under Nick Gracenin, who was a student of pioneer Wushu Instructors Roger Tung and Bo Sim Mark. Two years later, he won the PKKA National Open Forms Division. Shortly thereafter, he relocated to Seattle to work with Master Roger Tung.



2019 Inductees

Hoshin Dojo

Martial Arts School of the Year

The Hoshin Dojo, located in Midwest City OK, is dedicated to the development and spreading of the Martial Arts. The vision of the school is to reduce interpersonal violence, especially against women, by spreading the tenants of self-defense. This is accomplished through free community events and training participants to use simple but practical self-defense techniques that are highly effective. Hoshin Dojo also teaches youth self-defense and anti-abduction strategies at these free community clinics. The school is led by Renshi Charles Wallace, a black belt in the art of Motobu Ha Shito Ryu and Shobudo Bujutsu.

Evan Nicholas Hsu

Youth Black Belt of the Year

Sensei Even Hsu began his first karate lesson at the age of 5 and fell in love with the Art of Shotokan. Now a 3rd Dan at the age of 16, he continues to train and help teach students at Chozen Martial Arts in Alta Loma CA. Sensei Hsu has racked up over 100 awards, including 2 Grand Championships. His Senior Instructor has given him the nickname of "The Encyclopedia" for his impressive recall of all things Karate. Sensei Hsu is also a High School varsity tennis player.

Kira Jones

Female Competitor of the Year

Among Ms. Jones many accomplishments in 2018 include 1st place finishes at the Tournament of Champions, East-West Karate Challenge, Arkansas Open, American Pro-Am, Bowling Green Classic, OMN 18, Battle in the Midwest, Natural State Classic, and Paducah KY Grappling Championships. She competed as a member of the 2018 WKU Team USA in Athens, Greece where she won 3 Silver Medals and 5 Bronze Medals. All of this by the age of 14.



2019 Inductees

Scott Kangas

Black Belt of the Year

Mr. Kangas has been training for 10 years and currently teaches Kajukenbo in Rockport TX at Mammoth Training Center. He also teaches Phan-Ku-Ryu Ju-Jitsu, Muay Thai, BJJ and Arnis. Mr. Kangas holds 1st Dan rankings in Kajukenbo and Phan-Ku-Ryu Ju-Jitsu.

Dr. Stephen Khalfani

Combat Arts Operator of the Year

A resident of Fargo ND, Dr. Khalfani is a martial arts instructor at Dakota Dragon Dojo. With over 40 years of training experience, he holds a 5th Dan in Kinji-Ru-Jitsu and also teaches Combat Jiu-Jitsu. Dr. Khalfani also holds a Master's Degree in Public Management and Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Theological Philosophy. He is passionate about teaching life-saving self-defense techniques that anyone can learn and practically apply when threatened by an attacker.

Samantha Ko

Outstanding Martial Artist

Samantha Ko began training at the age of 5 and immediately connected with the martial arts. She has excelled in martial arts performance and competition. In 2011, Ms. Ko was awarded the title of "All Around Champion" at the first-ever Emery Academy of Martial Arts School Tournament. Over the years she has trained under GM Richard Bustillo, GM Ramiro Estalilla Jr. Sifu Andy Kimura and Sigung Taky Kimura. She received a certified instructor ranking in 2017. Ms. Ko is currently training under Sifu Matt Emery and Ms. Kymmy and working toward her 2nd Dan Black Belt in Wushu.



2019 Inductees

Monika LaFleur

Woman of the Year

Ms. LaFleur currently holds a 3rd Dan Black Belt under Shihan Sandy Larwood. This is her second recognition by our Association, the first being named the 2018 Female Instructor of the Year. Sensei LaFleur strives to inspire students at Shotokan Karate and Fitness to be respectful, diligent, kind, compassionate and to show the love of God in all things. Shihan Larwood refers to her as her “Go-To” black belt who is also a dedicated and faithful wife, mother, and friend.

Paula Lockhart

Black Belt of the Year

Ms. Lockhart is a student of GM James Goodwin, who personally nominated her for this award. She is a diligent student who recently earned her 1st Dan Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do, and currently holds an Orange Belt in Keri-Ju-Kido under GM Dale Garrett. She is an assistant instructor at 4-Mile Hill Tae Kwon Do in Searcy AR.

Nathan McCann

Black Belt of the Year

Mr. McCann began training with GM James Goodwin in high school. Years later, he and his family relocated to Searcy AR where he enrolled his daughter in classes only to discover the chief instructor was his first teacher. Mr. McCann enrolled with his daughter to finish what he started, earning his 1st Dan Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do in 2019. He is an assistant instructor at 4-Mile Hill Tae Kwon Do in Searcy AR.



2019 Inductees

Janice Mills

International Instructor of the Year

Janice Mills is an Associate Instructor at Battle Rock Krav Maga where he teaches alongside her husband, Master Todd Mills. She has also traveled extensively as an assistant instructor to GM Pete Mills. Ms. Mills recently accepted an invitation to travel to Israel with the International Krav Maga Association to train alongside the Israeli Special Forces. She has completed advanced training in Israeli Combat Shooting, Krav Maga, Tactical Driving and Defensive Tactics. Ms. Mills is known for her passion to serve others and seeks to maintain a Christ-like attitude in her daily life. Outside of classes, she devotes time to her family, church and community.

Hector Negron

Judo Instructor of the Year

A retired U.S. Army veteran, Master Negron is a certified national Judo Coach and Referee for the state of North Carolina. He currently teaches at Martial Sports HQ in Killeen TX. Master Negron served on Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Resolute Support, yet never stopped his training even while deployed. He is considered by his peers as a positive role model and an excellent Judo Coach.

Donald Eugene Rackard

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Sensei Rackard has been in the martial arts since the early sixties and recently retired from the Knox County Police Department. He is well-respected by his peers and is known as a loyal friend to those he loves, serves and trains with. He is a Vietnam veteran and served our country during combat. He is a gospel music singer and active in his church and community.



2019 Inductees

Claudia Perez Rivas

Female Instructor of the Year

A student of GM Michael Hornsby, Ms. Rivas is an amazing martial artist. She is known by her students as the lady who speaks softly but carries a big stick. A professional journalist, freelance writer, and photographer, she brings her creative side to her instruction in the martial arts. Ms. Rivas has trained for over 25 years and has studied Kenpo, Modern Arnis, Jeet Kune Do, Kali and Kickboxing. She is a member of True Force International Martial Arts Alliance, where she focuses energy and effort as an advocate for preventing domestic violence and sexual assault. Ms. Rivas holds a 3rd Dan ranking in the Art of Tae Kwon Do.

Dr. Ramsey Saffouri

Outstanding Martial Artist

A 6th Dan in Goju-Ryu with over 20 years experience, Dr. Saffouri also holds 3rd Dan rankings in Iado, and a 2nd Dan in American Kenpo. He is the President and Chancellor of Christ Jesus College and Seminary that provides Bible teaching and missionary services. Dr. Saffouri is the founder of AM-PM DOD, a service that provides 24-hour medical services to his community and has been an outspoken advocate for the advancement of medical treatments that help bring a better quality of life to patients.

Dudley "Ozzy" Scott

Outstanding Competitor

Currently holding a 5th Dan in Moo Duk Kwan, and a brown belt in Okinawan Kempo, Master Scott's attributes his passion for the martial arts to seeing Bruce Lee's movie, "Fists of Fury". He taught on the island of St. Croix before relocating to California. He joined the U.S. Navy and trained where his deployments took him for several years. An active competitor, Master Scott has won (and continues to win) numerous awards in forms, fighting and weapons at the national level. In 2011, he began training with GM Michael Peterson at The Inner Circle IMB where he teaches sparring tactics classes.



2019 Inductees

Shotokan Karate and Fitness

Martial Arts School of the Year

Led by Shihan Sandra Larwood, Shotokan Karate and Fitness is simply one of the best schools in Texas. A highly competitive school, they compete regionally and always represent their Art, their School, and their Instructor well. Shotokan Karate and Fitness not only demands martial arts excellence from its students but academic excellence in school as well. They are truly building not just good martial artists, they are also building Black Belt Leaders in Life who will excel in the future.

Caleb David Spurling

Outstanding Youth Martial Artist

A student of GM Wayne Carman, Caleb is a black belt student instructor at Taking Care of Business Martial Arts in Branson MO. He studies Karate, Krav Maga, self-defense and various weapons including cane, nunchaku, sai, bo staff and escrima. Caleb enjoys swimming, robotics and all things NASA. He plans to be a rocket scientist when he grows up.

Carol Swaggerty

Martial Artist of the Year

Ms. Swaggerty holds a 6th Dan ranking in Isshin-Ryu and a student of Krav Maga. She is a student of GM Pete Mills and a member of the Universal Isshin-Ryu and Jiu-Jitsu Association. Ms. Swaggerty has also trained in Eskrima, Ground Fighting and Boxing. She is a coach at Battle Rock Krav Maga and shares her experience in VIP/Executive Protection, Tactical Driving, Israeli Combat Shooting, and Defensive Tactics. Outside class, she spends time serving her family, church, and community.



2019 Inductees

Michael Swaggerty

Martial Artist of the Year

Mr. Swaggerty is a 15-year student of Isshin-Ryu and Jiu-Jitsu, holding a 5th Dan in Isshin-Ryu. He is a member of the Universal Isshin-Ryu and Jiu-Jitsu Association and has cross-trained in Krav Maga, Eskrima, Ground Fighting and Boxing. Mr. Swaggerty is a coach at Battle Rock Krav Maga and is known for his level-headed approach to training. He has advanced IKMA certifications in VIP/Executive Protection, Tactical Driving, Israeli Combat Shooting, and Defensive Tactics.

Sylvester Talavera

Outstanding JKD Martial Artist

Sifu Talavera began training in the martial arts at the age of 5. His father was a student of Guro Dan Inosanto. Over the years, Sifu Talavera expanded his training to include boxing, kickboxing, Wing Chun, Tae Kwon Do, Jeet Kune Do, Eskrima, Pentjack Silat, and Ju-Jitsu. In 2000, he began training in Wushu at the National Wushu Training Center where he met Sifu Matt Emery. He currently trains in JKD and Filipino Martial Arts under Sifu Cass Magda at the Magda Institute in Reseda CA. he is an assistant to the women's self-defense class. Sifu Talavera can also be found assisting with advanced classes and helping with events and seminars at Sifu Matt Emery's Academy as well.

Samantha Teague

TKD Black Belt of the Year

Ms. Teague began training at the age of 5 and received her 1st Dan in Tae Kwon Do at the age of 12. She has also trained in Combat Jiu-Jitsu and Krav Maga. Ms. Teague is currently serving as the Assistant Instructor for Karate for Christ of Arkansas, a school operated by her family for over 11 years. While her Dad was recovering from a motorcycle accident, she stepped into the role of Senior Instructor and has led classes with excellence and enthusiasm. Ms. Teague has a great love for her students and remains a driving force in the school's active ministry in the Benton, Arkansas area.



2019 Inductees

Nicole Topanian

Outstanding Youth Instructor

Since the age of 5, Ms. Topanian has been traveling across the U.S. competing in Sambo and Judo tournaments. At the age of 9 (and being the youngest competitor at the USA Sambo Open tournament) her father and coach, Andrei Popoadoupoulo, told her if she were to win the competition, he would buy her the hamper of her dreams. She went on to win two USA Sambo Championship titles (2009 and 2011). Today she teaches at Sambo 7 as a Junior Instructor. Her passion is self-defense, as she wants to make sure young people can protect themselves in any situation.

Krishan Ubongen

Martial Artist of the Year

At the age of 18, she has recently graduated Summa Cum laude at the Design & Technology Academy and will be majoring in neuroscience in the near future. A finalist in the 2019 Genes in Space Competition, where she had to study the virulence of bacteria in micro-gravity, she has already been accepted by NASA and Boeing, as well as Harvard University. In her spare time, she has pursued her passion for Tae Kwon Do, competing and placing in the Houston Open TKD Championship, UMA TKD Championships, and AAU TKD Texas Championships. She is a member of the Christian Taekwondo League where she hones her own skills as she also helps new students improve their technique.

Jesus Abel Valles

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

A Combatives Black Belt under William Badders, Mr. Valles is a full-time officer in the Professional Standards and Training Unit in Central Texas. He is a certified Law Enforcement Defensive Tactics instructor and teaches use of force, retention and control, ASP Baton, Taser, low light operations, and active shooter response among other programs. Mr. Valles has helped to coach a Gold medal winner at the San Shou World Championships in China and a Gold medalist in Karate/Kickboxing at the Texas Police Games. His motto is “never stop learning, never stop evolving.”



2019 Inductees

Chris Wetherington

Anti-Bully Advocate

Mr. Wetherington started training in the martial arts in response to being bullied. Now a 1st Dan in Tang Soo Do, his passion is to teach and train those who, like him, were the victims of bullying and predatory behavior and equip them to defend themselves when confronted. Mr. Wetherington relocated to one of the more challenging areas in the St. Louis area to be an advocate for those who are being victimized. He is committed to combatting pain, unrest, hate, and violence doing his part to make his community a better place to live and raise a family.

WILICO Self-Defense Academy

Volunteer Organization of the Year

Deputy Brandon Schaefer met with the newly elected Sheriff of Williamson County TX to pitch the idea of providing self-defense and situational awareness to willing members of their county without cost. Today, any citizen from age 4 to 100+ can receive self-defense training from the Sheriff's Department at a training facility provided by the County. Deputy Shaefer is a 2nd Dan Black Belt in Combatives under William Badders and has trained in a number of systems, including Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Muay Thai and Gracie Survival Tactics.

David James Wright

Master of the Year

Master David Wright has trained in the Korean martial arts for 34 years and holds a 6th Dan in Tae Kwon Do. He is known as a dedicated teacher who is committed to the welfare of his students and the well-being of the martial arts. Master Wright served with distinction as an Army Airborne Combat Vet during Desert Storm, he is a shining example of what it means to be a Master in the Martial Arts.



2019 Inductees

Nicolas Zarilla

Black Belt of the Year

A student of his mother, Patsy Zarilla, Mr. Zarilla holds a 3rd Dan in Tae Kwon Do and Chon-Tu-Quan Hapkido. He also holds a 1st Dan in Sin-Moo Hapkido. He has traveled and taught internationally and recently finished his freshman year of college where he is pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice.

Silver

George Blanton

Distinguished Instructor

An expert Kung Fu practitioner, this gentleman has trained with some of the greats throughout the years, the last being Kyoshi Lee Goodridge. Sifu Blanton now trains with Master J.K. Choi at his Hapkido school in Houston, TX. He is currently working with GM Michael Hornsby to develop a no-nonsense street-smart system for personal protection.

Sasha Chambers

Martial Artist

Ms. Chambers has been a student of Kyoshi Anthony Ferguson for over 12 years and earned her 1st Dan Black Belt in Shorin-Ryu in 2016. She has been an active competitor, winning titles throughout Florida, as well as in the Pan American Games, winning 1st place in kata and 2nd Place in Weapons. She has been a valuable asset to Kyoshi Ferguson, stepping into an Assistant Instructor role. Ms. Chambers teaches beginner students the traditions and techniques of Shorin-Ryu.



2019 Inductees

Saint Colon

Silver Life Award

Starting at the ripe young age of 4, Shidai Saint Colon has spent his entire life training in the martial arts. For the last 30+ years, he has been teaching in three countries with hundreds of students in Puerto Rico. In a country ravaged by poverty, Shidai Colon often teaches students for free, as he believes in giving back to his community. He has spent several years empowering students to perpetuate the Art of Bai Lung Chuan Fa Kung Gu, putting them in charge of schools he founded so they can see success. Shidai Colon has also trained in Goju-Ryu, Tae Kwon Do, and Shaolin Kempo Kung Fu.

Robert Cutrell

Distinguished Grandmaster

GM Cutrell is the founder of the art of ChunJiDo and ChunJiDo International, a worldwide martial arts association with affiliates in 5 continents and over 30 countries. He also holds black belt rankings in Tae Kwon Do, Kempo, Ju-Jitsu, and Hapkido. GM Cutrell has received numerous awards over his career, and in 2008 was prominently featured in a stamp treasury album in commemoration of the martial arts at the Beijing Olympics. He is also a regular contributor to Tae Kwon Do Times Magazine, one of the martial arts leading publications.

Charles Dismang

Humanitarian

For more than 45 years, GM Dismang has trained in the martial arts. His greatest achievement is not the accolades or trophies but the lives he has touched and the communities he has made better for teaching martial arts. GM Dismang's continued dedication to the betterment of others by providing free women's self-defense classes, local police training, youth boxing sponsorships for underprivileged and at-risk youth and more. Rock Steady Boxing brings dozens who battle with Parkinson's and other neurological diseases. GM Dismang hosts fundraisers throughout the year to spread awareness and raise needed funds for Parkinson's medical research.



2019 Inductees

Oren Lee Gautreaux

Silver Life Award

Mr. Gautreaux has studied Tae Kwon Do since 1973 and holds an 8th Dan black belt in the Art. He opened his school in 1983 and has been teaching full-time ever since. Master Gautreaux also holds a 5th Dan in Kenpo, a 4th Dan in Ju-Jitsu, a 3rd Dan in Kobudo, a 2nd Dan in Hapkido and a 1st Dan in Judo. He was a 4-Time National Champion at the North American Tae Kwon Do Championships (1976-1979), a Bronze Medalist at the U.S. Olympic Festival, a Bronze Medalist in the World Championships and has competed in the Pan American and U.S. Collegiate Championships. In 2009, he was inducted into the Tae Kwon Do Hall of Fame and in 2018 was named the National Collegiate Tae Kwon Do Association Coach of the Year.

Terry Gautreaux

Silver Life Award

Mrs. Gautreaux began training in Tae Kwon Do in 1980 and currently holds a 6th Dan in the Art. She is a graduate of Rockhurst University with a degree in Communications. Mrs. Gautreaux is passionate about seeing students excel in a sport that has done so much for her and believes the Olympic dream resides inside all of us. With the proper encouragement, she believes we can all achieve our very best in the martial arts, and in life. She began a long, successful career as a world-class competitor including a Gold Medal at the 1986 AAU Junior National Championship, a Gold medal at the 1989 U.S. Olympics Sports Festival, a Silver Medal at the 1992 Pan American Tae Kwon Do Championship and a Bronze medal at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. From 2003 - 2006 Mrs. Gautreaux served as the Women's Team Coach for the AAU National Tae Kwon Do Team.



2019 Inductees

Paul Keogh

TKD Master of the Year

Master Paul Keogh has been active in the martial arts for over 35 years. He began training at the Irish School of Tae Kwon Do where he currently holds a 6th Dan Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do. He is a member of the Irish National Tae Kwon Do Team and has won individual Gold, Silver and Bronze medals at numerous World Championships. In 2014, Master Keogh received his 1st Dan in Chen Style Tai Chi under GM Liming Yue. He was a long-time student of GM Richard Bustillo and in 2019 was privileged to train under Sigung Taky Kimura and Sifu Andy Kimura at the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute of Seattle.

Michael Munyon

Distinguished Master Instructor

Master Munyon is an 8th Dan Black Belt in the ITF and a Regional Director for the U.S. and Canada. A retired Master Sergeant in the Air Force, he served as a Special Weapons and Defensive Tactics Instructor for the USAF, Army, and Police. Master Munyon is a leader in the Tae Kwon Do world and has dedicated his life to the excellence of TKD, defensive tactics and active shooter training worldwide.

Chaz Paul Siangco

Distinguished Master

Master Siangco possesses a wealth of experience in Eskrima, Chinese Kenpo, Tae Kwon Do and Kajukenbo. A native of Hawaii, he has used his experience as a law enforcement officer and instructor to help train Border Patrol, DEA Agents, Police, Military and Naval Special Operations personnel. Master Siangco is one of the highest ranked practitioners in the Derobio Style of Eskrima and a highly respected tournament competitor.



2019 Inductees

Charles-David Young

Distinguished Instructor of the Year

Master Young has an amazing way of connecting with his students and honoring them as individuals. At the same time, he pulls the very best out of them in an effort to help them grow and mature as martial artists. Master Young believes each student should grow in their own way, and this philosophy has made his school and his students better. His father, Gary Young, notes Master Young has always paid tremendous attention to the details of his Art and making sure his students were getting the individual attention they needed to see success. He is also passionate about cultivating and growing leaders in his school, teaching his growing number of black belts how to be successful instructors on their own.

Gary S. Young

Silver Life Award

Master Young is a very special member of the Song Moo Kwan family. While most Masters make their impact directly in their Art, he has made a significant difference behind the scenes, choosing to serve and add value to others. Master Young is the first to volunteer his time and resources to support the school and its students. He is a ranking Instructor at CD Young's Karate in Henderson NV where he serves on testing boards and can be found regularly assisting and instructing all ages and ranks. He is an encourager, helping students to believe in and pursue their dreams. He epitomizes the spirit and humility of the martial arts in his daily life.



2019 Inductees

Gold

Eric Von Brandt

Lifetime Achievement

Grandmaster Alfred O'Neal says of Grandmaster Brandt, *"This nominee has been in the martial arts as a friend and instructor."* With over 50 years of martial arts training, GM Brandt holds a 10th Dan in GoJu-Ryu and a 6th Dan in Tae Kwon Do. He teaches both Arts to his students and has taken them to compete in the TKD Nationals several years in a row. He has also trained in Kendo, Shotokan, Shorin-Ryu, Shito-Ryu and Kuro-Shido. He is a member of the Black Knight Karate Association and the National Military Martial Arts Academy.

Marcel Bedard

Golden Life Award

GM Marcel Bedard is celebrating 50 years in the martial arts and has received numerous awards over his career. He has been inducted into the Hall of Honors, the Masters of Martial Arts Awards Hall of Fame, American Martial Arts Alliance Hall of Fame, and was listed in the "Who's Who in Martial Arts – The Legends, Pioneers and Masters" in April of this year. GM Bedard is a 7th Dan in Tae Kwon Do and also holds a black belt ranking in Combat hapkido. He is a member of the ITF, Budokan USA, International Combat Hapkido Federation, United States Grand Masters Federation and Michigan Sport Taekwondo Association.



2019 Inductees

Anthony Ferguson

Humanitarian Award

Kyoshi Anthony Ferguson is an 8th Dan black belt in the Art of Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu. He began his training in martial arts at the age of 13 after being assaulted and robbed by two older boys. He has spent years training under Hanshi Moses Colon and continues to pass on what he has learned to the next generation of black belts under his instruction. Koyshi Ferguson has been recognized by the Mayor of Jacksonville FL in appreciation for his dedication to community service and giving back to those in need.

He has served as a volunteer at the Frank Callan Boys Club in Savannah, GA training a class of 50 underprivileged youth. Kyoshi Ferguson also led a “Career and Karate” program for high school students who were failing school and had discipline issues at the Jacksonville State Community College in Jacksonville, FL. When students completed the program, they were rewarded with a full scholarship to attend Jacksonville Community College. In 2018, he authored an autobiography of his life in the Art of Shorin Ryu.

Terry O’Brien

Humanitarian

Terry O'Brien, the founder of Shamrock Boxing Gym, is a former professional boxer, Cincinnati Golden Gloves Champion (with a record of 16-0-0, with 16 KO's), and celebrity bodyguard. He opened Shamrock Boxing Club in Covington, Kentucky in 1968, making it the oldest boxing gym in the state of Kentucky. Terry coaches fighters in the ring and trains them at the gym as well. He also provides personal training for men and women. Terry has trained numerous Gold Glove Champions and took a boxer to the Olympics in 2004. He continues to train boxers out of his home gym in Covington free of charge and has positively impacted the lives of countless local youths in his area. He is absolutely a living legend!



2019 Inductees

Alfred O'Neal Jr.

Golden Life Award

Master O'Neal began his martial arts career training in Kickboxing and Tai Chi. He joined the US Army in 1977 and began training in Tae Kwon Do, Jude and Capoeira. In 1980, he joined the Black Knights Karate Association while stationed at Ft. Bliss, TX, where he actively competed as a member of the Ft. Bliss Karate Team. In 1983, he deployed to Germany where he won the World Championships in Koblenz, Germany for three consecutive years.

Master O'Neal deployed to Korea in 1988 and earned a Black Belt in Tang Soo Do while serving abroad. He retired from the Army in 1997 and still trains at Gym 5 in Fr. Gordon GA. Master O'Neal holds a 9th Dan in Goju Ryu under GM Eric Von Brandt. He also holds a 3rd Dan in Tang Soo Do Moo Association Duck Kwan under GM Hwang Kee.

Randall Parker

Honor Award

Master Parker's martial arts journey began more than 40 years ago. His goal is to pursue, enrich and passion the traditional martial arts to the world with integrity, respect, and honor. He received his first black belt in Shotokan in 1984 and was the USKA #1 ranked competitor (and USKA Champion) in Kata, Kumite and Weapons in 1985, and was ranked #3 in the World in 1987. His illustrious career includes multiple top world rankings and a passion for teaching and instilling positive character values in students, young and old. He holds black belt rankings in Tae Kwon Do, Judo and Okinawan Weapons, and has opened schools in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and South Carolina. Master Parker currently holds a 6th Dan under GM Wayne Carman and trains at Taking Care of Business in Branson MO.



2019 Inductees

Platinum

Edward M Brown, Jr.

Pioneer Award

GM Brown is the founder of the Black Knight Karate Association. He began his martial arts career at the age of 10 in Houston TX training at the YMCA under Master Charles Dixon Sr. In 1967, GM Brown enlisted in the Army and was stationed in Korea where he trained under Master Jimmy Ku-I. In 1977, GM Brown was named the 8th Army's Tae Kwon Do Team Coach. While in Okinawa, he trained under GM H.F.D. Hargrove and others in the Art of Wado Ryu.

GM Brown's martial arts skill was noted by the Armed Forces and he became one of the Army's recruiting tools. He has his teams have performed at Rockefeller Plaza, before the Senate Armed Forces Subcommittee, at halftime shows for the Denver Nuggets, Utah Jazz, Golden State Warriors and Seattle Super Sonics. GM Brown has also starred in 3 martial arts movies.

Richard L. Cumbridge

Lifetime Achievement Award

Sensei Cumbridge was a student of Master Robert St. Clair, holding a 3rd degree black belt in the art of Shotokan. He was the chief instructor at the Cumbridge Family Martial Arts Academy in West Virginia. Even after being diagnosed with cancer, Sensei Cumbridge did his best to be at every class, unless he was hospitalized. As cancer ravaged his body, he continued to teach, motivate and encourage his students. When he shaved his head in preparation for strong chemotherapy, he did it with his Karate family, and there was not a dry eye in the house. On September 18, 2018, Sensei Cumbridge lost his battle with cancer, but even in the final hours of his life, his concern was for the welfare of his family, his students and his school.



2019 Inductees

Fule Dogic

Aikido Martial Arts Legend

Born in Europe in 1954, Fule Dogic graduated from the College of Engineering in 1988, Economic University in 1992 and was a Law Associate American Bar Associate from 2007-2017. In 1974, he was promoted to Commander of the Special Army Police where he taught the officers Aikido, Judo and Aiki-Ju-Jutsu. He established the Agoura Aikido Academy in 2000, and in 2005 he founded his own school, Kyoryokuna Aikido-Powerful Aikido. Mr. Dogic is an active Aikido Instructor at City universities, school districts and various cities and communities. In 2001, he received a special recognition letter from the Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba International Aikido Federation for his excellence in teaching the Art of Aikido. Mr. Dogic continues to teach in the United States, as well as internationally in Europe and South America.

Gerald Pete Mills

Living Legend

A man of great faith, and an outstanding martial arts instructor, GM Pete Mills is an accomplished martial artist. He is known by his peers as a man of great character, integrity, insight, passion, and conviction. Since 1967 he has operated Pete Mills School of Karate and trained hundreds of students to Black Belt in Isshin-Ryu. A long-time member of the International Martial Arts Council of America's Grandmaster's Council, GM Mills has traveled the globe to teach martial arts, defensive tactics, and self-defense.

GM Mills is a staff member of the Martial Arts University, serving as Senior Advisor for Isshin-Ryu. He is also an instructor with the International Krav Maga Association and is credentialed as a VIP Security Specialist with Tactical Training Options. GM Mills holds a 10th Dan in Isshin-Ryu and has ranked in Small Circle Jiu-Jitsu, BJJ and Eskrima. GM Mills is an Army veteran, serving in Viet Nam. He received the Army Commendation Medal for his service. GM Mills has also assisted Chuck Norris in the Kick Drugs Out of America Campaign and is well known for his church and community service.



2019 Inductees

Special Recognition

Rodrigo Antunes

BJJ Ambassador

Gokor Chivichyan, co-founder of Hayastan MMA, says of this inductee, *“He is one of the most technical and talented fighters I have ever met in my life. He is a 5th degree black belt in BJJ and the only martial artist in the world to also hold a prestigious Black Belt in my system (JiuJitsu, Grappling, Sambo and Judo) simultaneously. He is one of the best competitors of his generation.”* Mr. Antunes is a 3-Time World Champion, a 2-Time Pan Ams Champion, 2016 UFC Super Challenge Grappling Champion. He is a member of the 11xWorld Champion Alliance Jiu-Jitsu.

In addition to teaching professional fighters, beginners, kids, executives, Law Enforcement, and Special Forces, Mr. Antunes has competed and medaled in important tournaments including the Pan Ams, World Masters, World No Gi, Brazilian Nationals, American Nationals and Rio State Championships. In 2018 he received the coveted “Honor Award” from the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame.



2019 Inductees

Gokor Chivichyan

MMA Ambassador

Gokor began training in Sambo and in 1971 won his first tournament, the Armenian Junior National Sambo Championship. At the age of 9 he won his second Championship in the 10-12 age division and qualified to go to Tussis to fight in the 1972 Soviet Junior National Sambo Championships. From 1974 to 1979, Gokor continued to compete and win championships in Judo and Sambo not only in the Soviet Union, but in Europe and at the World Games. In 1981, Gokor moved to Los Angeles and began training with the legendary “Judo” Gene LaBell.

After competing in numerous “no holds barred” competitions in France, Japan, Thailand, Mexico, Canada, Germany, England and several other countries, the United States Judo Federation helped Gokor acquire his U.S. citizenship in 1987 allowing him to qualify for the U.S. Olympic Team in 1988.

In 1991, Gokor opened Haystan MMA Academy in Hollywood CA and has drawn students from around the world. Haystan quickly established itself as THE place to train for mixed martial arts fighting. Producing champions in the ring, and in life, Haystan MMA continues to set the bar for MMA training and its stable has included several prominent world class fighters. He has been featured as an actor and stunt man in feature films, American sports, television and news programs. He has also been privileged to teach some of the elite law enforcement organizations globally, including the LAPD, FBI, numerous SWAT teams and Interpol in Europe.



2019 Inductees

Victor Dmitriev

International Combat Arts Excellence

As president of the International Federation Combat Sambo Spetznas AS and an honorary president of the Moscow Region of Hand-To-Hand Combat Federation, Grandmaster Dmitriev holds a Master of Sports in Boxing, Hand-to-Hand Combat and Sambo. He has earned the highest category of “Coach” from the Russian Higher Education RGUFK. GM Dmitriev holds a 10th Dan in Combat Sambo Spetznas, a 9th Dan in Shi-Gai-Sen Karate, a 5th Dan in Hapkido and is a 2-Time Silver Medalist of the World Sambo Championships and a 2-Time Ukraine Boxing Champion. He has served as a former officer of the GRU Special Forces and a former police officer with the Volosovsky Police Department of the Leningrad region. GM Dmitriev has worked in Mexico the past 3 years training police officers, prison guards, the Federal Police of Mexico and other government agencies.



2019 Inductees

Andrew Kimura

Distinguished Master Instructor

Sifu Andy Kimura has studied and taught Jun Fan Gung Fu / Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do for over 30 years. His father, Sigung Taky Kimura is one of only three people personally certified as an instructor by Sijo Bruce Lee. Andy Kimura is the only student whom Taky Kimura deemed worthy of a full instructorship and a Rank 6 in Jun Fan Gung Fu. Sifu Kimura has shown an impressive mastery of Jun Fan Gung Fu / Jeet Kune Do and has been put through the rigorous training required to obtain this unique distinction.

He was a board member of the Bruce Lee Foundation, a non-profit organization formed for the sole purpose of preserving and perpetuating Bruce Lee's art and philosophy. Currently, he is an advisor for the Bruce Lee Foundation.

Sifu Kimura has learned to appreciate the deeper, philosophical applications of the art that was entrusted to his father. Having lectured and taught thousands all over the United States, Europe, and Asia, Sifu Kimura is an accomplished educator in the areas of health, self-defense, philosophy and human development. He is currently developing a line of educational products that will assist him in spreading the teachings, that his family has kept privately over the decades, to sincere and interested individuals around the world.

In 2019, Sifu Kimura (in partnership with Sifu Matt Emery) presented the first ever, Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute of Seattle Instructors Conference in honor of Sigung Taky Kimura's 95th Birthday.



2019 Inductees

Taky Kimura

Martial Arts Legend

Sigung Taky Kimura is a Japanese American martial artist who is best known as being one of Sijo Bruce Lee's top students and closest friends. He is a certified instructor in Jun Fan Gung Fu, personally certified by Bruce Lee himself. Taky Kimura was also the best man at Bruce Lee's wedding, and was one of eight pallbearers during Bruce Lee's funeral. Sigung Taky has dedicated his life to promoting and perpetuating the art of Jun Fan Gung Fu / Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do. For over half a century Sigung Taky has quietly passed on the art entrusted to him by his best friend and teacher, Bruce Lee.

Growing up, Taky Kimura and his family were interned in a War Relocation Center (Internment Camp) during World War II, first at Tule Lake and later at Minidoka, due to their Japanese American heritage. Taky Kimura was actually taken to the camp one day before his high school graduation.

Sigung Taky currently holds a 7th level rank bestowed posthumously by Bruce Lee's widow, Linda Lee, by direction of her late husband, Bruce Lee. Sigung Taky was originally the only student under Bruce Lee to be given a 5th level ranking. When Lee closed his schools, Sigung Taky was allowed to continue to teach small classes under the mantra of "keep the numbers low, but the quality high."

To this day, the only person that Sigung Taky has certified as an instructor in Jun Fan Gung Fu is his son, Andy Kimura. Sigung Taky has appeared in many documentaries and films about Bruce Lee in order to help perpetuate his best friend's art and philosophy.

Sigung Taky is still teaching at 95 years old with his son, Andy. They continue to keep the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute of Seattle alive and well, teaching a new generation of interested and dedicated students. In 2019, Sigung Taky celebrated his 95th Birthday, during the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute of Seattle Instructors Conference.



2019 Inductees

SPECIAL COMMENDATION

Jim Dohan

Indomitable Spirit

Grandmaster Jim Dohan is one of the few martial artists to earn a coveted black belt directly from SGM Edmund Parker, Sr. and Professor Wally Jay. GM Dohan has been adding value to martial arts students and instructors for over 57 years, teaching the arts of IKKA Kenpo and Small Circle Ju-Jitsu. In 2010, he received the title of Shihan Kaiden. GM Dohan is also the Founder of Hawaiian Kenshou Bojitsu. He has received numerous awards and recognition for his years of service to the marital arts community.