



ATF Martial Arts was founded in 1980, as Allied Tang Soo Do Federation, but actually began eleven years earlier in 1969, when Co Founder, Fred Weeks first became interested in Martial Arts. At that time, Weeks had been Fencing for several years and he found that there were many interesting similarities between Karate and Fencing. That interest led to the Rapid City, SD YMCA and his first Martial Arts class under the instruction of Mr Joe Tabor who taught Goju Ryu Karate. He was hooked and in the following two years he studied Tae Kwon Do under Mr Phil Meeks, Jukite JuJitsu under Mr Claude Woodson and Tang Soo Do, instructed by Mr Mike Murphy.



Front:L-R Phil Meeks, Joe Tabor, Claude Woodson

Fred Weeks: Third from the right

In 1972 Mr Weeks returned to his home state of Arkansas, and there he met Mr Tip Potter who was an Instructor for the Chuck Norris System. Potter was a personal friend of Norris and operated a school in Doniphan, MO. At that time Weeks was a member of ATA (American Tae Kwon Do Association) with a rank of 2nd Degree Red Belt. Mr Weeks resigned from ATA and joined the Norris System and after testing for 1st Red Belt in The Norris System, in 1978 he was promoted to the rank of 1st Dan and the following year Mrs Weeks received her 1st Dan Rank. (Yes ...you read that correctly.....Fred Weeks was a Red Belt for 7 years!)

Weeks remained a member of UFAF (United Fighting Arts Federation) until 1980 when, because of irreconcilable differences with his instructor Tip Potter, he resigned from the Chuck Norris System. During the next two years he then joined the USA Tang Soo Do Assn and the Korean Karate Assn, gaining rank in both organizations. While a member of the USA Tang Soo Do Association under Master Raymond Walters, Weeks was the Recruiting Director for that organization, covering the state of Arkansas.



1978 Chuck Norris, Fred Weeks, Bill Wallace



1979 Randy Johnson, Dr. Tom Carter, Chuck Norris, Susan Weeks, Tip Potter



ONE OF 13—Susan Weeks of Walnut Ridge is shown with film star and Karate expert Chuck Norris, after she tested and was awarded the rank of 1st Degree Black Belt. Norris was three-time winner of the "Black Belt Hall Of Fame Award" and for four years held the title of World Middle-weight Karate Champion. He also is the president of the National Tang Soo Do Congress, of which Mrs. Weeks has been a member for four years. Preliminary testing for her rank began three weeks ago. The actual testing took place in Memphis on August 12. She now has the distinction of being one of only 13 female Black Belts certified in the Norris Organization. She and her husband operate the "Chuck Norris Tang Soo Do Karate Studio" in Walnut Ridge.

In 1980 the Allied Tang Soo Do Federation was formed by Mr & Mrs Weeks, Cert #1 & #2, and in July 1981 held the first ATF Black Belt Testing. ATF's next two Black Belts were awarded to Dennis Reed, Cert #3 and Gary Ring, Cert #4. In 1984 two young ladies joined the elite ranks of "ATF's First Few"..... Janet Harp Atkinson, Cert #5 and Sandy Blazer, Cert #6. Both Gary Ring and Janet Atkinson, at this date 2016, are still active and instructing the Martial Arts.



Far Left:
Gary ring & Dennis Reed



Left:
Janet Harp Atkinson
& Sandy Blazer

Before forming ATF, Martial Arts Instruction was given at several locations in the immediate area. To my knowledge the very first Martial Arts classes ever given in this area were held in the Southern Baptist College gymnasium in 1971. We were there for about a year.....and in chronological order in the following locations.

2. A small building on W. Main Street next door to what was the old WR Bowling Alley where subsequently, Moore's Feeds, Betty's Restaurant was and the Wonderful Chinese Food Buffett is now located.....for about 2 years
3. The Visitor's lobby of the Hoxie Jail.....for just a few months

4. Building on Main Street Black Rock.....for 3 years
5. The Alley Entrance behind 119 Main Street Students referred to it as “The Dungeon”
.....for 3 years
6. Building now torn down 1 block behind Times Dispatch next door to the Cleaners (In
this location on Elm Street..... for 20 years)
7. 123 Main Street (Old Wilcoxson’s Dept Store.... now “The Studio”).....for 10 years
8. 119 Main Street Present location.....for 7 years (2016)

In MOST of these locations, a student had to **really** WANT to be there and be dedicated to coming to class, for the conditions were less than desirable with no air conditioning in the summer and little heat in the winter. Lots of bugs in the summer because of the open doors for ventilation and concrete floors with little padding for a sparring ring. At first, in 1972, lessons were given free of charge and later on a small monthly fee was charged to cover the rent and utilities, but never enough to buy training equipment. Consequently we improvised on almost everything.

Money was never a motivating factor.

Somehow, in spite of the primitive environment and harsh training conditions, ATF was catching on. This was when we were the “only game in town” and if there was something to do two nights a week, as a family unit in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas....folks did it.

Many families signed up for instruction for that reason, but also at that time (1973) the word “Karate” still held a mysterious and unknown value and people were intrigued by the name and interested in learning about this little known art. At this time, I need to mention, there were no Martial Arts Schools anywhere in the area and only one in Jonesboro so we were somewhat of a novelty.

Eventually in the mid-70's another school was opened in Walnut Ridge. This was while we were located on West Main next to the Bowling Alley. The Instructor was a young man named George Helm and he taught a style called Shotonawan which no one had ever heard of. It was a hybrid system based on Japanese Shotokan with Okinawan influences. George’s Mother financed his school and money did not seem to be a problem. Everything was Fresh and new...the walls were light pink with sparkley glitter and the floor covering was pink shag carpet. Need I say more??? We laughingly called it the “Pink Pussycat Karate Studio”. As I recall....the studio closed in about a year.

In the 1980's our class sizes would vary between 30 -100 students and on most nights would be approximately 50 students. It was during this time that the public schools began to organize off-season sports programs, (Soccer, LL Baseball, Softball, PeeWee Football etc) and this began to not only take away the young students but also their parents who were students who left, following their children to the playing field. Also during this period of time several Dance Studios opened their doors and further decimated our numbers by taking away the remaining young girls who did not play softball & soccer. Add to that formula..... in recent years, the opening of two more Martial Arts Schools in this small community and you have where we are today.....fewer than 20 students on a regular basis.

In 2009 the school name, Allied Tang Soo Do Federation, was officially shortened to ATF Martial Arts.



It is important to note at this time:The original concept of Allied Tang Soo Do Federation was to bring together independently owned Martial Arts schools of all different styles with the common bond of sharing knowledge and help to all member schools. Each style would maintain their own individual ranking system and traditions. The concept was workable but time constraints because of work schedule and too little time to devote to development prevented the success of this idea. Although it was not really a Federation.....the name stayed and remained so for 29 years.

The new name, ATF Martial Arts, better identified what art/arts the school taught. When originally conceived in 1980, Tang Soo Do was the predominate style base art as was taught in the Chuck Norris System. Added to the Norris style of Tang Soo Do, were techniques and concepts from Tae Kwon Do, Goju Ryu and Jukite Jujitsu based on previous training I had received in these arts. As the years passed and more and different arts were introduced into the system it became more eclectic and although the Base Art was still TSD there were many influences from other systems. These changes were due, in part, to the return of Dr. Keith Waggoner, an ATF Black Belt who had moved away for several years and returned to live in Arkansas. During his time away, Dr. Waggoner trained with many groups and in many styles, one of those being Syoc Kali, under Sifu Harley Elmore. The Syoc group was very active in training our Military Special Forces Groups and Dr. Waggoner became an instructor for this group that also practiced Jeet Kune Do, Krav Maga, Silat, BJJ and Muay Thai. Moving back home to Arkansas he brought this knowledge and expertise back to ATF. These concepts and techniques from other styles were a good mesh for the base art of Tang Soo Do that had been taught for over 35 years. Dr. Waggoner's influence is now easily visible and recognizable in our current training concepts and applications. Welcome to the new era of diversified training.

In 1971, when I moved home to Arkansas I had been training for a little over two years and was a 2nd Degree Red Belt in Tang Soo Do. I wanted to continue my training but there were no schools in the area and no one to train with.....So....I began giving instruction for free, just to have someone to train with. My first group of students were all young men in their twenties and most of them were "redneck hardcore". They had to be shown that what I was offering them was better than what they then considered to be street fighting. Those were hard-knocks times. After a few demonstrations and these guys picking themselves up off the hard floor, wondering what happened, we had a class

of about twenty who just wanted to learn *how to fight*. They knew how to get into a fight and needed to know how to get out of one. This was during the bare knuckle days of Karate training and the only protective gear was a mouthpiece.no hands or foot pads and no headgear. Sparring was the main activity during each and every class but I gradually worked in the forms and soon their wild unfettered movements began to be more disciplined and focused. The bumps and bruises became less severe as they learned the concept of control! They even began to like Forms!

There are several stories that come to mind from that era.....

Kenny Davis, Larry Couch, Jim Siler, Bill Woodson, Doyle Kinder, Earl Nicholas & Stan Wilhite.....

all contributed to my memory bank.....

In 1973 ***Kenny Davis*** "Hair" was a wild eyed, twenty year-old with crazy athletic skills and shoulder length hair that always looked like it had never seen a comb. Kenny was one of my very first students....the Wild Group.....and took to training like a duck to water. Physically he was not an intimidating person, about 5' 11" and weighed about 180lbs.....All Heart and Muscle....but he could burn a hole through you with his eyes! I will never forget the first tournament we went to in St Louis....Kenny was a Green Belt....a very good Green Belt and in his first match he was paired against a Green Belt of another style who probably outweighed Kenny by 30 lbs. The referee called them to the center of the ring, ready position staredown.....Just before the ref called them to a fighting stance the other fellow put up his hands and slowly backed out of the ring saying "That's OK man....I forfeit "

I never saw it before and I have never seen it since.....a classic case of non-verbal intimidation.

Larry Couch was a muscled-up lightweight who put heart and soul into every workout. To say he perspired would be a huge understatement.....he SWEATED....and did it on a large scale basis. After a hard sparring session he would be dripping wet from head to toe. One such night , immediately after class had ended, we were sitting around my desk talking and Larry, getting comfortable, reached into his pants and pulled out his CUP and placed it on the desk.

At that time the school was located next to the Bowling Alley (yes...Walnut Ridge once had a bowling alley) This was a favorite hangout for the younger crowd who after bowling would sit on their car hoods in front of the school and watch class in progress through the glass front of our building.....then come in and visit after class.

On this particular night, several of the kids had drifted in and were asking about lessons and one little blond girl saw Larry's cup on the desk in a puddle of sweat, picked it up and stuck her face in it ...saying..."what is this...one of your face guards or what"? Nuff said.

Jim Siler was a project. In Webster's Dictionary, alongside of the word " REDNECK" is a mugshot of Jim Siler. He was about 5'6" and weighed about 200 lbs....built like a fireplug and thought he was the next Bruce Lee.

Jim came to class one night saying..."I don't think I can train tonight...my legs are really hurting." Thinking he was just sore...I said "sure you can...just work it out"....to which he

replied..."I'll try but they might start bleeding again"! OK.....Not just sore...
...so I say.....let me see.....and he did! His legs looked like someone had taken a dull chainsaw to both legs, knees down. "What happened here" I asked. His reply...."Well....I was practicing Flying Side Kicks off the top of my car.....and you know how..... in the movies when they do that, they just kinda FLOAT DOWN.....in slow motion"! Nuff said

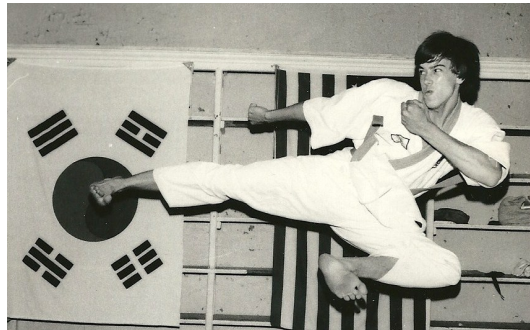
Bill Woodson was a Hulk of a man but he was only about 5'6" tall and built like a brick wall. He was a member of the "Redneck Hardcores" of my first class that I mentioned earlier. He was one of those guys who never shuts up and always has a comment about everything. The very first class he attended he wanted to break a board and I told him ,"Not without training....wait till you understand and know what you are doing". He was persistent and every class he would ask..."can I break a board now....HUH? Next week the same thing....Can I break a board tonight? Finally after a couple of weeks of this...I said to myself..."Why not let him learn the hard way"so I got two 12" boards (which a man of his strength should have broken easily) and held them for him. He squared up in a horse stance and prepared to deliver the mighty blow.....he threw the punch and the fist was about halfway to the boards....and suddenly.....HE CHANGED HIS MIND! It's as if he realized what he was doing and asked himself "WHY Am I Doing This".....but it was too late!!!!!! His hand hit those boards with a loose fist and a limp elbow.....and his knuckles left four bloody prints on the board....like four squashed skeeters!!! He didn't ask me about breaking again, until about a month later he broke his first board.

These memories, tho over 40 years old, are as vivid as if they were yesterday...while others have faded into obscurity....proving the value of having laughter in your life.

Doyle Kinder now comes to mind. Doyle was a very serious and athletic student from the 1970's era when we had the school in Black Rock. He absolutely loved the Martial Arts and definitely had skills. He was with me for about eighteen months and had reached the trunk of 7th Blue Belt when his father took a job in Phoenix, Arizona. Doyle was heartbroken and didn't want to move but of course he was only fifteen years old so he had no choice in the matter. One evening, about six months after he had moved and shortly before Christmas.....Susie and I were watching TV when there was a knock at the door. I flipped on the light and when I opened the door, there stood Doyle, shivering in the freezing cold, wearing a T-shirt and shorts. He had run away from home in Phoenix, and was going to ride his bicycle to Arkansas. Somewhere along the way he sold his bike for food money and hitched his way to Walnut Ridge. Of course, when he left Phoenix it was sunny and 90 degrees so he was ready to come inside when he got here. When he stopped shivering he told me that he had run away and wanted to live in the school and clean it for Karate lessons. (He had been watching too many kung fu movies of that era). I immediately had him call his Dad, who I was sure was worried sick about Doyle's whereabouts. Soooo after a long conversation with his father it was decided that Doyle would stay with us a week and his father would come to Arkansas and pick him up and return to Arizona. So Doyle had a week long vacation with us, attended a couple of classes and then returned to Arizona.

Less than two weeks later, while watching TV one evening, a knock at the door and there was Doyle Kinder.....again.....but this time he is determined to stay here. Same routine....called his Dad...

And after several conversations with the Father during the following day, at the Father's suggestion, Susie and I agreed to let Doyle live with us and attend Walnut Ridge High School. We went through the process of getting his school records transferred and enrolled in classes but the Father had second thoughts about the situation and after a couple of weeks he came to pick up his son. Doyle didn't run away again but a couple of years later he did return as a 2nd Degree Red Belt in Tae Kwon Do and spent a week with us again attending class. We kept in touch for a couple of years after that but lost contact over the years. That is the story of Doyle Kinder...who ran away from home....TWICE...so he could be a Martial Artist.



Doyle Kinder

One of my favorite memories is that of **Earl Nicholas**...who was, at the time in his late 20's.. had been with us for a couple of years and I think he had achieved the rank of Blue Belt before he dropped out...(never knew why). After being gone for years.... He would suddenly show up on class night, not to resume training, but to tell me"I'll be back in class next Tuesday".....I would see him from time to time over the years outside of class and he always told me..."I'll be back in class next Tuesday"....but he never was.....except to tell me..."I'll be back in class next Tuesday". After years of this routine it became a standard joke....someone in class would say.... "I saw Earl yesterday and he said he would be back in class next Tuesday"! It always got a laugh from those who knew. Occasionally, when taking attendance, I will call out Earl's name.....just to see if he might have showed up for class. Those who knew, would always respond..."I saw Earl yesterday and he said he will be here Tuesday".....(There is a mention of Earl in another of my writings..."Early Class")

There are many memories of miles traveled going to tournaments and training sessions in Doniphan, Mo. One of my very first tournaments we attended as a school was in Paragould in the late 70's when we were located in Black Rock. I took two young students, **Terry Verkler and Richard Eagan**, both 11 year old Purple Belts and from Black Rock. I had taught them Bassai to compete in the Forms Division which they both performed in the Child's Beginner Class. (At that time ATF did not have a three-level Yellow belt for beginners....students went from White directly to Purple, so they were considered beginners for tournament competition.) They both turned in excellent performances and won First and Second Place with less than One Point difference in their scores! Made me very proud of those two young men and all the judges were amazed that they not only knew a Black Belt Form but the fact that they did it so well. I was very proud for them....and for Me!

On another occasion we attended a tournament in Fayetteville (before the building of the bridge at Lake Norfolk) and took the Ferry crossing Norfolk going and coming. Leaning over the rail I dropped my sunglasses into the lake. Don't know why that is important except they were my favorite pair and remembering we had to save our pennies for gas money to drive to Fayetteville....plus I had gotten two broken ribs the Thursday night before leaving and hurt driving all the way across the state and back. We won several trophies and **Marilyn Reed**, Dennis's wife....won 1st Place Sparring, 1st Place Forms and Grand Champion of her division. Denny won 2nd in Sparring so he heard about that for a while!

Then there was the tournament in St Louis, Mo. Where I met Fred Wren, who was big on the Tournament Circuit in that era. A nice man with a powerful Side Kick.....broke five unspaced boards with one skip and a kick!

Bill Woodson, who I talked about earlier in the board-breaking story was competing in the Blue Belt Division....and the referee for his match was a small savage-looking Tae Kwon Do Black Belt who was all business. Every time the match was stopped and a point awarded, Woodson would either loudly agree or disagree with the call....."That's right Ref...You tell em"....or "Awwwww C'mon Ref"! This went on throughout the match and each time the Ref would patiently wave his finger and whisper to Woodson to be quiet! Finally he had enough and disqualified Woodson for "Disrespecting The Martial Spirit"! Had he kept his mouth shut he would have won the match for he was ahead on points with only seconds left on the clock. He lost his Qualifying Match so he was out for the entire tournament. An expensive lesson learned for we were there for two days. The qualifiers and preliminary matches were held on Saturday and the Finals on Sunday. Kenny Davis "Hair" was in the finals and won his division.

While a member of the Norris System, we were required to travel to Doniphan, Mo on a regular basis. Lots of miles and memories on that hilly, twisty, narrow road. We were scheduled to have two classes per month in Doniphan and all testings were held there. This event was after a Saturday testing which had lasted well into the night and we were headed home, about 11:00pm....there were several carloads of us on our way back and it was a very dark night. Dennis Reed was driving about 10 minutes ahead of us and this memory is vivid! As I topped a hill and the headlights swung down into the valley below I see all these white ghostly figures darting around further down the road.....(White GIs) It was Dennis and several others running, playing TAG..... in a cow pasture waiting on us to come along. He had a flat tire and no spare.....And I will mention that they had stopped at a beverage store along the way and alcohol was involved.

Sometime during this era, I met an Instructor, **Stan Wilhite**, who said he was Tang Soo Do. He had a school in Paragould and invited me to his school to work out. He seemed a little odd to me and said some things that I really didn't agree with, but I did accept his invitation and visited his school. Upon entering his Dojang....To say I was aghast would be a huge understatement.....At the front of his class was a table with an ash tray, a pack of cigarettes and a lighter..... But.....class started and about halfway through the warmup exercises, which one of his students was leading, he lights up and walks around the room smoking and blowing smoke. Could not believe it. Later in the year Mr Norris was planning a visit and the three local Norris Schools were meeting in

Doniphan at the High School Gymnasium for a seminar and workout. Those three schools were this school in Walnut Ridge, Mr Tom Carter's school in Popular Bluff and Mr Tip Potter's School in Doniphan. Since Wilhite's style was Tang Soo Do, I extended an invitation to him and his students to attend....thinking.."Who passes up an opportunity to work out with Chuck Norris"! He accepted and said he would be there.....but when the day/ time arrived to begin he was a no-show so Mr Norris began his seminar. Later, Wilhite and his crew shows up....over an hour late. Mr Norris told me to greet him and invite him to join us on the floor as he continued with the training. I did so to which Wilhite replied...."I think we will just watch" and led his people into the bleachers where they watched for about 30 minutes and then left without saying a word.

WOW!! What an act of blatant disrespect!!! The best Tang Soo Do Instructor on the planet invites you to come train with him and to teach you.....and you sit and watch.....then leave without even meeting the man!!!

Well...My first impression was right on!! He was VERY ODD! I never saw him again, but never wanted to!!!! I think about him blowing smoke on his students as they were exercising and I kinda think he was blowing smoke about being Tang Soo Do!

Much of what is now the A.T.F. System comes from the Norris System but it has become a more eclectic style with the addition of techniques from Goju and Shorin Ryu, Tae Kwon Do, American Kick-boxing, Jeet Kune Do Kali, Silat, Muai Thai, Chinese Grappling and weapons training. Although the A.T.F. Tang Soo Do system has been "Americanized" somewhat, the training and Dojang etiquette are very traditional, with respect and a proper attitude expected from every student.

Mr Weeks is a Fourth Generation Black Belt in the Norris System and his lineage may be traced as follows;

2nd Generation.....David Douglas, Certificate #019

3rd Generation.....D.T. Tip Potter, Certificate #098

4th Generation.....Fred Weeks, Certificate #228 dated 9-17-78

4th Generation.....Susan Weeks Certificate #267 dated 8-12-79

NOTE: Grandmaster Jae Chul Shin Dan#698 Korea/USA, trained directly under both Grandmaster Hwang Kee and Kim Yong Duk. He was promoted by Grandmaster Kee. Mr Chuck Norris was a student of, and was promoted by GM Shin . Chuck Norris Dan#2819

As previously mentioned, one of my first Instructors was a gentleman named ***Claude Woodson*** who was in the Air Force, Stationed at Ellsworth AFB and was a part-time instructor at the YMCA. He practiced Jukite JuJitsu and had classes at the Rapid City YMCA during the time I was taking Goju Ryu classes. (Nothing quite like Martial Arts Classes on a hardwood floor). Oftentimes it was a mixed class of JJ and GR and we cross trained on a regular basis.

This was in 1969.....

.....now fast forward to 2009 and my grand daughter Grace, who lives in Rapid City began taking Ju Jitsu classes at the YMCA under an instructor named Doug Langford, who was a student of.....yes....Claude Woodson. What a wonderful surprise to learn that Master Woodson was alive and well, living in St Louis, Mo. He traveled to Rapid City on occasion to award promotions and met Grace on several of these testings. We had several phone conversations and

made plans to visit, but life got in the way and it never came to pass. Grace achieved the rank of Brown Belt before graduating from High School and moving away to college.

NOTE: Master Woodson's #1 student during my time with him was a Green Belt and my personal friend named Al Salazar. Al earned his Black Belt with Master Woodson and became the Head Instructor in Rapid City when Master Woodson was transferred by the Air Force. Salazar continued his training/teaching Jukite Ju Jitsu when he moved to Texas several years later. He instructed in the Houston area until he succumbed to Cancer in 2010.



Left: Grandmaster Jukite JuiJitsu Claude Woodson
& Grandmaster Al Salazar

Throughout all these many years there has been one driving force in my life that I credit with keeping ATF Martial Arts doors open and the training available to all the thousands of students who have entered the door and began their journey in the Martial Arts. Some of those journeys were short lived while others lasted many years and still others decades. There were many high points and many disappointments, many victories and many times when I was ready to throw in the towel. To say the school made money would be stretching the truth and during those times of No Cash Flow, it would have been easy to quit and find another way to spend our time and money. Even my great love of what I was doing was not enough on several occasions and the only thing that prevented me from closing the doors was the love of my wife **Susan** and her words, ***"We can do this."*** She has been the silent force that has kept ATF Martial Arts in Northeast Arkansas for so many years when so many other schools have come and gone. She was one of the best instructors ever to wear a Black Belt and through all the many years, even after she was no longer able to instruct, she has helped support me and the school in any and every way possible. She viewed this as a mission or ministry to young people and eventually I adopted that mindset. She would say...***"If you quit....where are they going to go? They look up to youand you can't quit on those kids"*** What can you say to that?

I have had so very many memorable moments over the years and so many students who made me proud and left a lasting impression in my bank of memories.

One such instance I remember very well, which I spoke about earlier: the two young lads; Richard Eagan and Terry Verkler....both were about ten years old at the time....they were Purple Belts and were entering a tournament in Paragould. They competed in both Forms and Sparring Competition and for their competition form I had

taught them Bassai. Both worked very hard in preparation for the tournament and the hard work paid off in dividends for they won First AND Second Place in their division. I don't remember who won which place but I do remember how proud they were and how proud I was that my two eleven year old Purple Belts performed BASSAI, represented their school and their instructor, and won the top two places with their performance.

I can remember leaving the Black Rock School.....after a couple of years there. I had rented the building from Elbert Callahan....a man who I had previous business dealings with while at Weeks Industries (Our family business which closed down in 1987). It was a run-down old building on Main Street Black Rock...that required a month cleaning out before I could move in. Concrete floors and the only heat we had in the building was a small propane two-burner heater at the front of the building. In the Winter....Our feet would get so numb from the cold, we had to take a break every 30 minutes to come to the front and thaw them out. I am surprised we had any students at all, but this was in the 70's and KARATE was a magic word to some.....so those who really wanted to learn would show up and we would all get cold feet together. Commitment was obvious, for you really had to WANT to be there to come to class in the Winter.....And in the Summer when the bugs came in.

Rent on the building was only \$50 a month and I was charging \$15 a month dues.....which some were having trouble paying.



When I moved out of that building and came back to Walnut Ridge and opened the Dungeon School I owed Elbert \$350.00 in back rent for the old building in Black Rock.....which I paid him over a period of months after I moved.

Black Rock Class

L-R Seated....Lester Smith, Susan Weeks, Jim Siler, Terry Verkler
Back.....Fred Weeks, Lavon Smith, Gregg Penn, Gary Flippo, Eddie Davis

When we returned to WR we were in the alley entrance building behind where ATF is presently

located....and the rent was \$150.00 a month...but student enrollment increased and I was able to catch up on the back rent. We were STILL very primitive in terms of facilities and equipment and we still had a bare concrete floor....and NO WINDOWS/ nor Air Conditioning in the building. Some of my most Hard-Core Students a part of this era in the history of ATF. **Janet Harp Atkinson, Gary Ring, Dennis & Marilyn Reed, Howard Briggs, Charles Miller, Pam Staten, Jim Jamison, Kenny Davis**.....just to name a few....All were adult students with the exception of Janet Harp.....who was twelve years old when she began training. She grew up training with adults, and as you might expect, her mindset was that of an adult and as a result her performance was also. She and Gary Ring are still active in Martial Arts and Janet is now the Highest Rank in the Home School....second only to ATF President, **Dr Keith Waggoner**.

In 1982 ATF Martial Arts was an accredited college PE course.....offered at, what was then Southern Baptist College, now Williams Baptist College.



Southern Baptist College PE Class



"Early Class"

A revision, by Fred Weeks
of a n original story
written by Fred Weeks

An unusual noise awoke Derf Skeew from a sound sleep, and he was annoyed at being woke up. His family was out of town visiting relatives and he had just completed a very long and hectic day at work...he was tired and had planned to take a quick nap before his scheduled Karate Class. He may even skip class tonight...."if he doesn't wake up", he reasoned, and sleep straight through until morning. After all it would be a perfect night to skip, for it was

only a few days until Christmas,... testing was over and usually attendance was down , this close to the holidays. The weather forecast had been for more snow, and a storm front was moving in which would make driving hazardous. Derf just didn't feel like going to class tonight and he was trying to rationalize his way out of going. But I do need the practice, he countered. Being a new Green Belt, he wanted to set the good example his instructor expected from him. After all, he must live up to his newly acquired fighting name....There had been many long discussions about how your fighting name should reflect your own personality.....the importance of dedication and how the proper attitude about training can affect the younger students. The noise that had awoke Derf was that of birds chirping.....**BIRDS CHIRPING...** that did not make sense for it should be evening and dark outside! He opened my eyes and saw that the room was flooded with bright sunlight.."how unusual" he thought as he crossed the floor to open the blinds. It was a Glorious Day! Unusually warm....for this time of the year...blue sky without a hint of a cloud....a perfect Spring Day! What a surprise....What a great day for a walk... he thought, I'm awake...maybe I'll just walk to class tonight! He always felt better after attending class and working hard....his instructor, **Sah Bom**, had told him this on his first night"no matter how bad you feel...you'll always feel better after a good work out...and if you really want to learn...then practice alone....you have the tools and you will find all the help you will need!"

I have a key to the Dojang, Derf thought, with resolve,.....if no one shows... I'll just let myself in and get a good workout alone. As he put on his Gi, he thought of how his life had been influenced and changed during the past few years, by the practice of Martial Arts . His instructor **Sah Bom** had been the person responsible for those changes.. Derf had only been taking instruction for two short years, but what a difference he had noticed in his life. Sah Bom had been that unique combination of teacher, task master, advisor and friend. No one could lead a rougher class, be a better listener, or teach so much in an hour! As he remembered the conversations between the two men he thought of how much he missed that special friendship. He continues to dress and marvels at the warm weather...darkness should arrive soon but no need for a coat tonight....

As he walks, Derf observes that there are surprisingly few cars on the streets and as far as he can tell no one else outside enjoying this beautiful Spring-like day. How Strange! He soon arrives at the Dojang and although there are no cars parked outside, Derf is amazed to find hundreds of people already there!

Class had already started and the roll call had just begun. Derf could not remember ever seeing such a large class...and so much rank...he counted almost twenty Black Belts...twice as many reds ...and more Greens than he had ever seen in one place! He was astonished and confused.....and as roll call began he noticed another very strange thing...These were not the familiar faces of his class...not people he knew... and he recognized none of the names! Momentary panic..."I'm sure I am at the right place...I've been coming here for two years" he says to himself. Deeply puzzled, Derf places himself in line near the end of the second row and awaited the instructor to call his name. He did not recognize the instructor, an oriental man who looked very fit but well past his prime. That in itself, was not unusual...since Sah Bom left there had been a different instructor every other week or so. He did however recognize his surroundings as they came into better focus.....the flags..the

weapons on the wall... the creed and code of conduct...they were all there. As he listened to the names being called , he thought he did recognize one occasionally , but quickly another was called that he didn't .

The instructor droned on...name after name..."Earl Nicholas" he said.....no one answered and then someone said, "Earl called and said that he's on his way". There were muffled snickers and a couple of "Yeah rights" and the list went on. Responding when his name was called he waited until the roll call was over and again he thought he maybe recognized a few names but quickly they were erased from his mind by another one he didn't know. Then it ended and Derf was told, by the elderly instructor, to practice his forms..."forms are the basics of our system" he said! True, they had given him a lot of trouble during the recent testing , and Derf agreed that he really needed work there. As he prepared himself and found a place on the mat he noticed that most of the other students had already begun practice. He watched as they executed techniques flawlessly and completed the most difficult forms with clock-like precision. He had never seen such perfect execution of the techniques that he struggled with at every practice. "Patience", Sah Bom had told him..."have patience and listen to your body...it will tell you when you are making a mistake.....and once you have found it...PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!" As he watched, the other students continued with their forms and basics...and occasionally when one would falter momentarily and make a mistake...a higher ranking student would quickly lend assistance. It was like watching a well-oiled machine with failsafe provisions....each student urging the others on to better performance and eagerly helping each other in any way he could. An amazing thing was happening here because the instructor , who had such an air of authority, was saying nothing! The class was running itself without his intervention. Again Derf marveled at the harmony and tranquility. Then Derf recognized a familiar face among those on the floor practicing...he remembered seeing her picture hanging on the wall of the Dojang. She was one of the early Black Belts who had tested in this system twenty, maybe thirty years ago.

But there was something wrong here...she looked the same as in her picture! This is impossible, reasoned Derf...this lady would be at least sixty years old now! What's happening here???? Suddenly, as if materializing out of nowhere, several other faces became recognized ,and they too were faces Derf remembered pictured on the Black Belt Board just down the hall. All these people seemed to project a tremendously strong presence in the room as each demonstrated a different form or set of techniques.

Then a heavy mist seemed to come from nowhere and envelope the room and out of the mist steps scores of oriental people, men and women, all strikingly dressed, some in colorful ceremonial attire, some in long robes and the traditional gi, and others wearing nothing more than short pants. These people began to perform moves and techniques that Derf had never seen and only imagined existed. What perfection....the focus and Ki that seemed to radiate from their bodies was overwhelming. ...and their faces ...emotionless, yet radiant with confidence. Some of them were very old....too old it seemed, to be moving with such grace and fluidity. Yet there they were, performing as if age had no meaning. Derf was astounded and as he continued to watch these marvelous feats of strength and agility, he thought to himself...." I am really glad that I came tonight

and witnessed these masters of my Art.....what if I had not been awakened ...and slept through this”....What a loss”! But.....What is the occasion.....Why are these people here....

All too soon the class was over and Derf watches, his mind in turmoil and confusion, as one by one these hundreds of people leave the Dojang...each stopping at the doorway to bow and clasp the instructor’s hand. Each person saying something to the instructor and then vanishing out the door. Derf cannot hear what is being said but as the line shortens and he nears the door he sees the people he recognized and attempts to get their attention. They do not see him but he listens as they pass through the doorway..some just giving the instructor their name and others their name and two dates, their birthdate..... and the day they left this earth. Can this be true?

Stunned with realization , Derf now knows what is happening!.. This is a gathering of all former students of this system! Men, women and children who , over the years ,had developed and practiced this style and ,each in their own way, forced it to grow better and stronger....Here they are still returning before every class, to practice the art they love, with people whom they have a bond like no other! “The strength of a system lies within the spirit of those who practice it!” What a realization! The words of **Sah Bom** came rushing back to him “come alone and you will find the help you seek” Am I an observer or a participant he wonders, shaking his head . He closes his eyes tightly to clear his thinking...is this really happening? All is silent.....

.....and he is going to white!

The silence is broken...and he is snapped into reality by the voice of Sah Bom
..”Well Fred , I’m very pleased to see you came early to practice before class this evening!”

Fred looks up and **Sah Bom's** voice is making vapors in the cold air as he brushes snow off his coat.

”Would you turn the thermostat up”.....he says.....
”and help me get the school warmed up before class starts”!

End

The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

Psalms 121

There is a reality which we must maintain contact with, in order to preserve the truth of our belief.
From a sermon by Ruskin Falls, 1999

Review

The lessons to be learned from this story are many. Here are just a few.....in no particular order. See if you can find them. How many others can you find?

1. Instructors should not rule the class with an “Iron Fist”.....All of the time!
2. As a system develops, it acquires the spiritual attributes of it’s leaders!
3. Everything is not always as it seems!
4. No one is ever really alone!
5. The development of a system of Martial Arts cannot be attributed to only one person!
6. Teamwork makes any difficult task easier to accomplish!
7. Without dedication there can be no accomplishments!
8. Can You Name A Few Of Your Own ?



A Brief Look At The Journey From beginning to present day.

The ATF System is not a traditional Tang Soo Do System in birth, growth, or in its present state of development. The origin of the system dates back to 1969 and is deeply rooted in Goju Ryu Karate from that period of Mr Weeks’ training when he was introduced to the Martial Arts, at the local YMCA, by his first instructor, Mr Joe Tabor. During that time he also trained in Japanese JuJitsu, under Master Claude Woodson who was also holding classes at the YMCA. Mr Weeks’ next instructor was Mr Phil Meeks, who was a former instructor for Jhoon Ree’s Tae Kwon Do Institute in Washington DC and after that, was his first introduction to Tang Soo Do. At that time Mr Weeks was ranked a 4th Degree Green Belt in Goju Ryu and went on to attain 2nd Degree Red in Tang Soo Do under Mr Mike Murphy. This was during the years 1969-70-71.

After moving from South Dakota to Arkansas, Mr Weeks met Mr D.T. Tip Potter, who was a close personal friend of Mr Chuck Norris and was an Instructor in The Chuck Norris System UFAF, (United Fighting Arts Federation). Mr Weeks joined UFAF and trained in the Norris System 1972-1980, receiving his 1st Dan from Mr Norris in 1978. Mrs Weeks received her 1st Dan rank the following year. In 1980 Mr Weeks broke from UFAF and with Mrs Weeks, formed the Allied Tang Soo Do Federation.

That same year, Mr Weeks joined the American Moo Duk Kwon Tang Soo Do Association under the direction of Grandmaster Jae Joon Kim. He received his 2nd Dan #A14798 in that organization, on September 11, 1982. Next came membership in the USA Korean Karate Association 1982-89

under Grandmaster Raymond Walters. Here he received promotion to 3rd Dan, received his Instructor Certification and was appointed Recruiting Director for the state of Arkansas.

During this period, Mr Weeks met and established a relationship with Grandmaster Tom Hunnicutt, Shihan, Hanshi, Headmaster, Shorin Ryu White Swan Dojo, Okinawa Matsumura-Seito Karate Do and was awarded “Yondon” 4th Dan in the AOOMKA (All Okinawan Ozark Mountain Karate Association). In 1993 Grandmaster Hunnicutt awarded Mr Weeks Hachidan 8th Dan, and title of “Kyoshi” in the AOOMKA.

In April 2002, Mr Weeks was honored with presentation of Honorary “Quedan” 10th Dan, in recognition of 30 years instruction of the Martial Arts. This honor was awarded by South Region Phoenix Martial Arts, Kijono Judo Academy with approval of Dring’s Living Defense Martial Arts, and Waggoner Martial Arts Academy. These schools are all home-based in Little Rock, AR and were represented in the presentation by Dr Keith Waggoner, a long-time Black Belt member of Allied Tang Soo Do Federation.

In 2007, Brazilian JuJitsu, Muay Thai, Jeet Kune Do, Kali, and weapons training was officially added to the curriculum and in 2009, the name “Allied Tang Soo Do Federation” was changed to “A.T.F. Martial Arts” to better reflect the wide spectrum of arts we now study and practice. Krav Maga was also added to the studies in 2009, and completes the diversity of fighting styles currently being taught at ATF Martial Arts.

December, 2009 brought a second Honorary 10th Dan Award presented by Grand Master Tom Hunnicutt. and Mr Wes Craft of AOOMKA. Mr Weeks was also honored by Dr Keith Waggoner who was the chief organizer of the event, and who presented a plaque and congratulatory letters from many of the nations leading Martial Artists, including Mr Chuck Norris, Mr Bill Wallace and Mr Dan Inosanto, in recognition of forty years involvement in the Martial Arts. A custom graphite Bo Staff bearing the names of all the students and instructors was also presented, as a Christmas present to Mr Weeks.

ATF has been seeing “second generation students” for several years now and to see “same last-name students” twenty years apart, is not uncommon. It has been a journey of enlightenment. I am now 78 years old and in my 47th year of practicing the Martial Arts....And I am STILL PRACTICING



The Mountain

by Fred Weeks

**A short story of my
45+ year journey
in the Martial Arts.**

Once upon a time there was this big mountain just outside the village and for many years...the townspeople would wake up in the morning , look at the mountain and say to themselves..."One day I'm gonna climb that mountain"everyone in the village at one time or another would say to themselves or a friend...."I'm gonna climb that mountain...SOMEDAY"! But they never did....Meanwhile...the mountainwith the effects of the elements...wind...erosion....etc...slowly disappears into the landscape.....

When the mountain first appeared, the people were afraid to go near it, for it was foreboding the clouds hung over it like shrouds of mystery. The clergy spoke about the evils awaiting folks if they ventured too close to the mountain, so they looked at it from afar and wondered about it for many years. Finally a few brave and stout-hearted souls threw caution to the wind and defying tradition began a quest to the top of the mountain. After their success, others....seeing that the mountain could, in fact, be climbed, followed in the footsteps of their predecessors and began their journey. Along the way they experienced difficulty and sometimes ridicule from the townsfolk who didn't understand, but they too triumphed, and upon reaching the first peak, felt a sense of accomplishment never before experienced! Soon, everyone was talking about the mountain and it was seen as not forebodingbut recognized as challenging!

Those who wanted to climb the mountain, but never did....let the moment pass....AND OF Those who did climb the mountainfeeling that the FIRST PEAK was high enough....MOST never tried for the summit. A few who did were ill prepared and fell into the valley below....never to attempt the climb again.

Over the years there has been many climbers...of all ages...The little ones begin their training on very gentle slopes which get progressively steeper as they mature and gain experience, older climbers begin their ascent immediately. As they climb, the young and old alike ...the young as they mature, the old as they age, begin to realize that there is more here than just climbing a mountain. There is camaraderie as they meet other climbers along the way.... and they become family while they lend assistance to each other during difficult periods of the climb. They look for and find, those little

ledges on which to stop and rest..... and gather strength to continue. They become self sufficient as they check, and double check, the necessary knowledge and tools to continue in their quest for the summit.

They discover that in climbing the mountain a person experiences every possible human emotion and learns to cope with the negative ones replacing them with confidence and self-assurance. The positive effect of the struggle for survival on the side of that mountain, sometimes hanging only by a very thin rope, will provide the climber with many smiles and happy memories of success in later years as they reminisce about the “good old days”.

To the many...many...many of you who have climbed on the mountain for these many...many...many years...I will say it has been a pleasure to know you ...

To those of you who got tired and stopped along the way I will say “I wish I could have gotten to know you better.”

To those of you who have made the long climb to the first peak, I have enjoyed your companionship and I would remind you that there is always another challenge awaiting you.

To those few who have matched me step for step up ...always upward.....even though sometimes the crest is sometimes hidden with clouds...we know it is there.....and let us continue together....we never know who will show up at the top!

The mountain is still there..... but undeniably the elements have taken their toll.....It still is on the landscape ...but who knows when one last sandstorm will finally erode all that is left ...and it WILL sink into the horizon.

I really do not immediately foresee the final setting of the sun ...
but who knows.....and when it does happen...someone else will lead the climb.

If you really want to see God laugh, just tell him your plans!

It is my plan to resign my belt on the last day of the December Test Cycle 2015.

At Last.....So Soon

And Now,
it has happened.....

I have stepped aside to make room for more and younger climbers!

The Mountain is still there and I am waiting to see who will be the next climber to reach the summit!

Will that be YOU??



After forty seven years of involvement in the Martial Arts and having Founded Allied Tang Soo Do Federation (ATF Martial Arts) in 1980, I am stepping away from active participation and regular attendance of training classes.

I do so, leaving ATF Martial Arts in the capable hands of my friends and long-time fellow students, Dr. Keith Waggoner and Mrs. Janet Atkinson. They will make any and all training decisions regarding the direction that ATF will follow in the future.

All business transactions will be decided by Mr. Rick Baker, who will take over the day-to-day operations of the physical plant. He will actively seek guidance and direction regarding training from Dr. Waggoner, Mrs Atkinson, Mrs Boggs, Mr Boggs and any ATF Black Belt who is currently active and participation in weekly classes. Serving in an advisory and training capacity will be Mr Gary Ring and Mr Jamie Yowell.

It is NOT my desire to handicap or deter plans for progress into the futureHowever.....
The following are Only SUGGESTIONS, but reflect my feelings on certain specific matters.....

Be it known that it is my desire that ATF Martial Arts remain primarily a stand-up system, based on the Korean Art of Tang Soo Do. Although input from other arts will be taught, the testing curriculum will remain fundamentally unchanged and standards of acceptance for Rank Advancement shall also remain unchanged.

(There are many different ways to be promoted..... and willingness to learn and to help teach are

in some cases as important as technical expertise.)

1. FORMS: should remain the primary and determining grade @ 40% of total test score
2. SPARRING: Three types taught separately
 1. Hands/Feet...no grappling
 2. Grappling Only
 3. Combination Hands-Feet-Grappling
3. The Tradition of Dragonheart be continued
4. The Tradition of "Helping others in need" be continuedwith annual benefit demos.
5. The Tradition of Scholarship Students be continued (within reasonable limits...)
6. That this school always reflect the traditions of training quality Martial Artists for over four decades, and to continue with integrity and community service.

Retirement.....Thoughts

As You can see....I came TOTALLY UNPREPARED.....

Thank you all for being here today.....and

I want to Thank all of you for all of this..... and for the last Four Plus Decades.....It has been an honor and a privilege to have known so many and had so many influences in my life

The last 46 years would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of my loving and never give up wife, **Susan**....who I love dearly
.....and like everything else we have experienced since 1973....we will do this together....Susie.....

I have had many satisfying moments and occasions over the years...

Proud of many thingsthe people.....parents who entrusted us with their children....the charitable projects that we have participated in since 1980....the people we have helped both young and old.....

The most gratifying has been the years I have had my sons in class. Both started at age 5.....and both come up the hard way.....both achieved Jr Black Belt and went on to achieve Senior Rank. There has been nothing that has made me more proud than having both my sons with me from age five until they left home

RETIREMENT????

First of all...that word is misleading....there's no such thing.... as "Retirement".....I "RETIRED" 16 years ago....but.....continued to do what I loved doing.....and.....now.....

The inevitable has happened.....as it Always Does.....

I am NOT quitting.....I have just reached an age where the mind says GO and the body says NO!

To quote Sir Winston Churchill ..."This is Not the end.....It is Not even the Beginning of the End.....It is the End of the Beginning....."

I leave ATF Martial Arts in the hands of my progeny, secure in the knowledge that this proud name will, not only live on in the world of Martial Arts.....but will prosper and grow under new leadership

Dr Waggoner.....ATF Grand Master & Supreme Authority

Mrs Atkinson.....Walnut Ridge Master Instructor & Training Director....
and Local Authority

Present.....

Mrs. Boggs & Mr. Boggs...WR Resident Instructors

Mr Rick Baker.....Business OwnerPartnered with Mr & Mrs Boggs

All other ATF BB's here.....

All Martial Artists who's background who can be traced to ATF

Rick Baker 2nd Degree Red Belt.....

2016.....Reflections on a Year of Change and Transition

One year ago I officially retired from what had been my life for the last 47 years.

It was time. Since 1967 I had been involved in Martial Arts Training and in 1972 I opened my first school. Having a school was commitment. It meant that I had to be there for each and every class, no matter how many students showed up. Sometimes there was as few as one or two....sometimes there was a full house. Working full time at a day job and working the Karate school two/three nights a week was not a problem in my younger days, for the energy level and the enthusiasm was high octane and my health was good with relative few lingering injuries. As the years passed the pure joy of being in class began waning and the physical demands began to take their toll. Even up to the day I retired, my best two hours of any day was the two hour class I instructed twice a week. For those two hours I felt thirty years younger(at least for a short while) and my enthusiasm was strong but not spirited.

Even though I still enjoyed instructing classes, it came to a point where I did not have the energy to do all the necessary and incidental things which kept the school running and eventually over a period of time the things which were not getting done became more and more obvious. It was time.

In 2013/14 I began to recognize that my time of full time involvement in Martial Arts was rapidly approaching the end days. I knew that I did not want to turn the key in the lock for the last time and end ATF Martial Arts with a turn of the wrist. With this overriding motivation pushing me, I began to recognize and promote individuals within the System who had indicated that they would not let ATF die away as so many schools do after a run of a few good years.

As the Grand Master and head of the ATF System would be Dr Keith Waggoner who began training at ATF when just a young boy. He achieved his First Dan before moving away and subsequently began training in some of the most prestigious systems and under world renowned Instructors. Fortunately for ATF, good timing brought him back to Arkansas where he resumed his training and began teaching some of the styles he gained knowledge in while away.

As Second in Command Grand Master Janet Atkinson would be the Resident Authority and Training Director for the Walnut Ridge location. Janet began her training in ATF Martial Arts when she was only twelve years old and when she joined she was the only NON Adult student on the roster. She grew up in ATF sparring against people twice/thrice her size and attained her First Dan at age sixteen, before graduating from High School.

Operations Manager and School Owner is Rick Baker who came to us with prior training with Grand Master Kang Ree of Memphis, TN. Rick took the school as a Second Degree Red Belt and will be testing for his First Dan in January 2017. An interesting note: I opened my first school as a Second Degree Red Belt in 1973.

The ATF Instructor Core is a group of talented people and devoted Black Belts in the ATF System

who did not want their school to die . They answered the call to arms, stepped up and committed their time and energy to keeping the doors open and passing their knowledge on to students and future Black Belts:

Mr Jim Kapales, Mr Jason & Mrs Emily Boggs, and Reverend Gene Cullum is serving as ATF Chaplain and providing our spiritual guidance. Also assisting with instruction are Black Belts Mike Montgomery and Tom Johnson of Jonesboro and Junior Black Belt Riley Hubbard.

My sincere thanks and appreciation to you all.....for recognizing the value in what ATF represents, to not only the students you will instruct but also to our community and surrounding area.

Stepping away was far more difficult than I had imagined it would be. What had been mine for half a lifetime was no longer mine. A stark realization was seeing all the history disappear from the walls to be replaced with current certificates of Rank and Appointment. The process of seeing things change; signs that I had painted no longer being used, pictures on the walls taken down, things taken out and thrown away,all this left me with a feeling that the last 40+ years were in a sense, wasted.....and there was no room for Old School days of yore. What had been a living museum and tribute to all the students of the past did not matter anymore. Over the years I have had students return to training after a long absence of years and their first observation is....”WOW...Mr Weeks....this is like a time capsule and a trip back to the old times....its like I never left”. The pictures of students who trained there over the forty year period are no longer on the wall....What had been a somewhat cluttered and floor to ceiling pictures, certificates and memories that was an Old School Korean Dojang.....had been replaced with the empty mirrored walls and a clear workout floor of a modernized clean bright Martial Arts Academy. This is progress and a new start for ATF.....and this is all good...I suppose....but Old-Timers tend to remember “Old Times” and sometimes live too much in the past!

I had told myself that I would go to class regularly once a week and help out in any way I could, but after a short while I realized it was too stressful for me to be there so my visits became less and less frequent. I knew there would be changes and I expected them but I didn’t realize how this would affect how I felt about being there. The changes taking place are all upgrades and many of them were things which I knew needed to be done several years ago but my advancing years and a knee injury needing surgery prevented me from doing them. My energy level was not sufficient to work on the school making improvements during the day and then instruct at night. Also major changes, such as the ones taking place all cost money which was not available to me. As I mentioned.....the school never made enough money to support and upgrade. During the years when we had a full roster and everyone paid their dues, the school did actually support itself, but those times were the exception to the norm. It has always been our belief that....No Child, who wanted to take instruction should need to stay away because their parents couldn’t afford to pay for lessons. Consequently we always had several scholarship students on the roster. Many began training on scholarship and some, due to their parents changed financial situation, continued to come to class

long after they stopped paying regularly. And....there were many incidents when a student would begin to get behind on their dues and continue to come to class for several months before eventually dropping out owing hundreds of dollars in back dues. If they had come to me and discussed the situation they could have been put on scholarship and continued training. My feelings have always been..."They know they owe these dues....it's on them to pay or not". On the other hand, there were incidents when students fell behind and did the honorable thing and eventually paid what they owed. Every year, when the receipts were totaled and the books were balanced there would always be a considerable amount of lost revenues due to scholarships and no-pays. This amount could vary from one thousand, up to several thousand dollars. Some would say..."This is not good business practice!"

It was never about the money! Susie and I did not continue to keep the school running in hopes of becoming wealthy by teaching Martial Arts.

TRUE.....those thousands of dollars that accumulated over the many years, could have been used to improve and upgrade the school and provide a better training facilitybut it was only a BUILDING!

We preferred to invest in young lives. And we did....and have never regretted those decisions.

On July 8th, thirteen years after my first knee surgery, I had a total knee replacement which has kept me away from training for the last half of this year. Recovery and rehabilitation from the surgery was intense and extended because of unforeseen complications. I had twelve weeks of supervised rehab three times a week. During the recovery time I underwent two minor surgeries for skin cancer, one on my nose and on my shoulder.

In addition I have had two eye surgeries for cataracts and lens implants in both eyes.

All four events had their own set of restrictions and limitations during recovery which have kept me away from training and on limited physical activity.

SoIn December 2015 I was physically fit...(well relatively so)....and leading a Martial Arts Class in vigorous training twice a week.....

In December 2016 ...I haven't trained in over a year and I have a knee that is still recovering from major surgery, although it is getting better it is very weak.

It HAS been a year of change and transition. I look forward to 2017 and getting back to a regular training schedule.

Now....Back to the Past.....

Loyalty, Dedication and Commitment are three of the most important things we have taught our students over the many years. If a person has these three qualities, all the other minutia of life seems to be in the right place at the right time and even the most difficult tasks seem to go much better. Be LOYAL to those who matter to you,

be DEDICATED to your pursuits in life,
and be COMMITTED to your word and deed.

Over the passage of time....during the last forty seven years....there have been several loyal and dedicated students who have remained or returned to ATF and to Give Back to their Home School. None more so than the three Black Belts I am thinking of:

Dr. Keith Waggoner, who began his Martial Arts training as a young lad in his teens, earned his Black Belt in the ATF System and later moved out of state. While away he trained and received rank in several other Martial Arts, one of which was the Sayoc Kali system. This group trained U.S Military Special Forces in close-quarter combat techniques and bladed weapons. Dr. Waggoner stayed with this group for several years and later had an opportunity to return to his home in Arkansas. With him he brought all the training and knowledge he had received while away and introduced these techniques into the ATF System. His actions over the past several years have always exceeded the boundries of generosity and on many occasions, time after time he has given back to his home school.....of his time his expertise, knowledge and his finances. When I arrived at my final decision to retire, Dr. Waggoner was the obvious choice to step up and take ATF into the next generation.

Mrs. Janet Harp Atkinson, who began training when she was twelve years old, was my other obvious choice for leadership of ATF. After receiving her Black Belt in 1984, the year she graduated from High School, Janet went on to college and became a school teacher. Then... returning to class and assuming the responsibility of Training Director, she advanced in rank and became the second in command of the school. She has been my steadfast, loyal “Rock” for many years and ATF is indebted to her for her contributions.

Forty Seven Years.....is a tremendously long commitment to anything, and there were times during my career when I was tempted and close to calling it quits.

The first notable time was when I closed the school in Black Rock and moved back to Walnut Ridge. The old building in Black Rock was on Main Street and has since been torn down.

It was owned by Elbert Callahan, a man who I had previously had business dealings with. The building had not been in use for many years and was in disrepair and in need of attention. It had previously been used as a carpentry shop and the prior occupants had moved out leaving it cluttered with sawdust and scrap lumber. It was a mess and I paid rent on it for two months just cleaning it up before I could actually move in and start classes. The rent was a reasonable amount, \$50.00 per month, but too much for the condition it was in. It had bare concrete floor and the only heat in the wintertime was a small propane heater in the front of the building. Three feet away from it and you could feel no heat.....but it did keep the temperature below freezing. This was in the early 1970's and at that time \$50.00 was still a sizable amount of money.

I was charging \$15 per month for lessons so I reasoned that I only needed four students to pay the rent. Propane gas was less than \$10 a bottle and I used two per month for heat.....so another two students would cover the heat and misc expense. I finally got the building clear of debris and reasonably clean enough to

begin having classes. As I recall the first night I had about seven students and about halfway through the class some of the local juvenile delinquents tried to disrupt class by throwing bricks against the back door. I would open the door and go outside and they would run and hide. Guess they wanted to take class but just didn't have the money.

The initial response to having a Karate School in town was good....several more students enrolled but over time, due to the harsh training conditions attendance began to drop off. Many times Susie and I were the only ones there..We would drive over....Black Rock is about 15 minutes from Walnut Ridge, wait for half an hour for someone to show up and when no one did, we would go home and do it again the next week. This was during days of gas rationing!

I stayed in that building for three years and at the end of that period, when I moved I owed Elbert back rent for six months. He never pressed me for the money when I would fall behind because..... #1.....he knew I was not collecting any dues...and.....

#2...his grandson Richard Eagan (mentioned earlier) was enrolled and doing very well.

So.....closing that failed school and owing \$300 rent, after three years of paying expenses out of my pocket.....made me give serious thought to the direction of my Martial Arts career. Enter my wife, Susan.....who says "We are not quitters....This is something that has substance and is worthwhile.....Look for a location in Walnut Ridge." So I did. This was not the only time she intervened.....

.....she did so again in 2000 when we moved from the Elm Street location to the Wilcoxson Building on Main Street, otherwise ATF would have died at that time.

Once again she said, "Find another Building", and I did. From \$50.00 Per month in the 70's to over \$400.00 rent in the year 2000.

Mary Ball/Cliff Kite, Belinda Armstrong, the School in Pocahontas and Diane Fowler

Mary Ball

was a hard working and committed student of the 80's era. She and her son, Al Ball both achieved the rank of First Degree Black as a result of their hard work, training and caring enough to practice.

During this period of time, few Martial Arts schools in the area, had enough Black Belts on their roster to form their own Black Belt Test Board so it was common practice to invite Instructors from other schools, other systems to participate in school testings. Such was the case with Mary Ball's testing. I invited an Instructor, Cliff Kite, from West Plains, Mo to sit Mary's Test Board. I had known Cliff for a couple of years and although I did not agree with some of his training methods, I always considered him a friend. He had visited our school on several occasions and with his kids performed demos and worked with us on Forms.....so he was legit as far as I could tell at that point. However later on, I had sat on one of his Test Boards and his brutality toward his students had frightened me to the point that, in fear of legal ramifications, I would never do it again. Nonetheless he was still a member of Mary's Test Board on this particular occasion. She had a good test, nothing outstanding but passable and every instructor signed her BB Certificate..... except Cliff. He said that she had not performed to his expectations. Later in the day after test had ended and everyone was leaving, he called Mary aside and told her that the only way she could get his signature was to come to West Plains and train with him. West Plains is about 90 miles from

Walnut Ridge, a good two hour drive.but unknowing to me she decided to do this and was going there two times a week and paying Cliff to instruct her. I never understood and she never told me her reasoning for doing this...she just quit coming to class. In later years she left Cliff and began training with my good friend Master Tom Hunnicutt. At that point in time we reestablished a lukewarm relationship and I did sit on one of her Test Boards when she opened a school in Pocahontas. I am friends today with several of her students who are now Black Belts and came out of that school. Even tho they practice Master Hunnicutt's White Swan Shorin Ryu, they have their roots in Tang Soo Do and I notice the Korean Influence in the techniques they were taught by Mary Ball.

Belinda Armstrong.

was a 2nd Degree Red Belt from Pocahontas who was anxious to open a school of her own in Pocahontas. This was unacceptable for several reasons but the main two were.....
#1... she was not a Black Belt....but she reasoned "You opened your school when YOU were a Second Degree Red Belt Mr Weeks"! #2.....she was not even a good 2nd Degree Red Belt. She had physical limitations and to put it kindly, Comprehension Limitations, as well. Butshe persisted and finally I agreed to her opening a school with these conditions: She would have her classes on Tuesday and Thursday and on Tuesday nights I would go there and instruct her class and she would come to Walnut Ridge to continue her training with our Black Belts here, all testings would be done in Walnut Ridge and all promotions would be through this school, she herself would meet attendance requirements here in order to be promoted. This was agreed upon and we proceeded. She found a suitable building and opened an ATF School in Pocahontas. Fast forward six months..... the school was doing well but our agreement pertaining to attendance requirements was not. A couple of months after the opening, she started becoming unavailable on Tuesday nights....the nights she was supposed to be in Walnut Ridge. First it was SICK....not feeling well...then family issues....and then gonna be out of town....etc, etc. I was still going to Pocahontas but she was not coming here. It was getting old but class size was increasing and the students enjoyed seeing me on Tuesday nights. About six months into this misadventure I showed up to teach on Tuesday night and was met at the door by Belinda, wearing a brand new Black Belt! Her first words to me were "We don't need you anymore....I got my Black"! As it turned out, she had been going to Popular Bluff, Mo on Tuesday nights working with someone there who wore a Black Belt but certainly was NOT one in character, and he had promoted her to this rank in six months, working one night a week! At this point I told her that she would have to take my ATF Sign off her window and all her students would need to strip the ATF Patch from their uniforms.....,to which she replied....."You Don't Own Tang Soo Do"! As I mentioned earlier.....She had limited and challenged comprehension levels! Eventually she did take down my sign and removed ATF's patches from her student's uniforms. Years later as I write these two stories back to back, it would seem obvious that you just can't trust women students from Pocahontas and bogus instructors from Missouri!!!

Mary and Belinda's schools in Pocahontas were not the first ones there. In the early 80's Dennis Reed ,ATF Cert #3 and I opened a school on the Square in Pocahontas. It was a large corner building just in front of and across the street from the Strand Theater which had been long closed. After opening, Dennis who at that time was farming could not be there in time for classes after his season began. We had many students and we tried to encourage them to come to Walnut Ridge and some did....but I could not keep two schools open by myself with no other Black belts available. So we closed it down after the first year. I have often regretted closing that school for it seems that schools in that community have good success in recruiting students and have a long lifespan.

Diane Fowler

Diane was the wife of Keith Fowler, ATF BB Cert #26.

She tested for her First Degree Black Belt in 2003 along with my son **Chance** who was a Jr BB and **Emily Hoffman** who was a 1st Degree Red. **Keith Fowler**, a member of the Test Board, also received his 2nd Degree Cert #30 at this testing.

It is important to remember that Keith was a Board Member and his was the initial vote. Other Board Members were **Gary Ring, Robert Warden, Jim Kapales, David Coker**, myself and I think maybe **Chris Warden, Amanda Warden, Jesse Ferrell, Sam Colburn**Nine Board Members in all.

At the completion of the test, all unanimously agreed that Chance had passed his test and would be awarded 1st Degree Black. However Diane had struggled on her Oral Exam and both Diane and Emily had not demonstrated the expertise and confidence necessary for promotion. When the first vote was taken on Diane's performance, Keith was given the opportunity to speak and vote first. He was the first person to say..."she did not pass her test". It was a unanimous vote that both Emily and Diane had failed to meet the requirements, both mental and physical and after much discussion an agreement was reached that we would award Full Rank to Chance, Provisional Rank to Emily and Diane. The conditions of their rank were very simple: Both must, within 90 days demonstrate their forms to the satisfaction of the Test Board in order to keep the Provisional Rank. Failing to do so would result in them being reverted back to 1st Degree Red and reschedule the entire test. Forms, Kata, are very important in our system of training...and count 40% of student's score on test day. The very next week, Emily was hard at work on her forms, practicing and fixing. Diane and Keith never returned to class. As the end of the grace period approached, I called Keith and inquired as to Diane's intentions....to which his reply was...."WE won't be coming back"! Over the years both Keith and Diane both have relayed different recollections of this story when discussing their ATF training, but eight other Test Board Members know what happened. Emily, however, did meet the requirements, was recognized as a valid 1st Degree, is now a 5th Degree and a valued instructor and member of ATF Martial Arts. There are defining and obvious differences in people's character....and Martial Arts training seems to bring both the stellar qualities and the character flaws to the surface.

My mind is flooded with small **vignettes** of events which has happened over the years: Some

good...some Not So...

A brother and sister , age 12 and 10 began classes. The boy was a natural athlete and things came easy for him and it was obvious that he was the apple of his daddy's eye. The girl who was two years younger had to work harder and longer to learn, which she did because she wanted to learn. It appeared that the Father viewed her as his little princess and future Prom Queen. On the first testing she outperformed her sibling and the Test Board awarded her a higher rank than her brother. The Father was furious.....demanded a meeting with the test board to explain why his son was not ranked higher.

This didn't happen so he withdrew both of them from training. He missed an excellent opportunity for them both to learn a very valuable life's lesson.

Jesse Ferrell was testing for his 1st Degree Black Belt and was performing his Original Form which was named "The Essence of Power". In practice, it was a really good looking form and he presented it well. Fast forward to Test Day.....The opening move of the form was a six-board, no spacer break. He Missed it! When you call yourself "POWER" and you miss your break.....well.....it went downhill from there.

Susie and I were attending a Tournament somewhere.....in a gymnasium. Our people were competing and we had a seat floor level, second row.....a group of young thugs from another school were seated directly in front of us and were demonstrating an attitude we did not want our kids exposed to. They were boisterous, loud and bragging about how they were ripping their opponents' gis and how they had given one guy a bloody nose and another a black eye. In general , just showing a total lack of respect. Susie reached a point where she had enough.....she went to the concession stand....got the largest Coke they sold...64oz...and when returning to her seat she accidentally tipped the cup as she walked behind these young ruffians and managed to get every one of them. Opppppps.....she says.....smiling!

In the Black Rock School...the floors were smooth concrete and sometimes that concrete would sweat and the footing would be treacherous. Throwing a full power kick was an adventure in courage....you usually wound up on the floor...because the power of the kick would cause the supporting foot to slip and slide. Down you went!

In The Dungeon.....the air was so still...due to no windows in the building....and only small box fans for circulation.....the summertime was like a sauna. Again ...concrete floors that would sweat and become slick.....Down You Went!

The Elm Street School.....the street drainage was so bad that when there was a hard rain and the streets became flooded....every time a car drove in front of the school it created a tidal wave that washed up over the curb and sidewalk and came inside the building.....

The Main Street Wilcoxson building.....A great school...big, modern building...lots of room, Air Conditioning...heat....Really enjoyed the first few years there but as the building aged it began to leak and gradually became worse with each rainy season. I contacted the landlord and was promised that it would be fixed. At first it was just a few leaks and some strategically placed buckets would solve the problem....then water started coming in in dozens of places....not enough buckets...so every time it rained I would place a large piece of visqueen on the floor under the buckets. Then the buckets became ten-gallon TUBS, and before I finally moved.....18 miserable months passed between the time when I first reported the bad leak problem and we finally moved! At the end, when it would rain hard I was collecting over 100 gallons of water inside the building. The landlord refused to fix it so we moved into the 119 Main St address where we are now. I found out later that the landlord was being investigated by the IRS for tax fraud. The once beautiful building was now in a state of deterioration and remained so for several years until it was bought and renovated into “The Studio”.

Over the years we have presented many “Ladies Self Defense Seminars” and “Children’s Stranger Danger Programs”. These have always been free to the public and generally we had good attendance. Part of both programs is a confidence building exercise in which everyone gets to break a board. The size of the board was determined by the size of the person breaking it and their personality. Children...small boards of varying sizes and adults....larger boards. This has always been an exciting part of both these programs and everyone looked forward to and enjoyed it.

In compliance with the ATF Code of Conduct, “Help Others In Need”, all through the 1980's part of the test fee was a donation by each student to the Lawrence County Food Bank. Each student testing would canned goods which we would then deliver to the Food Bank.

In 1990 We began doing an annual benefit Demo for the March Of Dimes and that first year we raised \$2000.00 for Healthy Babies. We continued our annual efforts for the MOD until the year 2000 having raised \$21,000.00 for MOD during that ten year period.

At that point, the year 2000, we put our efforts toward helping the needy & hungry folks in Lawrence County by working for the Law Co Food Bank. We continued with them until 2008 when we switched our allegiance to the Children’s Shelter with a Fund Raiser Demo every year at the Downtown Beatles at The Ridge Fest.

From 1990-2016 for the three charities ATF students and Instructors have raised \$49,000.00.....for healthy babies, to feed the hungry and to provide necessities for homeless children.

One year in particular stands out in my memory....One of the instructors , Rowdy Fortson issued a challenge to the students....if they could collect a certain amount before Saturday when we officially began the Demo..... he would shave his head.....

(See Photo Below)



I have been going through old records of the past 47 years...sorting and discarding the unimportant and keeping those things relevant to ATF History.

In sorting and reading the many Black Belt papers which have been written for promotion over the years.....there have been many good ones.....this one, written by Mr. David Coker in 1990 hit a grand slam homer with me.....

This is the last paragraph of the Thesis.

“One area which I think many Martial Artists lack in...is the traditional values and origins of the Arts. The Martial Arts community has become more commercialized and turned into a sport. While this is acceptable in the Olympics and other areas of competition, it is still very important, that we as Black Belts, uphold our heritage, the basic structure and teachings our forefathers developed. Without this heritage we would not have a good foundation to teach, develop and understand the true meaning of the Martial Arts.

If a person does not feel any of the above mentioned is important, then perhaps he should question the true meaning of a Black Belt. I say this not in vain but by the knowledge and commitment my instructor has instilled in me. The things stated above can be magical in living a long and healthy life. I believe everything stated above to be true in my heart with full sincerity.”

From Robert Warden: "I realize that I did not struggle alone in my quest....My instructors worked harder than I did for my achievements, giving of their time, knowledge and expertise, in order for me to achieve."

From Sam Colburn: "If you train long enough and hard enough in Tang Soo Do and put your whole

mind, body and spirit into the training, you will learn to channel your weakness into strengths."

From Jesse Ferrell: "To receive a Black Belt in Tang Soo DO means I have overcome the obstacle before me."

From Dr. Shawn Lancaster: "Obtaining a Tang Soo Do Black Belt carries with it many responsibilities.....A Black Belt must stay in shape, refine her/his skills, continually learn new skills, be a competent leader, teach others, and represent your school proudly. All these things I pledge and take responsibility for."

From Becky Bennett: "My training has saved my life on at least one occasion.....A Black Belt must know when, where and how to use their skills, access each situation and decide which is the best course of action."

From Mr. Jim Kapales: A Black Belt is a symbol of hard work, loyalty and dedication....of sweat and blood. It is the end of one journey and the beginning of another."

From Dr. Keith Waggoner: The training and discipline I received began to make me feel a sense of conscience to Do Right...no matter what. It has helped me to fulfill not only a personal goal but also a desire to help others obtain theirs and be a loving example which proves that a morale, Christian life is attainable."

From Rev. Gene Cullum: I feel that I must be true to myself by continually striving to advance in my training and always be a student of the Martial Arts. I want to continue to "Seek Knowledge and Defeat the Weakness within Myself."

AND.....I am sure There were more EXCELLENT Papers written over the many years, by hardworking and dedicated students, but alas.....the passage of time and a disorganized filing system has taken it's toll and they are but dust in our memories. I am still finding things which have not seen the light of day for many years.....so I do expect to find other Black Belt Thesis which I will post at that time.

Parental Involvement

When I was growing up, there was very little parental involvement in a child's school or extra curricular activities...probably because those were "Poor Times" and parents were too busy making

a living for their families.

Now.....it seems that parents are involved in every aspect of their child's life. I think this a really good thing both for the child and the parent...mutual memories are a lasting gift to both. However, This new (new compared to the 50's) child/parent relationship is flawed when the parent becomes a 911 Rescue Unit for the child when they experience difficult times. IMHO in such times the parent's duty is to counsel and encourage their child and urge them to do what is necessary to succeed. Let them learn life's lessons early and be better equipped to handle them in later life.

I am by NO MEANS an expert on parenting.....and I HAVE been ejected from a couple of ball games for expressing my opinion on , what I considered "Bad Calls", but...my 45+ years in the Martial Arts has given me some insight into what goes into having a strong resilient child who can face adversity with confidence and perseverance.

Both my sons, Chance and Range began training the first class after they were five years old and grew up experiencing high expectations from me, other instructors, classmates and of themselves. Being the Instructor's sons was NO FREE RIDE. Quite the contrary....On testing....they had to be better than everyone else to achieve the same rank. One word from me to the Test Board and they would have been ranked higher, quicker.....but they would NOT HAVE BEEN BETTER! They had to experience Difficulty, Disappointment, Failure, Renewed Dedication and Then....Success, in order to understand the learning process and what it takes to be successful. I think, anyone who knows them and sees them perform will have to agree, they are BOTH EXCELLENT BLACK BELTS.

They represented the school they grew up in, their instructors & classmates with respect and dignity and made their parents very proud. Both have now graduated from college and have moved on with careers of their own. I, as a parent, am very happy for them and their accomplishments, but it is bittersweet happiness for they are no longer a part of ATF in a physical sense. They both retain Legacy Rank and could return to training at any point in the future but it saddens me that they are no longer a part of this school on a regular basis.just as it saddens me that I am no longer a part of the regular training regimen.

All things must pass.... and so this shall too....

All the things that I taught them and which they in turn passed on to other students they taught.....

The skills we leave behind, hang like pictures on the wall for others to see
and remember times past.

The past never changes.....only the history!

The Beatles Fest & ATF 2018

a brief history.....w ritten by fred Weeks

Some may or may not know....or may have simply forgotten, or chose to forget.....

The Walnut Ridge downtown celebration began before 1990, when it was just “The Fall Festival/Chili Cook-off”, held in mid-October with just a few vendors and church bake sales. It basically was a competition for the best Chile, best Booth and best Crew & Decor and Halloween themes were prevalent. A board of judges tasted and selected the winning Pot of Chile which was auctioned off at the end of the day ...First Presbyterian Church, (Rev Terry Bozarth, Bill Alsup and myself and I think....Clay Sloan) cooked up the winning culinary delight in 19???. Tim Taylor was either Mayor or Director of Chamber of Commerce at that time and I think he actually started the tradition. That was the first year that ATF performed what would be an annual charity event for the next 28 years.

“Beatles At The Ridge Music Festival” has been called many things during the past three decades; “The Fall Festival & Chile Cook-Off” for many years, The Chile cooking contest was eventually canceled and it was just “The Fall Festival”, then “The Iron Mountain Festival” and then “The Gateway Fun Festival” and NOW....”The Beatles at the Ridge” Music Festival. Bringing folks from around the world ...to Walnut Ridge, Arkansas.....My Home Town.

.....and.....it has moved around a bit over the years.

The First few years it was held on the. South east side of Main Street ...and ATF would do their very first demo in front of the old school which has now been bulldozed. Jonathan Green broke the first board of the first demo we preformed. I remember one year it rained so hard and the water rushing down the street was so bad the vendors booths were washing away and the festivities had to be canceled.

It later evolved into Beatles Festival and then expanded to both sides of Main street. At one point the event was being held at Stewart Park but I think that was for only one or two years....

Since our first demo in 1990 ATF Martial Arts has worked for;

The March of Dimes 11 years

The Lawrence County Food Bank 8 years

The Children’s Shelter.....This will be our 9th year with the Children’s Shelter

During the preceding years, thanks to the generosity of our community and surrounding area, and the hard work and commitment of our instructors and students, almost \$50,000.00 has been raised

for these for these worthwhile Charities

Item #5 of the ATF Code of Conduct states;

“Help Others In Need”

And Students and Instructors of Allied Tang Soo Do Federation have been doing this for almost three decades.

I will mention now that.....From 1990- 2015... all lumber (500 board feet annually) was donated by Hoxie Lumber Co. Our thanks and appreciation to those fine folks for their support for so many years, without which we could not have succeeded in our calling.

Some of the highlights over the years.....

Robert “BEAR” Warden’s ten-board knuckle break.....It has never been equaled...

Bobby King performed the first Fire Break

Jim Kapales was the first to break with his head

Jim Kapales was also the first to break concrete.

Range Weeks and Matt Noblin were always a crowd pleaser when they teamed up with their aerial antics....Those two guys looked like twin overhead drones!

When we first started in 1990 the event was much smaller and we had as much time as we needed or wanted, to break our 500 boards. Later on, as more was added to the day’s event schedule, our time was limited to 90 minutes and then the following year we were further reduced to one hour time limit. So now....in trying to make sure that proper introductions are made, each and every student is given time to perform..... and at the same time make sure that money is collected and counted before our hour is up....we have a tightly choreographed one hour presentation which moves very quickly and efficiently to not waste one minute of our time.

In ADDITION to just breaking boards.....our students perform several demonstrations of their Martial Skills and Ninja Wizardry.

In the past A small portion of our demos have been set to music and short routines with specific themes. The students work very hard to make this part an enjoyable performance in which they just have fun.

MEMORABLE DEMOS:

I call your attention to these events posted in the Video Section.

Team Freedom Demo

Thriller Demo

Salute to The Armed Forces Demo

Come Together Demo

Let's Get Ready To Rumble Demo

This year's Demo is called "Cops n Robbers".....and is the brainchild of Mrs Angee Jones whose daughter Madison has been a student for about five years. Angee helped us a few years ago with the choreography in the Thriller Demo which was one of our best ever. This one should be a lot of fun as well and I am looking forward to it. I have not been involved in the production of these for the past two years and I really miss preparing for the big day..... The "Salute to the Armed Forces" was the last one I choreographed or had any hand in the production of. My job was always the easiest on performance day....all I had to do was grab a mike and talk.....the kids did all the work. It was always very gratifying at the end of the day when the money was counted and the presentation made.

This years Beatles Celebration is less than two weeks away and ATF Martial Arts is practicing and preparing to entertain the crowds again in 2018. Since we began in 1990, we have averaged slightly over \$2,000.00 a year in collectionsso that is our goal for this year.

Please be with us at 9:00am, Saturday Sept 15 at the First National Bank Stage (Adriana's Parking Lot) And help US help The Children's Shelter. And....please understand....The Children's Shelter is for children who have NOTHING.....So dig deep and give generously.

disclaimer:

I am working from memory and am not responsible for errors of omission , wrong dates or names but the events and monies are true to my recollections. But..... I am now 81 soooooooooooooo.