



## HERE'S WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT SENSEI CLOUD'S KARATE CLASSES:

*"Her room is neat, & grades are improving...  
And better yet, she likes herself."*

*"I got strong!"*

*"Sensei Cloud empowered our child in ways we never knew were possible... literally transforming our homelife from a place of stress and power struggles to one of joy, support, and cooperation..."*

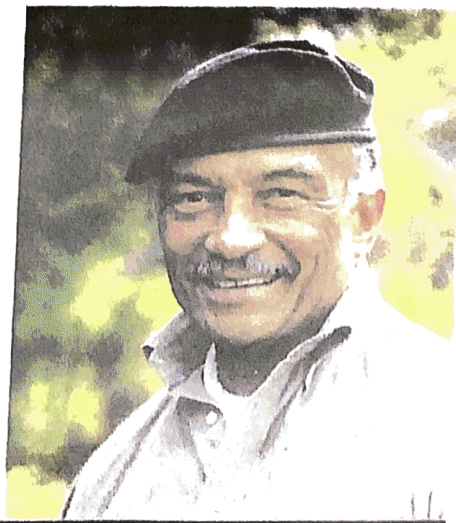
*I've learned the practice of Karate is a way of life... it improves your life skills in ways I never thought possible. Sensei Cloud's classes change the way you see yourself... and that changes your world!*

**WORKING WITH DAVE CLOUD IS ONE OF THE MOST EMPOWERING THINGS YOUR CHILD WILL EVER DO.**

*"We have such a great new connection since my son & I have been practicing our katas together."*

Sensei Cloud's mastery goes beyond the practice of Karate—into a broader realm of human empowerment. Beyond punching and kicking, his training expands kids' strengths (mental & physical) and enhances self-discipline, confidence, respect for others, and overall success. *Come see for yourself!*

- Students age 5 through 90s
- Parent/Child classes
- Kid classes
- Private lessons
- Group classes
- 40+ years teaching experience



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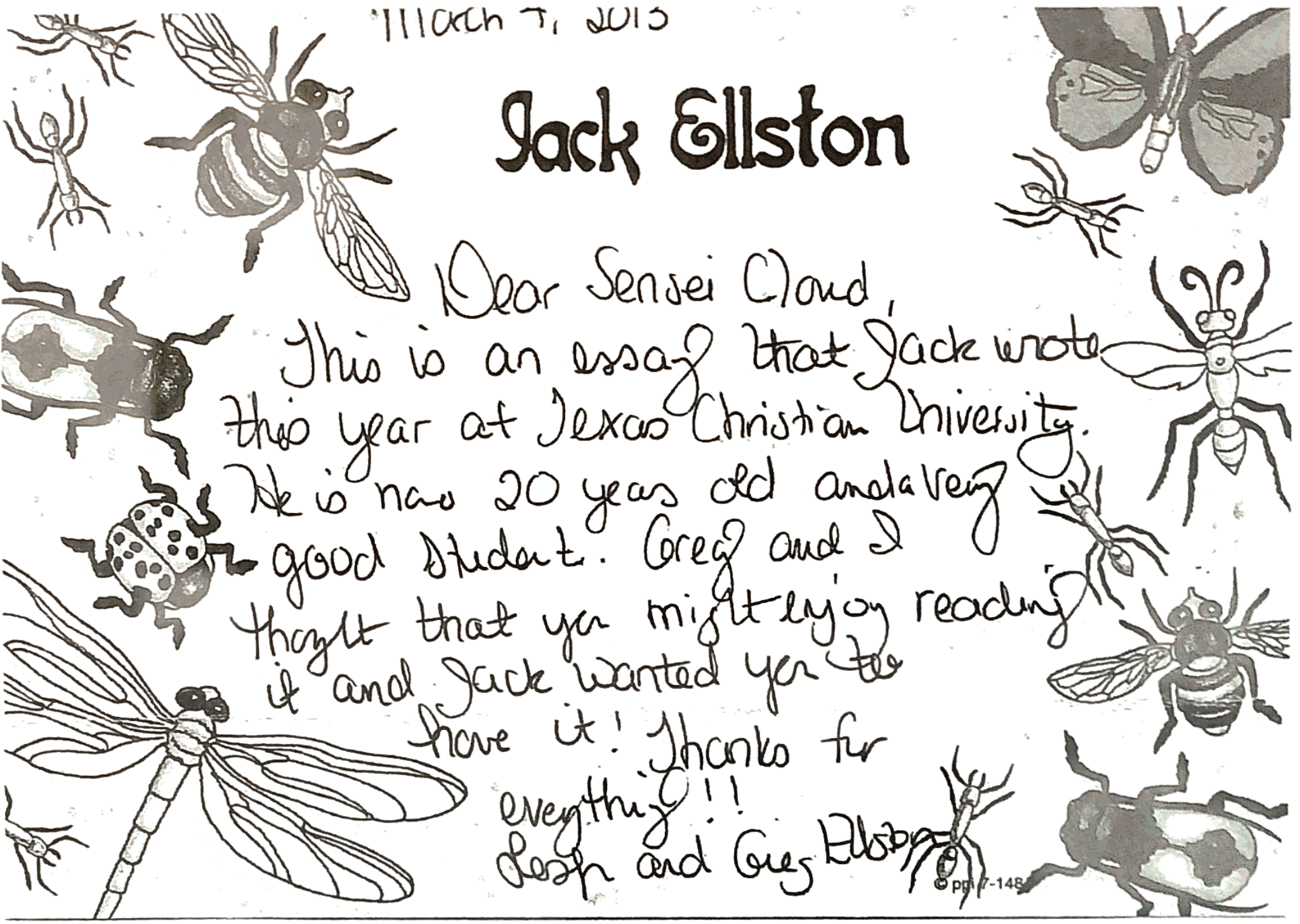
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March 7, 2013

# Jack Ellston

Dear Sensei Cloud,  
This is an essay that Jack wrote  
this year at Texas Christian University.  
He is now 20 years old and a very  
good student. Greg and I  
thought that you might enjoy reading  
it and Jack wanted you to  
have it! Thanks for  
everything!!  
Josh and Greg Ellston



**Question 1: Think about an individual (non-family) who has influenced, inspired, or motivated you in some way in your life (this can be someone you know directly or someone you've observed or read about). Tell us how this person has affected you (e.g., your choice of goals, behavior, or personal development).\***

Almost everyone has that person that pushes you so hard to be better, that at times you hate him or her. But in the end meeting that person was one of the best things to happen to you, whether you realize it or not. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade I signed up for a martial arts class at my local gym. I signed up for karate for fun. I had no idea that the person I would meet would help build me into a better man that I ever thought I could be. The first time I met Thomas David Cloud there is only one word that can describe it, Intimidation. I was standing in front of a man who was not afraid to get in your face and push you to be better. This essay topic asks you to pick a man who has influenced, inspired or motivated you; Sensei Cloud did all three with unfathomable ease. There were plenty of times in my life when I hated this man. I would rather just stay home and not go. I was literally shaking with nerves almost every time I entered the gym. But like all good things, the hard work was worth it. Sensei Cloud helped mold me into the man I am today. Words cannot do justice for what he has done for me.

To understand the effect this man has had on me, it's important to provide some background. My story is much different from many students at Texas Christian University. When I was born I was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, a potentially debilitating physical disability that affects your brain and nervous functions. When I was born the doctors told my parents it would be difficult for me to walk. From as long as I remember I was different than the other kids. Throughout my life I have been in and out of hospitals, casts, and physical therapy. My twin brother, who does not have cerebral palsy, did everything with me. But I wanted to be distinctive from my brother with at least one thing, so I chose to take karate. Because of Sensei Cloud and the support of a group of great people, it turned out to be the greatest decision I ever could have made.

Sensei Cloud was a leader, no doubt about it. When he spoke people listened, when he instructed us we followed him to the letter. But his leadership stood out beyond the drill sergeant aspects. He was able to help me become a better man through the life lessons he taught me, and the physical things he pushed me to do. Some of which I never thought was possible. My mother had told him about my disability. What set him apart from almost every other man I have ever met is his ability to talk to you one on one, take you away from the group. At the same time however, he makes you feel like you never left the group, that without you the group would be weakened significantly. Sensei Cloud was able to mentor me and push me to become a better man. Sensei Cloud didn't care that I was disabled, he expected me to do more because of it. If the rest of the class was doing 50 pushups he expected me to do 60. There would be days in the week that he would break me down, physically and emotionally and he taught me to be a better man. Sensei Cloud was most of all humble. He taught us to be humble in all aspects of life. He is one of the main reasons I look back on my life, acknowledge my accomplishments, and aim to



best them. He taught me to never settle, nothing is ever perfect. Anything can always be improved.

I look back on my life and my decision to join karate and sometimes I wonder how different it could have been. I cannot thank Sensei Cloud for all he has done for me. Without him lord knows where I'd be. Probably not at TCU, probably not applying to enter Neeley and applying to be a BSNF leader. I only hope I can use my leadership skills to affect someone's life similar to how Thomas David Cloud changed mine.



NORTH

## Metro Post

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1993

## Expert Conveys Values To Youngsters

Story By Pamela Selbert

Post-Dispatch Special Correspondent

Photos by Wez Paz

Of the Post-Dispatch

David Cloud of Ladue has been singing the praises of karate ever since he first studied the art while serving in the armed forces in Okinawa in 1966.

In the Vietnam War, Cloud flew a C-130 Hercules transport plane, airlifting soldiers in and out of combat zones. Cloud saw a lot of suffering and death, and it angered him, he said.

"I needed some way to control my stress and anxiety and I found it in shorin-ryu karate," said Cloud, 47. "Someone suggested I join a karate class — and once I started going, I went every day."

Most of his classmates were Japanese; there were few servicemen in the karate class, and Cloud was the only black man, he said.

"I was so intent on learning it, I soon had the highest rank in the class," he said. "That meant I sometimes was asked to take over the class."

This forced him to learn Japanese, said Cloud, laughing at the irony of a black American teaching karate to Japanese men.

By learning karate, Cloud said he also learned how to "redirect his energies."

He had had trouble "dealing with the fact that people were dying all around me —

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ABOVE: Karate *Sensei*, or instructor, David Cloud discussing the virtues of concentration with a group of young martial arts students. BELOW: Assistant instructor Julie Speth getting physical with young students in the beginners' group at the Mid-County YMCA.

## Karate

From page one

karate taught me how to handle the things that upset me," he said.

Cloud benefited so greatly from learning karate that when he returned home to Webster Groves in 1970, and "saw kids on the street with nothing to do trying to be tough," he decided others could profit from what he had learned.

He has taught karate for nearly 23 years now, but continues to be amazed at the results it can bring to someone's life, he said. The 140 students enrolled in the thrice-weekly classes he teaches at Mid-County YMCA range in age from 4 to mid-60s, but the results are

"Instead, it lets others know you're in control of yourself, and that you're redirecting hostilities."

Cloud has taught these principles to a lot of folks — in 23 years he has had more than 4,700 students, "18 of whom have gone all the way to becoming black belts and 50 who are brown belts," he said.

Back in 1970, Cloud tacked signs to trees and otherwise put out the word that he was teaching free karate lessons in his grandmother's back yard.

In quick succession, 90 students of all ages began arriving for the lessons, and it was soon apparent he needed a better spot to hold class, Cloud said. A local television program that focused briefly on Cloud's predicament prompted offers from a wide variety of sources, he said. Cloud chose the Webster Groves YMCA and taught

and transportation departments at Christian Northeast and Christian Northwest hospitals.

But on Wednesday and Friday evenings, and Saturday mornings, he's at the Y teaching kids and adults to "turn negative things in their lives into positive things, through karate," he said.

When kids study the art, their self-esteem grows and, consequently, their grades generally go up, he said. More than just learning the karate moves, they also learn things like "paying attention, and listening to their parents," Cloud said. "A lot of parents come to watch every class — they love this program."

Among the parents who like the program is Post-Dispatch columnist Bill McClellan, whose son Jack, 5, started taking karate lessons about a month ago.

inspires his students, even the ones, and keeps them all enthralled about learning."

McClellan said Cloud's students "have the option to progress as fast as they want to — he works each one at their own speed."

McClellan is pleased that "getting the basics" of karate creates an atmosphere somewhat like "boot camp."

Cloud teaches students things like "arranging their shoes in straight lines, and listening to their mother and father, but while they're learning they're also having fun," he said.

Sharon Clark, an assistant at Mid-County who sells the T-shirts that the students wear, believes the program "is an excellent role model" for the students.



# TWENTY YEARS LATER:

## *Shorin Ryu's Dave Cloud*

H.W. Keyes

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During the Vietnam War, St. Louis' Dave Cloud was stationed in Okinawa with the US Air Force. "The stress was intense," said Cloud. "Some of my friends were dying, and others were turning on to drugs and alcohol to cope with the pressures."

Cloud turned to karate master Shoshin Nagamine, who not only taught him the art of self-defense, but, also, passed on a legacy of discipline and positive thinking that continues to help Cloud even today.

"I went with friends to the place where they had been taking martial arts lessons," explained Cloud. "All the other students - all black belts that particular day - were sitting with Master Nagamine and having tea. I tripped over the entry platform and, with the floor being wooden, made such a loud noise when I stumbled ..."

"Previously, I had felt size was of importance," Cloud recalled, a former football scholarship recipient at Northeast State Teachers College. "That day I felt so small. I was going to leave but Master Nagamine asked if he could help me. He invited me in and I started training the next day."

"I became a karate junkie! I went every

Master Nagamine charged \$5.00 per month for instruction and Mrs. Nagamine made everyone's gi for \$5.00. "The Nagamine family got me through the war, the loss, and I owe them a debt of gratitude."

Cloud last saw Takaoshi Nagamine, the master's son, in 1990 at Bill George's dojo in Harrison, Ohio. Today, Dave Cloud is Director of Safety and Security, Christian Hospital Corporation, St. Louis, and manages 200 employees. Along with his administration responsibilities of the past seven years, Cloud has two dojo locations. He has been involved with the YMCA since the 1970's and has taught more than 3,700 students.

"In the '70's, there was a lot of crime in the streets of St. Louis and in Webster Groves," Cloud said. "I thought if I could just find a place to teach karate, I might help get some kids off the streets and change their attitudes."

Cloud decided to teach karate in his grandmother's backyard and 70 students signed up for his first class. Soon thereafter, a local television news team came by and taped a feature highlighting Cloud's program for adolescents. Within days, the YMCA phoned and offered him an even wider audience.

"Karate brings peace of mind and a positive attitude that gives you the confidence to handle any circumstance," he said. "I work in a high-stress job but things don't get to me because I know that each night in my karate class, I'll be able to relieve the tension."

**"KARATE BRINGS PEACE OF MIND AND A POSITIVE ATTITUDE THAT GIVES YOU THE CONFIDENCE TO HANDLE ANY CIRCUMSTANCE."**

"When I get stressed out, I can't wait to get to the dojo," Cloud affirmed. "I put the name of the problem on the bag and beat the bag and, when I have finished, the problem is no longer visible and no longer a part of my body."

Vanessa Poston, Hazardous Communications Coordinator, Christian Hospital Northeast, has known Dave Cloud since 1979. "I don't know what comes from within him ... He is always up and it is difficult to tell when there is anything not going exactly right with him," Poston shared. "He knows what perspective to place things in."

"You just rarely ever see him without a smile. He is always so positive," she continued. "Dave has a difficult job in an environment where focus is on patient care. He is persistent and always upbeat and, therefore, very successful. He has a positive way of accomplishing goals that just amazes me."

After more than twenty years in the art, Dave Cloud has remained not just for the feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction but for the thank you's from students and their parents. "To see a kid grow is invaluable," Cloud acknowledged. "Once you enter the dojo, all problems should be left behind. You are there to train and keep your body and mind clean."

A long time friend and fellow martial artist, Bob Peel, stated that Cloud teaches a very traditional style of Okinawan karate. "He made it appealing to me by the fact that he had trained in Okinawa and gave to me and the other students a greater insight," said Peel. "Within yourself is the major challenge - using the things you have learned in the dojo and applying them to your life outside. Karate-do is a way of life."

And Cloud has set superior goals for those