

DISCIPLINE, DEFENSE, AND FORGING CHAMPIONS AT JW AMERICAN KARATE

By Master Roy Day

he town of Tucker has always had an individual personality and its share of champion athletes. These days Tucker is producing a new kind of champion, children ages 8 to 14 fighting in Karate tournaments and training at Tucker's hometown dojo. A dojo is a room or school where Karate is taught and practiced. We are located on Idlewood Road, near the corner of Lawrenceville Highway. Our dojo is uniquely run by a Master in a wheelchair – that would be me. As someone who grew up in

the Tucker/Northlake area and who trained for over a decade under our dojo's founder, Master Robert Quinn, it gives me great joy to see our children develop into champions in such a short time. At our most recent tournament, we brought five competitors and did not lose a single fight to a student from another school. Before the unfamiliar reader is shocked that children as young as eight years old are fighting and developing into champions, all contact is above the waist and athletes are protected by a full set of protective gear.

Parents' primary concerns and motivations when enrolling their children in Karate is the quality of the environment, the safety of the sport and what is being taught. Karate is statistically much safer than football, soccer, and all the other major contact sports. We provide a disciplined environment, which can be fun as well. We teach children how to stand up to bullies and defend themselves successfully if necessary.

People often ask how I came to run the dojo, or became a Master, or how I ended up in a wheelchair. I was a healthy kid who played a myriad of sports, first in the Grey-Y program at Rehoboth and then at Oak



Dojo owner, Dr. Stephanie Sargent Weaver, Master Instructor Roy Day, Instructor Rick English, Assistant Instructors Jim Kinney, Doug Bernhard. Not pictured: Phillip Kinney, Jason Nguyen, Nathan Phillips, Bob Trouteaud.





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Roy Day with President Clinton



Lakeside vs. Henderson 1972



Roy Day in Fencing Meet

Discipline, Defense & Forging Champions At JW American Karate (from pg 8)

Grove Elementary. I played soccer at Lakeside, where we won state in 1970. On October 28th, 1972, I fell the equivalent of seven stories in a demolition mishap that took two lives and left me a paraplegic.

The wheelchair didn't stop me from leading an interesting and unusual life. For three years I studied with Medicine Men and Women training to be a shaman. I wrote my thesis in Anthropology at Georgia State about the effect of Christianity on traditional Paiute ceremonial practices. I spent three years running a nightclub in Athens and then went on to write three books of poetry and a novel. In 1995 I became aware of the sport of wheelchair fencing and for almost a decade I represented the United States as a member of the US Wheelchair Fencing Team. I competed in the Paralympics, three World Championships, and after the Sydney Games I completed four life-altering scuba dives at The Great Barrier Reefs.

In 1998, the year after I won the US National Championship in Épée fencing, I met Master Robert Quinn. He was a Master of American Karate, Kenpo, and Modern Arnis (Philippine Stick Fighting.) My nephew Patrick was dealing with many mild symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome and his parents thought Karate might help. It did.

When I met Master Quinn, I told him I'd been working on a system of self-defense for wheelchair users. He was a third-generation police officer and eager to help; the rate of serious violent crime is two to three times higher for the disabled than the able-bodied. He guided me over the years to write two books, 'Crime and the Disabled' and 'The We Defend System of Self-Defense' and to found www.thewedefendsystem.org to address this problem.

Master Quinn tragically passed away in 2010 and was honored in dojos around the world. I continued at the dojo for a couple of years, but then was gone for five years while I took care of my elderly father. I returned later as a volunteer instructor. The Quinn family decided to sell the business and Dr. Stephanie Sargent Weaver stepped up determined to keep Master Quinn's legacy vibrant and alive.

With the support of the Quinn family I have attempted to run things the way Master Quinn had and the results have been spectacular. In the six months since

I have taken over every student we have has become a better self-defender. Instructor Jim Kinney also teaches women's self-defense at Emory and is preparing to test for his black belt shortly. Jim's son, Phillip, is also an instructor and earned his black belt as a teenager. Instructor Nathan Phillips is a sophomore at Tucker High School and is the youngest student to earn his black belt while attending this dojo. All of these men came up under Master Quinn, and have been invaluable since I have returned. Our new instructors, Mr. Rick English and Mr. Bob Trouteaud, bring vital resources to the dojo as well. Mr. Rick studied Kenpo for 25 years during his long career in the US Navy, specializing in close quarters combat. Our new sparring instructor Mr. Bob's experience and excellent form is helping to raise our sparring skills to even higher levels.

If you walk by JW American Karate, it is hard not to notice all the shiny new trophies on the window ledge. They have been won by our 'tournament tigers'. Eight-year-old Emma Jean Brennan, 10 and 11-year-old cousin's Krishiv and Ayush Patel, 12-year-old Julie Horton, and 14-year-old Gracia-Maria Najim – our potential Olympic hopeful.

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Discipline, Defense & Forging Champions At JW American Karate (from pg 11)

The very first class Emma Jean took, I taught her how to hit something safely. I held a bag and told her she could hit it as hard as she wanted. She pulled back and wailed on the pad and smiled from ear to ear. Within minutes I asked Dr. Weaver's permission to put Emma Jean on the fast track to spar and fight in tournaments. She dominated her class in the last tournament and the first-place trophy she was awarded is 2/3 her size.

Krishiv is an aggressive and all-out attacker whereas Ayush is a more reserved counter-attacker. Ayush was so laid back in sparring one night his father called me over and expressed doubt that Ayush was ever going to show the warrior within. I assured Mr. Patel not to worry. Now every time Ayush comes in first place at tournaments I remind him of the incident.

Julie and Gracia-Maria can fight each other fiercely and then seconds later be laughing and smiling. Because



they are close in age and belt, they've been in the same category and had to fight each other, usually with Gracia-Maria coming in first and Julie second. This situation is about to change and I expect Gracia-Maria to continue to be a champion in her category, and Julie to begin to dominate her new category.

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Gracia-Maria (see cover photo) is naturally quick and coordinated and took to Karate like a duck to water. The only question is how far can she go. She has only been in our new system for six months and is yet to compete in a national venue which will occur at the Battle of Atlanta in June.

It is a requirement that all our students do well in school and behave at home in order to attend class. Whether the child is in our little dragon class, junior

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Jay and TMNT at Battle of Atlanta 2015

dragon class or even if they are dealing with ADD or ADHD, they will be in a disciplined environment, learn self-respect and respect for others, and they will learn how to defend themselves.

Besides Karate for all ages 4 and up, and selfdefense for the disabled by appointment we also teach a class in women's self-defense every Saturday. It is the desire of our owner, Dr. Stephanie Sargent Weaver, that we be of service to the community and we hope that the teachers and students of our local schools take part in our programs in even greater numbers. We not only offer classes for children, but we hold separate classes for adults, from the beginner to the advanced student. Anyone is welcome to come by the studio and participate in a class, first one is free!"



