

GrandMaster George E. Anderson 11/25/1931 to 8/6/2009

Hanshi George Anderson was unarguably one of the most influential figures of modern martial arts. His martial arts background dates back to 1950 when he began training in early forms of taekwondo, karate and jujitsu with Il Joo Kim and Tong Choo Choi. He quickly developed a reputation as a quick learner and strong practitioner. In the 1970's he formed the first of a number of martial arts organizations designed to represent the best students that various amateur martial arts styles have to offer. Mr. Anderson spearheaded the creation of the Central TaeKwonDo Association (CTA) and was elected its first Chairman. His international certifications as a World Union of Karatedo (WUKO) and Pan American Taekwondo (PAT) official led him to U.S. involvement with the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). With the strength of the AAU, he was soon elected Secretary General of the Pan American Union during meetings in Madrid.

His subsequent election during the 1970's to positions as President of AAU Karate and then President of the World Referees Council allowed him to gain the experience needed to work on getting karate recognized by the United States Olympics Committee. He was elected to represent karate to the USOC and then to represent all affiliated sports to the Board of the USOC and served in these capacities for eight years. From these platforms, Mr. Anderson engineered a successful drive to have karate recognized as a medal sport in the Pan American Games.

Many of these international accomplishments were a "first" for someone from the United States. These accomplishments, along with his organizational abilities to develop a network of intelligent practitioners, coaches and referees who began to change the landscape of amateur karate in the United States, led him to be recognized in 1985 as the "Man of the Year" by Black Belt Magazine, the most influential of all martial arts trade magazines.

Hanshi Anderson then rewrote the rules for competition for amateur karate and gained its acceptance as the international standard as adopted by the WUKO and all major karate organizations. These rules continue to be the template used nationally and internationally by today's karate practitioners and for the development of new officials.

With his election in Budapest as Technical Director of the First World Cup, Mr. Anderson directed the unification of the reconfigured WUKO, now labeled the World Karate Federation (WKF), and the International Amateur Karate Federation. Upon his return from Budapest, the first unified "First World Technical Congress" was held in his hometown of Akron, Ohio in recognition of his accomplishments. Many in the martial arts community considered what Mr. Anderson did with the Pan American games, the USOC, and the unification drive to have been "missions impossible" that were successful only because of his veracity, personal commitment to the art and sport, and desire to move karate forward.

The skills he learned internationally and the friendships he developed around the world led to the creation of the USA Karate Federation (USAKF) in the 1980's, an organization

which eventually became the first National Governing Body for karate under the USOC banner and the powerhouse for amateur karate and jujitsu in the United States.

In 1990 he formed the United States Jujitsu Federation (USJJF) and served as its first President. The USJJF is now the national governing body for jujitsu within the USOC family and now appears in the Olympic Committee's World Games. By the early 1990's Hanshi Anderson had developed a reputation as karate and jujitsu's "Renaissance Man", doing what no one else had been able to do with these two sports. This label stuck with him when he was featured as the cover story for Karate Illustrated magazine in 1992 with successive recognition as the cover story for Karate Profiles magazine in 1993.

By the late 1990's Mr. Anderson's national and international accomplishments as an organizer, practitioner, and style leader led him to receive numerous high-ranking black belt awards and certifications from the most prestigious martial arts organizations in the world. Perhaps more important than the rank recognitions was the constant demand placed on Mr. Anderson to visit martial arts schools around the world to physically demonstrate techniques in workshops and seminars, provide technical assistance to multi-country martial arts and other sports organizations, and to teach members of royal families, heads of state and their security staff, and provide the presence needed to lead the global martial arts community into the 21st century.

Reflecting this drive to position the martial arts for the new century was his prolific writing of more than 50 technical manuals, instruction guides, organizational constitutions and by-laws, books, workbooks, and standards templates. His own KwanMuKan style of karate boasts more than 2,500 black belts with multi-art schools throughout the United States, Canada, the Middle East, Europe and South America. Hanshi Anderson drove his students to develop an intellectual side to their training, demanding them to understand that being a successful martial artist is linked directly to family, education, friendship and civility.

During his last few years Mr. Anderson enjoyed worldwide appearances on numerous martial arts television and radio productions, magazine profiles in Kickboxx magazine (2002), Samurai Banzai (Italian, 2002), and numerous accolades including inductions into leading karate, jujitsu, taekwondo and police instructor halls of fame. His most recent work with members of the USA National Karate Federation, current National Governing Board for Olympic karate, led to the creation of the "Senior Masters Caucus" to provide mature and fledgling martial arts organizations the insight and experience of long-time practitioners. As always, his favorite times were teaching students directly, whether high ranking black belts and law enforcement officers studying advanced techniques, or beginning students at The University of Akron where he was an Auxiliary Professor.

The martial arts community has lost an influential leader, technician, educator and friend. Many consider the martial arts community to be "family" and with Anderson's passing they have lost their father figure.