

Adam Kinowski

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4<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt Essay- *My Taekwondo Experiences*

For the last eighteen years, I have been an active participant and Instructor in the art and sport of Taekwondo. I received my first and second degree black belts under Master Kwang Pai, in Clifton Park, New York and my third degree under Master Carlos Leal under whom I continue to train. Throughout my Taekwondo training I have been involved in many mental and physical training workshops, clubs, and organizations; I have also acquired many great friendships. Taekwondo has helped to shape the person that I am today.

In 1996, I traveled to Korea where I was fortunate to train at The World Koong Joong Mu Sool Association, The Kyung Hee University, and The Kukkiwon. It was at these institutions that I learned many training exercises and technical improvements in sparring and forms, such as: various kicks, strikes, blocks, as well as mental and physical strength-building concepts. I also experienced spectacular Martial Arts demonstrations that inspired me to train harder and embrace my artistic side by creating and choreographing Taekwondo events. All of these training experiences have instilled in me a greater sense of the six tenants of black belt: modesty, courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable-spirit. It has also given me a deeper appreciation of Taekwondo history and Korean culture.

For the last seven years I have operated and owned a Taekwondo practice named AJK's Martial Arts and Fitness Center, Inc., which operates in Huntington Beach and Newport Beach. With the help of my wife, Kirsten Kinowski, who is the CFO of AJK's, and Sandra Wight, who is our First Instructor, I have been able to conduct a successful Taekwondo curriculum and program for all ages. Presently, I teach ITF (International Taekwondo Federation) and WTF (World Taekwondo Federation) patterns, standards for competition patterns, standards for Olympic sparring, weapons, and some hapkido. Over our seven year history, our program has successfully graduated twenty-six first degree black belts and three second degree black belts. We have also organized Taekwondo training camps, In-house championships, demonstrations, and special events.

In an effort to develop well-rounded athletes in Taekwondo and remain current with our Taekwondo community, AJK's is affiliated with The CUTA (California United Taekwondo Association) and The USA Taekwondo. Currently, I hold an Associate Level coaching credential under the USA Taekwondo, and I am actively seeking my Level One Coaching status, which I hope to obtain by next summer at the Junior Olympics. It has also been my privilege to work along side of such talented athletes in the competition arena. I have been lucky to have coached at local, state, national, and senior level tournaments. It remains AJK's goal and mission to provide quality instruction and service through these organizations, as well as the assistance and effort from Mrs. Kirsten Kinowski and Ms. Sandra Wight.

Over the course of my eighteen years of Taekwondo practice, I have made beautiful friendships, which have helped me to be a better person. It is these friends who have bared witness and supported me through high school and college graduations, careers, marriage, and children. By wrapping myself in my community, I have gained and given respect, gratitude, fortitude, and care. It is these friendships that continue to support me in my quest for black belt excellence and the development of my character. I would like to pay special recognition to these families for their constant support and encouragement over the years: Dudla, Laya, Lewis, Mesh, Pai, Paupst, Yuhasz, Brinkman, Broderick, Henderson, Leal, Russell, Stone, Wight, Zimmermann, and my wife, Kirsten.

In conclusion, my Taekwondo experiences have strengthened my overall ability to lead and serve my community. Not only am I a husband, father, and director of a Taekwondo business, but, since 2000 I have been an elementary school teacher at Carden Hall in Newport Beach, CA. I have always viewed myself as a "Martial Arts Educator"; I see myself as a team member, along with school teachers and administrators, counselors and parents, in helping young people fulfill their physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual needs so they can lead healthier, happier lives. It will be my privilege and honor to hold the rank and title of 4<sup>th</sup> degree Black Belt and to continue my training under Master Carlos Leal, all the while committed in the teachings and practices that have been bestowed upon me in my Taekwondo development.