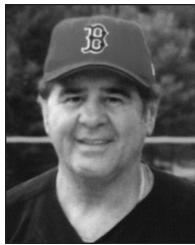


Grand Master Hee Kwan Lee – Hap Ki Do Korean Martial Arts Legend

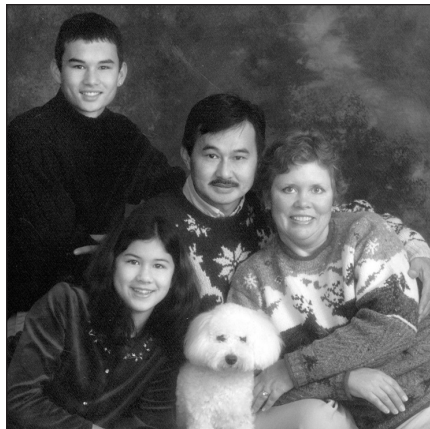


“By working faithfully eight hours a day, you may eventually get to be a boss and work twelve hours a day. Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not,

and a sense of humor was provided to console him for what he is.”

In America, at the age of six, young children are usually starting the first grade of elementary school. In 1961, at the age of six, Hee Kwan Lee started his education in Seoul, South Korea, his birthplace. In Seoul, compulsory education starts at age six. But, young Hee Kwan had other ideas. Hee began his formal martial arts training under the private tutelage of Master Instructor, Young Chang Kim. Little did Lee know at that early age that he would someday become a Grand Master (GM) in Hap Ki Do himself. Mr. Lee’s dedication to this International Korean Marshall Art Sport is legendary.

In 1979, at the age of 24, Mr. Lee, had become a 5th degree black belt Master Instructor. Hee fulfilled part of his childhood dream by coming to the United States. When he arrived in Kalamazoo, he had very little money in his pocket, but his goal was to one day have a business of his own, where he could teach Hap Ki Do. While in Kalamazoo in 1979, he worked with his



Hee Kwan Lee with wife Barbara, son Alex and daughter Katie.

brother teaching martial arts at a location his brother rented on West Michigan Avenue in Urbandale. In 1980, he moved to Battle Creek. After teaching in the Cereal City for a few years Mr. Lee ventured to Chicago in 1983 seeking more gainful employment. He worked six months in the “windy city” and decided that big city life was not for him. Chicago didn’t fit into his future plans of someday owning his own business. The city’s expensive cost of living was a big factor in Hee’s return to Battle Creek to resume his martial arts teaching

career and continue to pursue his dream of someday having his own martial arts complex.

After teaching around the Battle Creek area for several years, Mr. Lee received what he calls his blessing when in 1991, he was hired by Post General Foods, now Kraft Foods. With this added revenue from Post/Kraft, Hee was able to make his dream a reality in 2004.

To be exact the groundbreaking for his building at 1600 West Goguc St. in Battle Creek took place on March 27, 2004 (25 years after he came to Michigan). This was when construction of his state-of-the-art facility took place. It took a lot of hard work but he was determined to open his own business, which is known as Hee Kwan Lee’s Hap Ki Do Korean Martial Arts LLC. Mr. Lee credits the resources he saved from

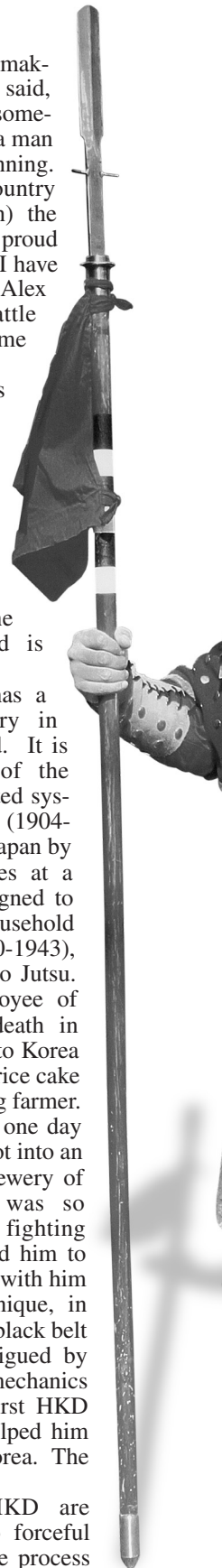
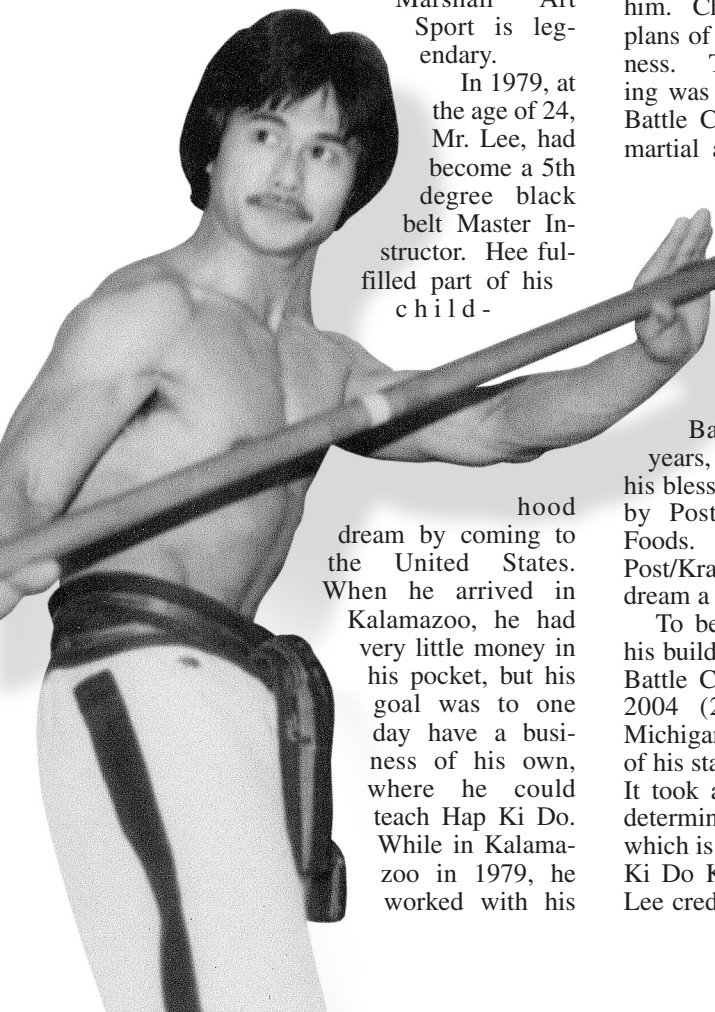
his job at Post/Kraft with making it all possible. He said, “Only in America could something like this happen for a man with such a humble beginning. I truly consider this country (he’s now a U.S. citizen) the land of opportunity. I’m proud that my wife Barbara and I have raised our two children, Alex and Katie, here in Battle Creek and call it our home town.”

Incidentally, Mr. Lee’s wife Barbara Hinds is a 1972 graduate of Battle Creek Central High School and she was one of Lee’s first students at the West Michigan location. They were married in 1985. Mrs. Lee worked 20 years for the Federal government and is now a stay-at-home mom.

Hap Ki Do (HKD) has a long and storied history in Korea where it originated. It is said that the founder of the Martial Art defense-oriented system was Yong Shul Choi (1904-1986), who was taken to Japan by Japanese occupying forces at a young age. He was assigned to work as a laborer in the household of Sokaku Takado (1850-1943), the patriarch of Dalto Ryo Jutsu. Yong remained an employee of Takado until Takado’s death in 1943. Choi then returned to Korea and worked as a roadside rice cake salesman and later as a hog farmer.

As fate would have it, one day during this period, Choi got into an altercation outside the brewery of Suh, Bok Sup. Sup was so impressed with Yong’s fighting capabilities that he invited him to his office so he could talk with him about his style, or technique, in HKD. Sup was already a black belt in Judo, but was so intrigued by Yong Choi’s defensive mechanics that he became Choi’s first HKD student and eventually helped him open his first school in Korea. The year was 1951.

The strengths of HKD are deflection as opposed to forceful blocking. It’s a defensive process



of perpetual forward motion, using one technique after another, until your opponent succumbs to defeat. Quickness is essential. In HKD, sometimes the greatest journey is in the distance between two opponents. There are traditional advanced throws that are captivating to watch, but are unrealistic in hand-to-hand combat.

Yong Shul Choi, who was considered the modern day founder of HKD left no formal successor when he passed away in 1986. But several advanced masters created their own sub-systems of the art and have chartered new HKD organizations. However, there are two individuals who were instrumental in the founding of HKD; Choi's first student, Suh, Bok Sup who was Choi's first black belt student. Without his contribution to the art, Choi may never have been given the opportunity to formally teach in Korea.



Although there are several people that hold the rank of 9th and 10th degree black belt, Suh, Bok Sup was the first HKD black belt and a force in the development of the original foundation. He could rightfully be considered Hap Ki Do's highest ranking black belt. The second person is Ji, Han Jae, an early student of Choi who relocated from Taegue, Korea (the birthplace of HKD) to Seoul, in 1957, which was the center of Korean Martial Arts after the Japanese occupation. Jae was responsible for introducing advanced offensive punching, kicking and weapons. Aside from founder, Yong Shul Choi, Ji, Han Jae did more to expand upon the original system of HKD and promote the martial art around the world than any other instructor in history but, due to differing ideologies, many Korean instructors no longer reference him as the source of record or knowledge.

A little history about Korea... this country gained its independence from Japan after WWII ended in 1945. Ideologically, the country was split by the Soviet Union and the U.S. into North and South, both sides thought that eventual reunification would take place, but this was not to be. On June 25, 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea in a bloody war that lasted over three years and involved more than 20 nations. The demilitarized zone is a symbol of the dispute and a poignant reminder of the Korean War (1950-53). No peace treaty was ever signed between the North and South and the last vestige of the Cold War is the closed border region (38th Parallel) between the two countries which highlights the fact that the war never ended

and an uneasy truce continues between the adversaries. Hee Kwan Lee says, "It's not a peaceful co-existence."

Lee's KMA LLC has a proud history and they can add to their reputation by making a strong showing this summer when Hee and seven coaches and chaperons will take a team of 31 American students from his school to Seoul, South Korea, to compete in the 2007 Tri-Annual Hap Ki Do International Championships. This tournament event will host 1,200 to 1,500 participants from 50 countries from around the world. Grand Master Lee's team could solidify his relationship with HKD's International Federation in an effort to bring the tri-annual event to our city in 2010. It would be a great honor for our city, state and country if the championships were hosted by GM Lee and his staff right here in Battle Creek.

This international competition would bring an influx of hundreds of athletes from 50 nations, along with coaches, families, friends and representatives from each country. The economic impact from this 10-day event would be astronomical, not to mention the news media coverage it would generate locally, statewide, nationally and internationally; plus the competition it would bring from other states and communities in the U.S.A.

Mr. Lee is well connected in Seoul and makes regular trips there to advance his skill in the martial art. He currently is an 8th degree black belt Grand Master in the International Hap Ki Do Federation and is working toward his 9th degree black belt. The highest degree you can attain is a 10th degree black

...continued...

belt. In competition, Hee is famous for his Coup De' Grace. His name is becoming synonymous with Hap Ki Do in this country as well as his native South Korea. Lee has panache! With expertise and experience from previous competition, he erodes the will of his opponent to win. Hee exhibits great skill, cleverness and know-how.

Mr. Lee gives a lot of credit for KMA's success to his two assistants, Master Robert Schreiner, a 5th degree black belt, and Master Mike Ormstead, a 4th degree black belt. Master Schreiner was born in Battle Creek and resides in Galesburg with his wife Lisa. He started training in the martial art of Tae Kwon Do in 1977 and earned a black belt. Schreiner met Lee when Hee came to this country in 1979. They trained together at the International Academy of Martial Arts (IAMA) in Kalamazoo. When Lee decided to work on his own in 1980, Schreiner continued his training at IAMA. A year later, he came to Battle Creek to train with GM Lee and has been with him ever since.

Mike Ormstead hails from Flint but went to high school in Millington Michigan where he was a four sport prep star in football, basketball, baseball and track, graduating in 1970. He played two years of football at Olivet college when a leg injury sidelined him. He went on to WMU and graduated with his BBA in 1974.

He met Lee in 1983 while teaching Hee the intricacies of water skiing and kite flying behind a boat. They formed a lasting friendship and Mike's training in HKD began soon after they met. His interest in HKD has resulted in more than 20 years of training with GM Lee. Mike and wife Denise have two sons, Justin and Adam, and the family resides in Battle Creek. He believes that the art of HKD has something to offer people of all ages in the world of self-defense.

Lee says, "My two assistants, Bob and Mike, have been invaluable to the success of my business. They are like having two more right arms."

Hee and his school are very active in many local volunteer projects. KMA voluntarily and monetarily provides support for many area fundraising events too numerous to mention, but one of the most noteworthy is the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, where KMA has raised over \$32,000 in the last three years. Now that's giving back!

Mr. Lee and I talked briefly about baseball and my association with the internationally famous Grand Rapids Sullivan's team. I told him that this team from Michigan competed in international competition in Haarlem, Holland, from 1963 until the turn of the century (21st), and we played against the nation-

al teams from many countries, including the Far East teams from China, Japan, South Korea, Taipei and Taiwan, on many occasions. I said, "The teams from the Orient were always well coached and very strong fundamentally, well disciplined, dedicated, and they executed precisely, both defensively and offensively. They had speed and quickness, a will to win, and took the sport very seriously." Hee Kwan said, "Soccer is also very popular in my country and basketball is fast becoming a favorite. As for our athletes, we as coaches demand 100 percent from them. We focus on hard work, discipline and repetition as the key to success. You have to practice, practice, practice..."

To describe Hee Kwan Lee's demeanor, I think he is a very proud man and a firm taskmaster who wants success for his athletes. He has a sense of humor but maintains a very positive attitude about his work with KMA and his 200-plus HKD students. Hee's a man with goals and direction and knows what road will lead him and his team to success in South Korea. Hee believes!

On the fundraising side, I know that Mr. Lee is raising funds and can use all the monetary help they can get in preparation for his teams trip to South Korea in July. For information about contributing to this worthwhile endeavor, call KMA at 269-963-kick (5425) or visit their website www.koreanma.com. Any support will be greatly appreciated. And, if you're interested in the art of self-defense, stop by the school at 1600 W. Goguc St. and watch GM Lee and his staff in action. The best way to select an instructor is comparative observation. You won't find any better teacher or school than Lee's KMA in Southwest Michigan Hee knows his craft because "Hee is Lee"!

As a competitor Hee Kwan Lee is poetry in motion. They say, "Poetry is just the evidence of life. If your life is burning well, don't put out the fire." I'm Carl Angelo, Touching the Bases for *Scene (the most read) Magazine*.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The Stan Musial adult baseball program will be a five-team league. There was some doubt as to whether Battle Creek would field a major division in 2007. Frankie Fagan of Atlas Sales (Budweiser), long-time Behnke/Bud co-sponsor, dropped her sponsorship, which could have caused a huge void in city baseball.

However, the Grande Dame of local baseball, Betty Behnke of Behnke, Inc. will continue her sponsorship in support of the diamond sport. Her new co-sponsor is James King of King Medical Equipment. The team will now be

known as Behnke-King.

Mr. King is no stranger to Battle Creek sports. The former high school athlete (Pennfield) is one of the co-sponsors of the Battle Creek Knights. The Knights are a member of the International Basketball League. James King is a long-time supporter of local athletics and his generosity is known throughout the community. We thank Betty Behnke and James King as well as the other sponsors, HBC, Battle Creek Merchants, Keene's and newcomer, Lucho's Pirates, for keeping local adult baseball alive. An added attraction for city baseball fans will be inter-league play with Kalamazoo's city league teams. Another highlight for summer baseball fans and, we at *Scene Magazine* would like to welcome them to town, is the Battle Creek Bombers. The Bombers will play a 68-game home and away schedule and will host their home games at C.O. Brown Stadium, the former site of many minor league teams with major league affiliations.

The Bombers will compete in the strong Northwoods League (NL), a collegiate wood bat league. These young college athletes do not play for pay. With the addition of Battle Creek and Green Bay as expansion teams the NL will consist of 14 teams in the upper Midwest. There will be two divisions the North and South and our city will be in the southern division. Battle Creek is the first franchise from this area. The Bombers started their schedule on the road May 31st at Brainerd, Minnesota and they began their home schedule on June 6th at C.O. Brown Stadium against the Wisconsin Woodchucks.

Battle Creek will be coached by Brian Murphy a Division II assistant coach from Bryant University in Rhode Island. Coach Murphy has been working expeditiously to put the Bombers roster together. He said, "With our personnel I think the team will be very competitive." The Northwoods League has been in existence for 14 years.

Our local city league baseball started play the first week in June. You can follow the Bomber's and our city teams schedules in the Battle Creek Enquirer.

So, c'mon fans and friends, let's get on the baseball bandwagon this summer and support the new kids on the block, the Bombers, and, our local teams. Baseball has been a big part of our city's storied athletic history. Don't let it die! And, maybe, just maybe the Stan Musial National Tournament will someday resurface.

For more information on the Bomber's 68-game schedule, call General Manager Rick Lindau at 269-962-0735, the teams main office at Bailey Park.