



Derrick Wright

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**Today
we'd
like
to
introduce
you
to
Derrick Wright**

So, before we jump into specific questions about the business, why don't you give us some details about you and your story.

I became interested in Chinese Martial Arts after seeing my first Shaw Brothers classic feature film titled, "Soul Brothers of Kung Fu" which debut in 1977. I was in a foster home and my older foster brother wanted to go to the movies. The only way his mother, my foster mother would let him go was if he took me along. After seeing this film I was infatuated with all things associated with Chinese Martial Arts, and the Chinese culture.

Unfortunately, there were no Chinese Martial Arts schools in the area. I am originally from a small town in Southeast Missouri, the only martial art schools in the area taught only Tae Kwon Do or Karate. I was able to enroll in a Karate school in Sikeston, Missouri for a short time but was immediately disenrolled when I began to get into fights with some of the boys in the neighborhood. It wasn't until I joined the Marine Corps, stationed in Okinawa at Camp Futenma and working as a military policeman that my real martial arts training began. I started training in basics of Yang Style Taiji Quan and Hsing Yi with Master Hokama in Naha, Okinawa, Japan, and Southern Dragon with Master Norman Burland. Master Burland was a staff sergeant in the Air Force. He was one of Master Hokama's senior students and taught his own class at his home on Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa.

After military tours, and deployments in Okinawa, Korea, and Desert Shield/Storm, which included Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain. I moved to Los Angeles, California and started my life as a civilian.

Check out some of his work below:





WRIGHTS KUNG FU ASSOCIATION
20 YEARS
November 1997-2017



More of his work:

Not too long after getting settled in Los Angeles I began searching for a martial arts school. I enrolled in the Shan Tung Kung Fu Association in Pasadena, California and trained with Master Kenneth Edwards. After receiving my instructor certification with Master Edwards, I moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, attended San Francisco State University and started a martial arts club. After about a year, due to the weather, finances, and difficulties of trying to raise two younger brothers as a full-time student, I decided it was best to move back to Southern California. After re-establishing myself in the Los Angeles area again, I started a martial arts club in the North Hollywood area. I taught at NOHO Gym, North Hollywood Park, and the MKM Cultural Arts Center before opening my own studio in North Hollywood on November 2, 2002. It was not easy, but I took a step of faith and believed it would work and it did. While still working full-time as a supervisor at a local hospital, going to school full time and raising two boys, with the help of some dedicated and loyal students, we established and operated a full-time successful martial arts academy.

I relinquished the North Hollywood school in December 2007 to one of my promising black belts and his family. They were very excited about running the school and operating it as a family business. My senior students and I did our best to provide them with the support they needed to be successful. Eventually, I took some time off, traveled and continued my own personal martial arts training.

After a much-needed break, In October 2008, I decided to open another school. This time in the South Bay, in the Torrance and North Redondo Beach area. Due to the downturn of the economy, this location was slower to establish and although we didn't have nearly the success we had in North Hollywood prior to 2008, However, we were able to serve the community, teach hundred of students, create many black belts and most of all help people to change their lives. Currently, I teach more private, and semi-private lessons. I also teach after school programs in several charter schools in Los Angeles area. Although I am experiencing the financial success that I once did as a business owner, I still get to help change lives by teaching martial arts, honor my commitment to my teacher as a disciple of the Seven Star Mantis Style by propagating the art and promoting Chinese Martial Arts. This has also given me the opportunity to focus on my own training.

I have been involved in the martial arts officially since 1988. I have been a practitioner of Seven Star Praying Mantis Kung Fu since 1997. I first met my current teacher Grandmaster Kam Wing Lee in 1997 at a seminar he was teaching. He is currently one of the oldest, if not the oldest living active practitioners of the Seven Star Mantis Style as taught by Grandmasters Chui Chui Man and Luo Guang Yu. Luo Guang Yu is a famous Chinese martial arts master and pioneer in the martial arts community that brought the art from Northern China to the South and began teaching it at the Chin Woo Athletic Association. Prior to training with Grandmaster Lee, I trained consistently for fourteen years with one of his students, Master John Cheng MD. Once Master Cheng decided to focus on his medical practice and family, We both agreed it was in my best interest to continue my training with Grandmaster Kam Wing Lee. Training with Grandmaster Lee has thus far been the pinnacle of my martial arts training. His teaching method and approach to the martial arts is very direct, straight forward, and no nonsense. He expects and demands that all of his students work hard and discover the martial arts for themselves. I have experienced many great moments and experiences so far with Grandmaster Kam Wing Lee. Besides great training, I have had the opportunity to travel throughout Asia and meet many masters and students. Attend many great events, explore places most people will never have the opportunity to visit, eat exotic foods and see magnificent places. I look forward to many more years to come.

Martial Arts is definitely more than a hobby or a sport. It is a lifestyle. What you put into it is what you get, It's just like life. For some of us, it is our life!

Overall, has it been relatively smooth? If not, what were some of the struggles along the way?

I don't believe any road is a smooth road. Any road that is worth travel has its bumps and bruises. I think most struggles are financial in nature. The constant struggle of being an artist and being a business man always seem to be contradictory in nature. Another is ego, our own ego and the ego of others. Once we realize that it's about the knowledge, memories, and the journey and not about the titles, positions, where we sit, who we sit next to and how many levels we are, then the real training can begin.

Wrights Kung Fu Association – what should we know? What do you guys do best? What sets you apart from the competition?

Wrights Kung Fu Association is an organization established by myself and my closest students. Our goal is to learn, teach and propagate Seven Star Praying Mantis Kung Fu. We are most proud of being a small close and tight group. While other people pride themselves on knowing and teaching many different martial art systems, we are proud that we are able to focus on and attempt to master one. We really believe the quote, "jack of all trades and master of none."

What is "success" or "successful" for you?

I believe success is being happy with who you are, where you are, who you are with and what you are doing. Most people in our society believe that success is how much money you have, what kind of car you drive, how big your house is and the size of the lot. This is not a success, these are fillers. Don't misunderstand me, Having those things are nice, but they are not who we are, they do not define us. It's just stuff to make us temporarily happy. Success is being who you truly are.