

A BLESSED LIFE!

As I look back on my life of 75 years, I feel completely blessed and amazed at how it has progressed. NOT to say that it's been a fairytale where ALL my wishes came true — I HAVE had my ups and downs, like everyone else. I am truly thankful, however, that the number of “ups” far outnumber and OUTSHINE the number of “downs”!!

Blessing ONE was being born here in Hawaii! Of ALL the places that I could have been born and raised in, the stars were perfectly aligned. My grandparents emigrated from Japan to Hawaii for better job and life opportunities, and THAT was the start of the course of MY life! HOW BLESSED IS ONE WHO GETS TO LIVE, GROW UP, WORK, MARRY, AND RAISE A FAMILY IN PARADISE???

Blessing TWO were my parents! My father started his working life in the fields of the plantations and drove pineapple trucks from the age of 16. As the eldest son, he worked hard to keep his family provided for, even working off his father's gambling debt on Maui. My mother came to Hawaii soon after from Japan. They met, got married, and had a family of four children, of which I was number three. GROWING UP ARE SOME OF MY MOST CHERISHED MEMORIES!!



The true blessing came when they both decided to start their own businesses. My mom was a gifted dressmaker and seamstress, sewing for some of the most powerful business families in Hawaii at the time, including the Dillinghams, Dods, Martins, and Pangs. My dad, a master carpenter by trade, started his own contracting business and did construction and repair jobs. I previously mentioned that he NEVER forgave my grandfather for having to work off his gambling debt. He also swore that he would NEVER put his children through such an ordeal, and HE KEPT HIS WORD!!! Hard work, dedication, and love for family from Mom and Dad resulted in four happy, carefree, and thriving kids who never felt that we missed out on anything. MY LIFE WOULD NEVER

HAVE BEEN THE SAME WITHOUT THE LOVE, SACRIFICE, AND DETERMINATION OF MY PARENTS!!!

Blessing THREE was our move from Wahiawa to Pauoa Valley in Honolulu. My Dad built his own house with help from my Uncle George (Mom's younger brother). After attending Pauoa Elementary and Kawananakoa Intermediate Schools, my storybook life began to unfold at Roosevelt High School! I was in my junior year in Rough Rider, our news-writing class, when I met THE LOVE OF MY LIFE, PAULA!!! Although off to a rather "rough" start (get it?), our first date to the RHS Mistletoe Ball convinced me that she was the one I wanted to spend the rest of my life with!! THROUGHOUT MY 75 YEARS I HAVE NOT REGRETTED MY DECISION AND HAVE THANKED MY LUCKY STARS FOR MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE!!!

Blessing FOUR was starting karate lessons at the University of Hawaii in 1967. This was the start of my, now, 56 years in Shotokan karate and 40 years since I founded HSK!! I am living proof of what TOTAL commitment and dedication to a passion can produce! However, I am constantly aware and reminded of the magical alignment of my lucky stars! NONE of this could have come to fruition without the love, support, and encouragement from Paula. As I have often stated, Paula is the most SELFLESS and GIVING person that I have EVER met!!! I know of several members who shared the same love and passion for karate as I did, but were "forced" to quit because of their spouses. THANKFULLY, PAULA'S SUPPORT AND SACRIFICE ALLOWED MY PASSION FOR KARATE TO FLOURISH INTO WHAT IS NOW HAWAII SHOTOKAN KARATE!!!

Blessing FIVE are our kids, Remy and Rylan. Although biased, I generally don't sugar-coat my comments. Rem and Ry are two of the nicest adults I know — aside from Paula! Thankfully, they have followed Paula's lead in

treating people with kindness and understanding. Their personalities differ like day and night, but anyone who meets them instantly falls in love with them!! YOU WOULD BE HARD-PRESSED TO FIND TWO NICER PEOPLE!!!



Blessing SIX is my HSK Ohana. Through karate I have met thousands of people whom I would NEVER have met otherwise. Through HSK I have met dozens that I can now call “my family”! The Senpais, and many of the brown and purple belt members have special places in my heart. It normally takes a LONG time for me to call someone a “good friend”. What better place than karate to find out who those are! I have known these awesome individuals for many YEARS, some of them more than half my lifetime!!! We often get together, have dinners, even golf together! I LOVE MY HSK FAMILY!!!

Blessing SEVEN are my grandchildren, Rylynn and Rynn. Rylynn, you recall, caused the “softening of Sensei” fifteen years ago, causing EVERYONE at HSK to take one last big breath and let out a sigh of “RELIEF”! Both still train at HSK, and are slowly improving their skills. Paula and I have been covering Rynn’s tuition for Iolani School since kindergarten, and hopefully will be able to do so until he graduates. He is VERY BRIGHT, and growing into a fine young man, although I believe he spends WAY too much time on gaming and not enough time on his fitness and health! Rylynn is still the love of my life!! Now taller than I am, she is developing into a vibrant young lady, is an honor roll student, and participates in the RHS color guard and band programs. So proud to watch her perform!! Pleasantly, both STILL ask to sleep over at our house from time to time, which surprises us now that they are getting older. You would think that they would rather spend their time with friends than with us OLD folks!!! LOVE MY GRANDCHILDREN TO BITS!!!



Blessing EIGHT is the news that Ry and Anh are expecting their first child, a son, in June!!! The joy is knowing that their wish is finally coming true after having tried for so long and at great expense. Anh is doing well and in her second trimester, and they both are excitedly looking forward to becoming parents!! Needless to say, Paula and I are ECSTATIC!!! WOOHOO!!! ANOTHER GRANDCHILD TO SPOIL!!!

Blessing NINE is our change in lifestyle and GREAT HEALTH! You have already heard about my bout with a stomach virus that lasted 6 months. Thankfully, that's over!! Paula has had a bout with scoliosis for much, MUCH longer than that!!! Five years ago I underwent surgery for my back, called a laminectomy. I was having numbness in my legs that started in my toes and foot, then spread upward through the entire leg, causing me difficulty in walking. At first, I tolerated the numbness, which only affected my left leg. When I began noticing that my right leg was also being affected, I decided to have it checked by a specialist. X-rays showed two areas where my spinal nerves were being pinched!

Guess what? The specialist that I saw was a former karate student of mine! His name is Dr. Kyle Mitsunaga. Isn't that COOL??? He did such a great job on my spine that I was able to return to karate within a week of the operation! With such great results, we asked him to check Paula's scoliosis. I was SHOCKED to see the x-ray of her spine!!! Instead of a straight and gently curved spine, it looked like a corkscrew! It was no wonder that she experienced pain in her legs and back! He told us that he COULD straighten it out, but also that he would NOT recommend it, as the operation could not guarantee that she would be able to walk without pain. We decided to pass. Later, Paula heard about a laser shock treatment that could help her and gave it a try. Thankfully, it looks like that HAS helped a bit, as she no longer experiences severe knee or back pains.



To help us remain healthy and fit for as long as we can, we have turned toward a plant-based diet, avoiding meats, poultry, and dairy products. We still partake occasionally in fish, which we both love! Luckily, Paula and I are on the same page, so we have very little drama in our home. We also exercise daily to stay fit. **LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING OUR GRANDCHILDREN (and grandchild-to-be) GRADUATE AND MARRY — AND, IF WE'RE SUPER LUCKY, MAYBE EVEN MEET OUR FIRST GREAT-GRANDCHILD!!!**

BLESSING TEN is more personal, and something that still amazes me! Most people say that at my age I probably should settle on a **MUCH** slower paced life. You know — **STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES???** Although I have most **DEFINITELY** slowed down and my karate skills are **NOT** as they once were, I am happy and excited that I am still able to **TEACH** with energy, enthusiasm, and effectiveness, and **TRAIN** with focus, intensity, and spirit!!

Though some may argue to the contrary, my age carries a **POWERFUL** message! I am **VERY** much aware that the Senpais, members, and parents look up to me for inspiration and hope for not only their karate future, but also the future of their health! As a role model, I want them to not only strive for a longer life, but a life with purpose!!! My hope is to inspire people to discover and productively use the incredible potential that they each have, and to inspire others to do the same!!!

To have the stars align **SO** perfectly in my life, I know that I have much to be thankful for!!! I am, and have been, blessed with wonderful parents, countless opportunities, a passion for karate, amazing kids, an awesome family, priceless grandchildren (+1), a super HSK Ohana, great health, and, of course an incredibly loving, selfless wife — **PAULA!!!**

I AM BLESSED!!!

