

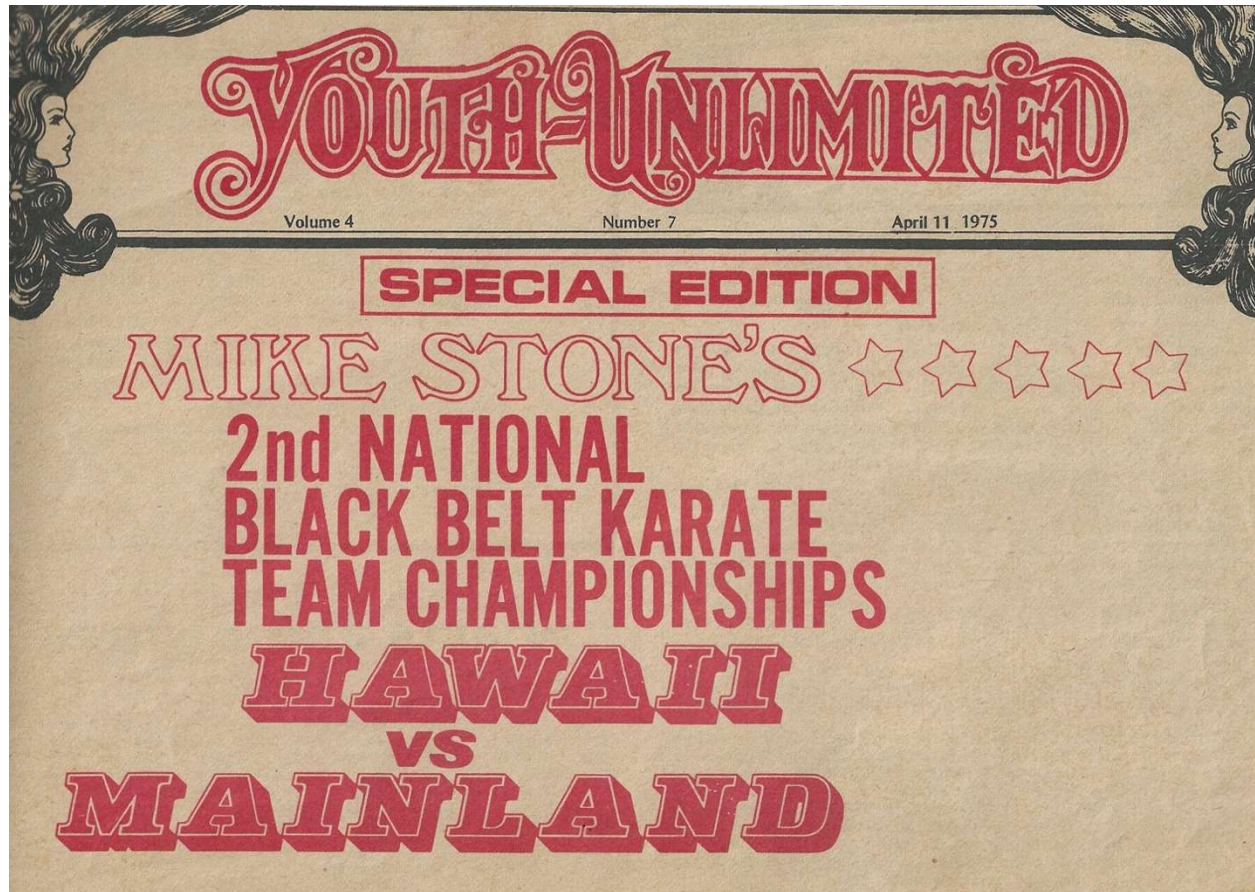
My Karate Journey -- Part 7: The Honeymoon Ends!

KAH was rolling along, racking up an impressive tournament record, sometimes finishing in 1st, 2nd, AND 3rd place in competitions. We knew that we had a bullseye on our gis, but we accepted it and welcomed ALL challengers. Then, in 1974, local marital artist Mike Stone, who had made a name for himself on the mainland, gathered the top competitors in the nation to take on the Hawaii team! He called it "Mike Stone's First National All-Star Black Belt Team Championships – HAWAII vs MAINLAND!"



He brought with him nine mainland champions, many featured in Black Belt Magazine. Hawaii entered two teams, one from KAH, and another made up of champions from all the other clubs in Hawaii. The competition was great, and the competitors were very skillful, which made for a very good match-up. Unfortunately, he also brought with him a battery of judges who were, shall we say, VERY BAD!!! Unlike the mainland crowds, Hawaii karate fans are very well educated in the art and know when the refereeing is poor or biased. A few bad calls during a tournament are to be expected. But when ALL the calls were for the mainland team with no apparent scoring, loud choruses of "BOO!!!" rang out throughout the arena until the matches ended!

Hawaii, of course, lost the match! Everyone was very upset by the judging, and Funakoshi exclaimed, "That's the last time we are entering THAT kind of a tournament!" A year later we found ourselves competing in, yet, another one!



When Funakoshi told us that we were entering ANOTHER Mike Stone tournament, many doubts and skepticism entered my mind. How could such a thing happen when, just a year ago, he told us the opposite? Was he made an offer that he could not refuse? Is he now using us to fill his pockets? Is his goal to now commercialize what was once a dedicated bunch of people doing the right thing for love? These, and many other questions troubled my mind, and I quickly lost faith in Funakoshi and KAH!!!

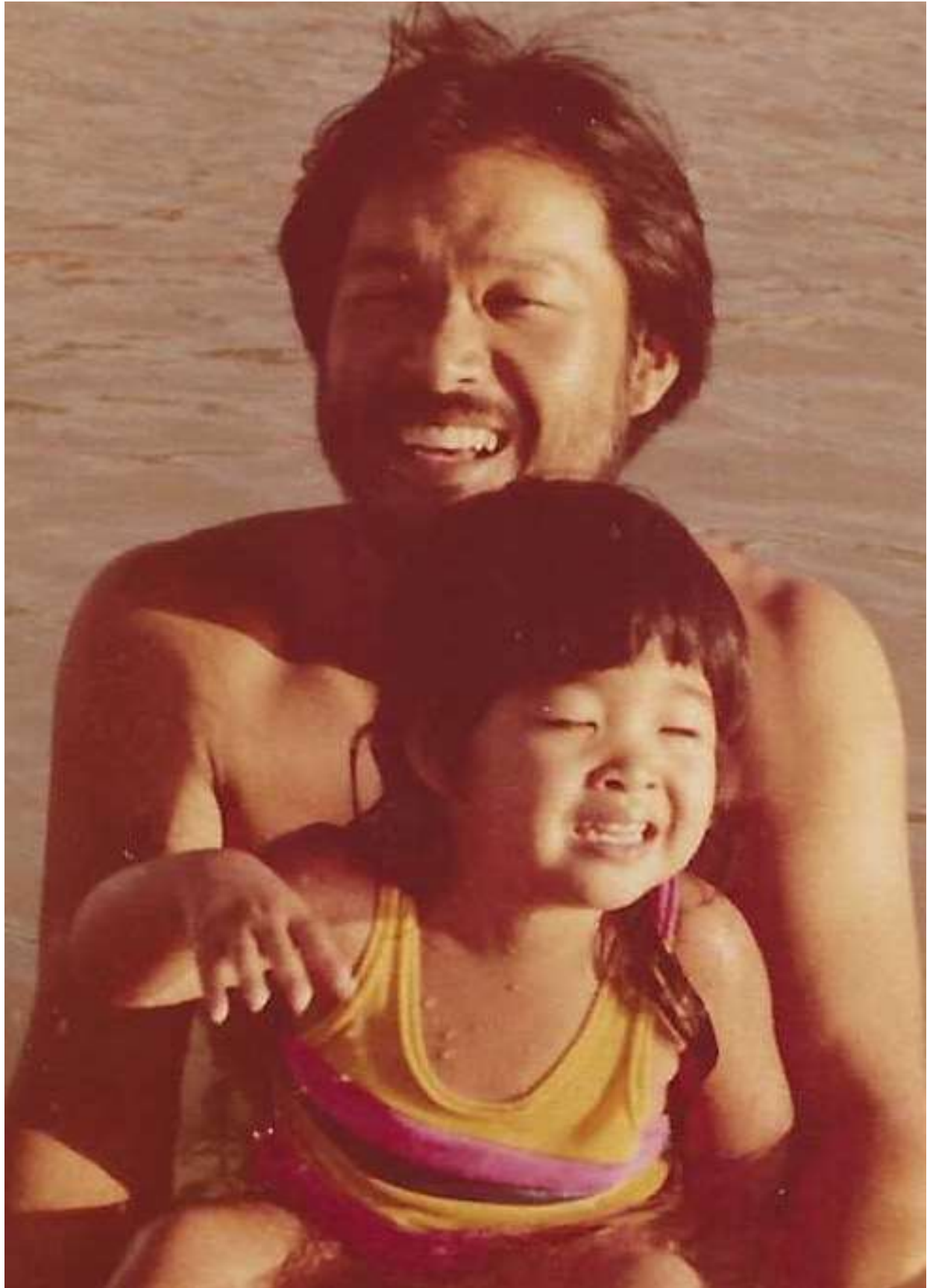
Out of respect for KAH and Funakoshi, and in an effort to avoid a major break-up of the club, I decided to stop supporting KAH by staying away without telling anyone. This, however, was NOT the end of my karate career! I could NOT walk away from a "treasure" that had so profoundly changed my very being! I continued to learn and train on my own, and with Lawrence Go, a student of mine for many years, to whom I had been giving private lessons.

When I left the club, I told Lawrence and his parents of my decision, and also told them that they should find someone else to teach Lawrence, since I would not be up to date

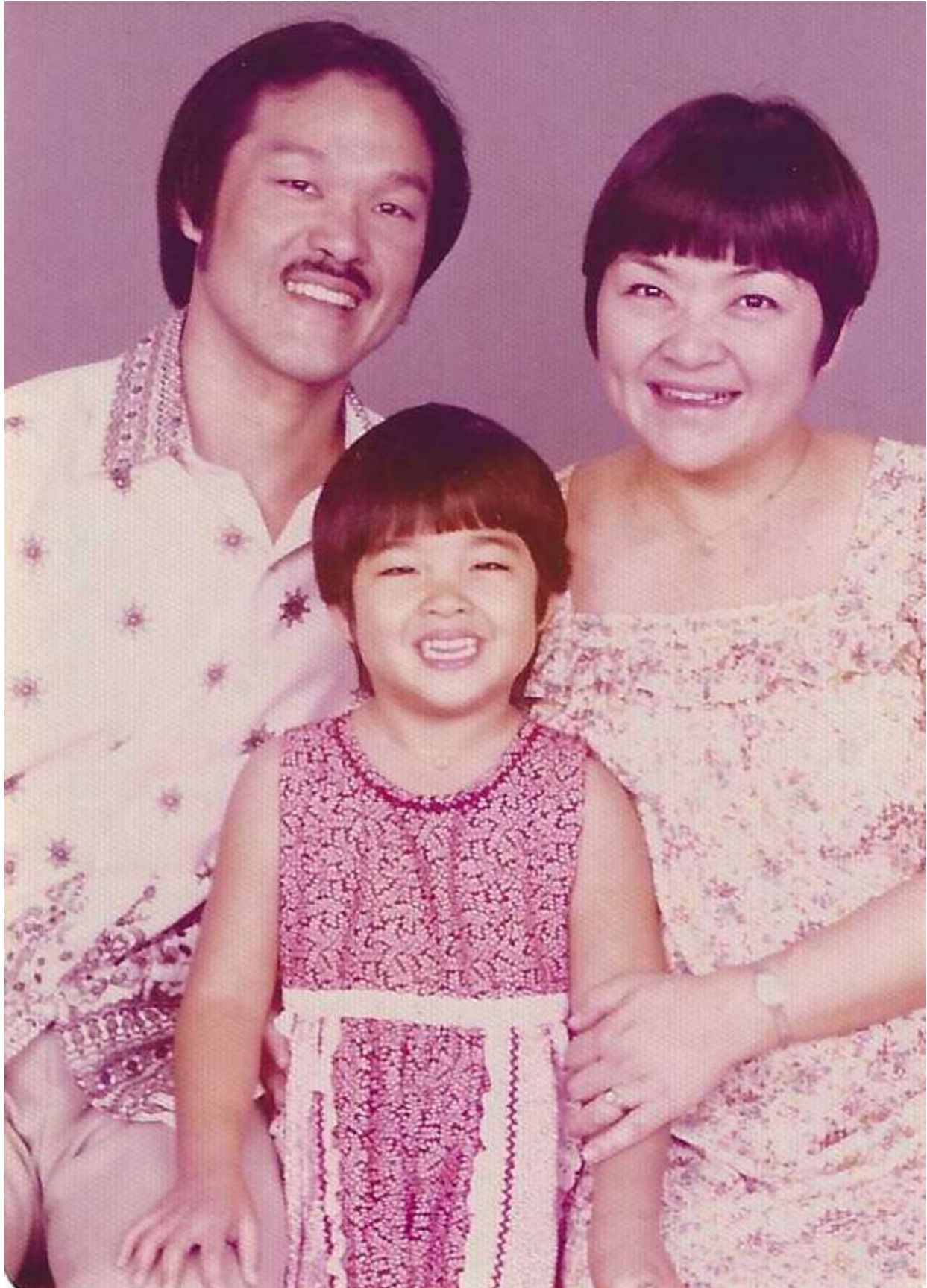
with changes the club may make to the katas. Without hesitation, they said they didn't care about any changes or politics in the club, but wanted ME to continue teaching Lawrence. This vote of confidence was a shot in the arm, and made me even more committed to spreading the art of Shotokan karate to those willing and dedicated to learning it!

This self-isolated training went on for over seven years! But, believe it or not, this long span turned out to be a total BLESSING!!! I ALWAYS believed that there were better ways to teach the techniques of Shotokan karate, and now I had the time to focus on just that!!! I analyzed the techniques, stances, katas, and kumite of the style, and brainstormed better and more practical ways to teach and execute the various moves.

Secondly, and MOST importantly, I had the opportunity AND the chance to spend quality time with my newborn daughter Remy, and be a close and regular part of her development and formative years! Those were the BEST -- except for her sleeping episodes!!! I only wish that I could have had the time and done the same for my son Rylan, but HSK was in full swing at that time! Would have loved to have taught him long-term how to catch and hit the baseball, shoot baskets, toss the football, etc. Sorry, Ry!!!



Thirdly, I finally had time to test my running resolve. I was a pretty fast sprinter but had never really tested myself in longer runs. This break also gave me time to train and prepare for endurance running. In October 1979, I ran the 1st Annual Val Nolasco Memorial Half Marathon, and in December 1979 I finished my very first Honolulu Marathon! Two years later, in June 1981, and with a lot more miles under my belt, I ran the 1st Windward Marathon and finished in under 4 hours!!! My running challenge was complete!



In 1983, I decided it was time to start my own karate club. Remy had just turned 5, and I thought it was a great opportunity for her to start reaping the amazing benefits of this art!! Before starting, however, I felt it proper to let Funakoshi know of my intent and went to visit him one day. He wished me well, and the FINAL TIES WERE CUT!!!