

MY KARATE JOURNEY, PART 9: THE SUN RISES!

The start and rapid growth of HSK could not have been any more exciting and satisfying! Our Manoa dojo trained on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and I was busier than ever teaching classes and planning activities for our members. Although I had a full-time job teaching math in the public school system, I considered karate an exciting and pleasurable “hobby.”

This hectic schedule, daunting as it may seem, brought me much pleasure and childish anticipation! So much so that I decided to open a branch in Kaneohe! What!!! MORE WORK?????

Before I started HSK, I talked to brother Roy and good friend Ron Taketa, who both trained with me in the old club. They also left the old club after I did. I explained my plan to open my own club, and told them that I did NOT expect them to be at classes or trainings, but just wanted to know that I had their support should I need it. They both agreed, and soon after, HSK was “born”!

Ron, who lived in Kaneohe, had 4 kids that trained at the Manoa dojo. A Kaneohe dojo right in his neighborhood would be ideal, so I inquired at different schools in the area to see if their facility was available for rental. We were able to acquire Puohala Elementary’s cafeteria, so our registration for new members in the Kaneohe area began.

In the summer of 1984, our first Kaneohe class started their training with 14 eager beginners.



With new beginner registrations every 3 months, the Kaneohe dojo quickly grew. Kaneohe trained Mondays and Wednesdays, so now I was on the road 5 days a week! Although the workload increased, so did the fun and excitement! Roy and Ron, also caught up in the excitement, were now at the dojo regularly to help with the teaching responsibilities. Kevin Ichiriu, a former student of mine from the old club and just back from dental school, also joined to train and teach. My instructor core started to develop!!

In two years, HSK had increased its membership to just under 100! Manoa had grown to almost 70 members, and Kaneohe 30. HSK WAS TAKING OFF!!!



Pop and Remy were in full-steam-ahead mode, and continued training with focus and intensity. Within two years, they had both tested for and were awarded brown belt ranking!



Rem's strong mind served her well in competitions, helping to win her share of medals and trophies.





Pop continued to amaze everyone with his agility, quickness, determination, and resolve. In October 1986, he earned and was awarded the coveted black belt and dan certificate at the spry age of 70!!! This was the FIRST of many dan exams conducted by HSK, and one of my most memorable ones!!!





CONGRATULATIONS, POP!! SUPER PROUD OF YOU!!!