

Richard Schwinn & Sensei Jeff Kohn



JEFF KOHN: A lifetime dedicated to karate



Susan Solway, Ph.D.

Sensei Jeff Kohn began teaching karate in the early 1970's. The rapid expansion of his student population forced Kohn two years ago to relocate to Glenview, Illinois, where he built North Shore Dojo, a spacious state-of-the-art facility of 7,000 square feet, equipped with video rooms, library and multiple studios. Dedicated to sports education and teaching since college, Sensei Kohn earned a Bachelor of Science from Illinois State University in Physical Education and completed graduate work in exercise physiology at the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana. He continues his formal karate education through participation in conferences, symposia and workshops worldwide.

Sensei Kohn launched his career as a National and International karate coach in 1985 when he served as the Head Coach of the Junior National Team in Budapest, Hungary. He twice served as Head Coach for the United States Maccabiah Games in Israel and has assisted Coach Tokey Hill (World Champion, Madrid, 1980) on numerous World

Championships, World Games, World Cups, Pan American Championships and European Open Championships. Sensei Kohn credits the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, New York, with significant enhancement of the U.S. National Karate Team. He believes American athletes benefit tremendously from this unparalleled opportunity to engage in the latest and most sophisticated training methods, and considers himself privileged to be a part of its coaching staff. 2002 was a milestone in the history of American karate with two gifted athletes, George Kotaka and Elisa Au, winning gold medals in the world championships in Madrid. According to Kohn, "Sensei Kotaka and Sensei Limcaco deserve great praise for their outstanding commitment to the highest standards of our profession, which resulted in the stupendous accomplishments of their students and brought honor to our country."

Sensei Kohn credits the strength of his own program to the teaching talent of his instructional staff. Sensei Ariel Aloe, formerly a member of the Argentine National Team and recently named to the U.S. coaching staff, has worked at North Shore Dojo for three years and focuses on kumite. Currently at work on a master's degree in Educational Psychology at Loyola University with the intention of pursuing a doctorate in this field, Sensei Ariel's energetic approach to teaching and strong work ethic has made him one of the finest teaching coaches in the country. Sensei Clay Morton, a national and international champion, who most recently took the silver medal in kata in the Pan American Championships in the Dominican Republic (2003), will represent the United States in the Pan American Games in August 2003. He is a second year medical student at Palmer Chiropractic College and a brilliant teacher and role model for students at the dojo. Sensei Morton's methodical and progressive approach to teaching and training puts him in a class of his own and benefits dojo students immensely. Sensei Adam Brozer, who teaches kumite, has been competing on the national and international circuit for the past decade. Most recently the winner of the gold medal at the Australian Open in 2003 and still hungry to be a world champion, Sensei Brozer provides an exceptional example of elite athleticism and boasts a long list of victories in countless competitions. His sportsmanship and competition experience makes him an invaluable faculty asset and role model to younger aspiring champions.

Recognized nationally for his work with students with special needs in such venues as Newsweek and Parent magazine, Sensei Kohn applies principles of karate to the teaching of students with autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, ADD, AD/ID, Tourette's syndrome and cancer patients. Taking a "tough love" approach to his students—pushing them to push themselves both within and outside the dojo—Sensei Kohn works hand in hand with occupational and physical therapists, psychotherapists, and medical doctors. "The results are amazing. My fourteen-year old son is autistic and has never been able to sustain his concentration or develop his coordination. Sensei Kohn gets him to focus and stay on task for over forty minutes. I've seen dramatic improvement in his attention span and dexterity since joining his karate program just three months ago," exclaims Merynne Marymont, M.D., a radiology oncologist at Children's Memorial Hospital and Northwestern University Hospital in Chicago.

When asked about his future dreams and goals Sensei Kohn doesn't hesitate to respond: "I want to see at least one of my students win a world championship, and I want to see karate in the Olympic Games and in the Special Olympics." Passionate about karate and teaching, Sensei Kohn smiles when he reflects on his many years in the business. "Some of my best students have taken the lessons learned in the dojo—lessons about the value of hard work, diligence and perseverance—and successfully applied them in other fields. I'm thinking for example of Blake Sloan, a professional hockey player for the Dallas Stars and winner of the Stanley Cup in 1999, Jamie Murray, MTV and Real World actor, and Chef Don Yamauchi, named as one of the top chefs in the United States."



Sensei Kohn's philosophy about karate, one which he shares with many karate professionals, boils down to this: "You don't have to be an international champion for karate to change your life. As the many dedicated students and parents at North Shore Dojo can attest, karate profoundly enriches and transforms in immeasurable and meaningful ways the lives of all who follow its path."

