

## History of Connecticut Kenpo Karate

From its beginning in 1991, CKK has been affiliated with Middletown Kenpo Karate which was founded by Professor Lee Lowery, 8<sup>th</sup> Degree. Professor Lowery opened Middletown Kenpo Karate in 1976 after earning his Black Belt from Richard Griffin, a student of Ed Parker and the Tracy brothers (who were also students of Ed Parker). Thus the roots of Connecticut Kenpo Karate go back to the Ed Parker system of American Kenpo Karate. Many dozens of Black Belts were promoted under Professor Lowery's leadership, however Black Belt number three in 1981 was Sifu David Nokes, one of CKK's founders. Upon his retirement, Professor Lowery turned over Middletown Kenpo Karate to Professor Tom Allen 6<sup>th</sup> degree (number eight) and Sifu Joe Vecchitto 5<sup>th</sup> degree (number 20). They both retired in 2010 and Middletown Kenpo Karate is now owned and operated by Sibok Lynnette Hurlburt (number 49).

Sifu Nokes opened East Hampton Kenpo Karate in 1986. Two of his many students there were Sifus Doyle and Tanguay (numbers 23 & 24, respectively), both promoted to Black Belt in 1992. Sifus Nokes and Doyle partnered in opening Connecticut Kenpo Karate in August 1991 on Willard Avenue and two years later, moved the school to the Market Square location. One of our first students at Willard Avenue was Sifu Lee Anne Brophy (number 53) who earned her Black Belt in 1997. Sifu Tanguay, who had been an instructor at East Hampton Kenpo Karate, joined the CKK teaching staff in 1998, when he moved to the Newington area from East Hampton.

In 1995, circumstances necessitated that Sifu Nokes focus his instructional efforts on his East Hampton school; and turned CKK over to Sifu Doyle who managed the school until 2005, when it was turned over to Sifus Tanguay and Brophy.

The American Kenpo Karate system is rigorous and requires many years of strenuous training. As our school became more and more oriented toward children, the complexities of the Parker system became difficult for our younger students to master. So in 1995, Nokes and Doyle developed the junior program which scaled back on the adult requirements in order to provide a more manageable course for children while also providing a transition to the full adult program. Sifu Scott Hoffman was one of our pioneers in this program and was the first to earn the rank of Junior Black Belt in 2000 at age 12. He went on to earn his adult Black Belt (number 76) in 2002. Over the years this innovative program has benefited hundreds of young students.

The Junior Black Belt program was further modified by Sifu Tanguay to make the transition from Junior Black Belt to Adult Black Belt easier with more interim feedback to the students. These adjustments have been very successful.

Professor Lowery was also a student of Modern Arnis, created by Grandmaster Remy Presas, and at one point was one of its leading practitioners in America. Professor Lowery integrated Arnis with his Kenpo program and this has been carried forward at CKK. One of Professor Lowery's personal students and later a personal student of Grandmaster Presas was Sifu Brian Zawilinski. Prior to his passing in 2001 Sifu Brian was promoted to Master of Tapi Tapi by Grandmaster Presas. This level was only given to

seven people in the world. Master of Tapi Tapi Zawilinski is now the personal instructor for Sifu's Tanguay, Brophy and Hoffman. Sifu's Tanguay and Brophy also study with three other Master's of Tapi Tapi, Master Ken Smith (IL), Master Chuck Gauss (MI) and Master Gaby Roloff Germany)