



***History***

**1976:** Masters Jack and Marian Erickson founded the Dragon School in June with the assistance of Master Eva Loyd. The first location was a leased building in the 3000 block of Wolf Street in Dallas, TX. At the time, they were Instructors for Master Ye Mo Ahn at his school in Garland and at the classes at Heights Recreation Center in Richardson.

**1977:** The Wolf Street building lease expired in June and the Eriksons moved the classes to Cottonwood Park in Richardson. Classes continued outdoors in the park year round until October 1991. The Heights class also continued.

**1981:** Master Ahn was appointed one of four US Regional Representatives of the World Tae Kwon Do Federation (WTF). This organization was sanctioned by the Korean government and was formed to unite all Tae Kwon Do in Korea. It was affiliated with the International Olympic Committee. Master Ahn persuaded the Eriksons to join the WTF and the US Olympic Committee with him. The WTF had a unique set of forms that were added to the Dragon School curriculum.

A second recreation center class was opened at Huffhines Park in Richardson.

**1983:** It became clear that there was no organized WTF activity in the area, so the affiliation with the WTF was dropped. The WTF forms were dropped from the curriculum, because it was concluded that fewer forms done well was better than many forms done with mediocrity. The respect and friendship with Master Ahn continued.

In June, Master Alton Thibodeaux was transferred to Alice Springs Australia by his employer. He began a branch of the Dragon School there with the help of David Hooker. The first Black Belt from that school was Master Danny Davis.

**1985:** The director of the Beijing Wu Shu Team contacted George Xu (Xu Guo Ming) in San Francisco to explore the possibility of assembling a group of American martial artists to visit China to attend and demonstrate at the First International Wu Shu Championships to be held at the city of Xian in central China. In coordination with Brendon Lai of San Francisco, they began contacting martial artists of different disciplines to assemble a diverse team. Their intent was to organize a group that contained some of the most famous martial artists in the United States, as well as normal instructors to participate in a cultural exchange, people to people, with the most famous martial arts of China.

Master Marian Erickson and John Gehm (a 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Black Belt at that time) were invited to be part of the group traveling to China in August. In an effort to promote cultural exchange through the martial arts, under



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the leadership of team captain, Professor Wally Jay and co-captain Al Dacascos, they traveled to Beijing, Shanghai, Xian, and the Shaolin temple in Honan Province, the original birth place of the martial arts, as emissaries of cultural exchange performing their skills for their hosts and observing demonstrations by the greatest masters living in China. The disciplines represented by the American team members included Karate, Jujitsu, Kung Fu and Tae Kwon Do.

- 1986:** The Ericksons received a personal invitation from Grandmaster Jhoon Rhee to attend a seminar in Austin, TX in October. At the conclusion of the seminar, Master Jack Erickson was promoted to 5th degree Black Belt and Marian Erickson was promoted to 4th degree Black Belt.
- 1987:** The Ericksons and Eva Loyd attended a second Jhoon Rhee seminar in Fort Worth, Texas in April. In order to have national affiliation for students who moved out of the area, Dragon School joined the Jhoon Rhee System. Within the Jhoon Rhee System, the traditional Moo Duk Kwan Forms were aligned to the Jhoon Rhee System belts. The Dragon School added Forms from the Jhoon Rhee System that did not require music (the one exception was a form done to “God Bless America” which was performed for demonstrations). The former basics were replaced with the JRS Multiple Combination Basics. Furthering the intent of the JRS combination basics, the Dragon School hand techniques and kicking combinations drills were added.
- 1987:** It was decided to stop adding new forms and drills of various ‘systems’ and ‘styles’ and return to the traditional Moo Duk Kwan roots of the Dragon School. The affiliation with the Jhoon Rhee System was dropped at this time. The friendship and respect continued between the Ericksons and Grandmaster Rhee.
- 1987:** The Dragon School joined the newly formed Texas Black Belt Commission (TBBC), an organization of independent schools and instructors. The TBBC shared Martial Arts knowledge, set standards for certification and promotion of Brown and Black Belts, and promoted friendship and interaction between schools. Concurrent with this affiliation all adult Brown and Black Belt promotion tests had TBBC officials on the Test Board and the promotions were certified by the TBBC.
- 1995:** Masters Jack and Marian Erickson, 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belts, retired from teaching in June. They appointed Master Alton Thibodeaux Head Instructor and gave him the responsibility of carrying on the traditions of the Dragon School. Master Danny Davis has been the co-instructor of the school since that time.
- 1996:** In August, The Dragon School was accepted as an affiliate school in A-KATO, the American Karate and Tae Kwon Do Organization headed by



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Grandmaster Keith Yates. Grandmaster Keith Yates and Masters Jack and Marian Erickson trained together under Grandmaster Allen Steen. After this affiliation all subsequent Black Belt promotion tests were certified by AKATO. The affiliation with the Texas Black Belt Commission ended at this time.

- 1998:** In September, both the Tuesday and Thursday classes moved to the Heights Recreation Center. The classes at Huffhines were discontinued.
- 2006:** In September, a children's class was added to the Tuesday/Thursday schedule for ages 6-10. The class was ended in 2011 after five successful years.

A family tree of Dragon School Black Belts can be found on the website: [www.dragonschool.com](http://www.dragonschool.com).