

**Prof. Carl Totton:
Martial Arts Autobiography**

NOTE: This autobiography is reprinted from “Kenpo Continuum: The Continuing Historical Studies of the Kenpo Community in America and Throughout the World”, compiled by Amy Long (2008).

My martial arts journey began in September of 1963. That’s when I first joined a kenpo school in Los Angeles run by kajukenbo master John Leoning, a senior student of Adriano Emperado. I had been playing around with martial arts for a couple of years with friends and reading martial arts books, but Leoning was my first real teacher. I was 15 years old.

Like many kids, I was interested in self defense since I lived in an area of LA known for gangs and violence. Just walking to and from school was a daily challenge often requiring some combative skill. My friends and I looked around at some of the local karate schools and really wanted to study kung fu in Chinatown with the legendary grandmaster Ark Wong, but it was too far. We were extremely impressed with Leoning’s intensive class and as a bonus he also taught the kung fu he had learned from Ark Wong. His senior student was Carlos Bunda, a noted tournament champion.

A friend I met in the late 1960’s is Ron Chapel, a senior student of Ed Parker. I often visited his class at Manual Arts High School (later LA Trade Tech College) and have benefited greatly from his advice and coaching over these many years. Throughout the 1960’s and in to the 1970’s, I continued studying kenpo, aikido, arnis (Remy Presas), and many Chinese martial arts. My teachers included kung fu from Ark Wong, Share Lew, Wai Doo, Ralph Shun, Al Garza (Matrix System), and many others. I also studied the internal Chinese martial arts (tai chi chuan, pa kua chang, hsing-I chuan, and lu ho ba fa) from well known masters like George Xu, John Fey, Chao Li Chi, and Chen Xiao Wang, among others.

One of the biggest influences on my martial arts career has been the teachings of Master Haumea “Tiny” Lefiti, a giant 325 pound Samoan who taught both Mok Gar Kung Fu (he learned in Taiwan from a Chinese general, and from Ark Wong) and Limalama, a Polynesian martial art founded by Grandmaster Tino Tuiolosega (Tiny’s cousin), a first generation student of Ed Parker and Ark Wong.

Limalama is a hybrid art combining kenpo, kung fu, jujitsu, boxing, and aikido with Samoan street fighting and weapons. A unique and rare style, it had many well known practitioners in addition to Tino and Tiny such as Richard Nunez, Saul Esquivel, Sol Kaihewalu, John Louis, and Ted Tabura. Known for its rapid-fire combinations with fluid hands, Limalama (meaning Hand of Wisdom) is a valuable addition to the kenpo legacy.

I first met Senior Grandmaster Ed Parker at his Internationals in Long Beach during the 1960's. He was essentially a kenpo "uncle" of mine at the time due to his connection with Emperado, Leoning, and Chapel. After I received my first black belt in 1970, I began helping my instructors teach while teaching a small private backyard class myself. Our school, the Taoist Sanctuary, was located in North Hollywood, California, and was where Share Lew and Leoning were teaching. I helped start the Sil Lum Kung Fu Association in 1973 with my friends Douglas Wong, Tom Chan (then Ho), and Wilson Quan. We wanted to combine the best teachings from our collective instruction kenpo, kung fu, limalama, karate, boxing, aikido, and judo/jujitsu to create a hybrid mixed martial art which had both traditional and innovative features. It is something we continue to work on today, over 35 years later.

In 1983, Ron Chapel asked me to officially join Mr. Parker's association, the IKKA. This was an extremely exciting time as Mr. Parker was beginning to document his vast knowledge with the Infinite Insights series, and later some videos. Mr. Parker was extremely generous to me with his time and knowledge and asked me to call or come over to his house at anytime for questions or lessons. I often would spend hours sitting with him in his living room in Pasadena while he shared concepts and blinding fast moves with me.

I would take Mr. Parker shopping for clothes (at the big man stores) or to purchase new guns (he had about 170 guns hidden, spread around his Pasadena home every six feet or so-intruders beware!). I introduced him to Won Kok, the restaurant in LA's Chinatown which became his favorite place to eat. We had wonderful times together and I, like all kenpoists, was dismayed when he passed away so suddenly.

My higher martial arts ranks include an instructor's certificate and 5th black (IKKA), 7th black (WKKA), 7th black (TILOA, limalama), 9th black (Cloud Forest World Chinese Martial Arts Assn.; and 9th dan, American Federation of Jujitsu for kenpo jujitsu). In 2005, I was honored with a sijo or founding grandmaster title from the Whipping Willow Martial Arts Association signed by masters from all of my major traditions including kung fu (Ming Lum, Douglas Wong, Andrew Ching, Antwione Alferos), American Kenpo (Bob Liles, Dian Tanaka, Tom Georgian, Sandy Amason), BKF kenpo (Daryl Jones), kajukenbo (Max Togisala), and limalama (Ted Tabura). In other arts I hold teaching certificates as an instructor, master instructor, and grandmaster. My synthesis of the basis for all martial arts studies I call the Core System, with over a dozen DVD's available on this unique method including Monk Fist style, automatic dim muk, chuan fa (kenpo), & qigong. In 2003, I was named to the US Martial Arts Hall of Fame.

Professionally, I have taught martial arts, Chinese medicine, and qigong at my school, the Taoist Institute (taocore@taoistinstitute.com) in North Hollywood, CA, since 1981. I have a doctor of psychology degree from Pepperdine University and work full time as a psychologist, and teach part time graduate studies in psychology for universities and medical qigong and philosophy of Chinese medicine at colleges for acupuncture.

My specialty is exploring states of consciousness and teaching others to discover their own path in life through the martial and healing arts, psychology, philosophy, and spiritual studies. I have been fortunate to study some of the world's great arts with many of the world's greatest teachers. I was privileged to speak at the Gathering of the Eagles 1 & 2 in Las Vegas where I publicly thanked Mr. Parker for guiding all of us in the kenpo world on our collective life paths. I'll never forget his generosity, inquisitive mind, and genius in helping everyone he met feel special and empowered. May we all continue to honor his legacy.