



## Shihan Okazaki Visits Mid-America

*By Mike Mrusek and Jerry Baker*



*Image courtesy of Mid-America ISKF*

Shihan Hiroyoshi Okazaki came to Mid-America on December 7 where he led us through an extensive repertoire of drills that demonstrate the basic principles of movement. We are incredibly fortunate to have Okazaki Shihan in our region to share his wealth of knowledge and experience.

These core principles we reviewed included:

- All movements are built upon smaller components such as the support leg, the hip, and the technique itself
- The proper hip alignment during the progression of each movement
- The appropriate alignment of your center, both vertically and horizontally
- The proper rotation of the body
- The full extension and body connection during both blocks and attacks
- Having strong and focused spirit

The training began, as most do - “Left leg forward down block!” That movement, the call to do it again, and the instruction in how to do it correctly, set the stage for the rest of the afternoon. No matter what we practiced, Okazaki Shihan returned us to the core principles outlined above. All movement, regardless of its complexity, begins, progresses, and ends with the same basic principles.

All moves are made up of “micro” moves during which your mind must be focused on the proper structure, angle, direction, completeness, and delivery of your technique. In short, each technique is comprised of smaller movements that emulate and are integral to the larger movement.

The principles above are fundamental to all karate. Incorporating them in to your daily training will lead you down the right path.

### **In This Issue...**

- December Clinic Summary - Page 2
- Coach's Note - Page 3
- Scholarship Program - Page 4
- Follow the Leader - Page 5
- Sensei Golden Memorial - Page 6
- Helping Those in Need - Page 7
- Never Heel Up - Page 8

## Summary of Drills from December Clinic

*By Mike Mrusek and Jerry Baker*

### Drill #1

- Left-leg-forward front stance. Left-arm down block with right fist on right hip. Right elbow pulled back toward the center of spine.
- Slowly step forward leaving left arm out pointing toward the opponent until your body weight reaches the center of your axis. Then switch arm positions as you are landing in a right-leg-forward front stance with a down block and draw hand.
- Step back to previous front stance and down block. Slowly working on the timing of the block, draw hand, and landing in front stance.
- Complete both sides in sets of 10. Gradually increase speed.

### Drill #2

- Left-leg-forward front stance with right fist middle-level counter punch.
- Jab to face with left fist.
- Follow with middle level counter punch with right fist.
- Start slowly while feeling the hip rotation of each punch.
- The jab is to be at half body, and the counter punch is to be at squared body and hips.
- On the jabs, the knee should be slightly bent. As you deliver the right fist reverse punch the back knee will straighten with the hip rotation and energy from the ground.
- Keep elbows tight with body connection. Do not hook the elbows.
- Complete both sides in sets of 10. Gradually increase speed.

### Drill #3

- From *kiba dachi*, left fist straight out at middle level.
- Rotate left 45 degrees into a front stance using your hip while delivering a right-fist reverse punch.
- Rotate right 90 degrees into a front stance using your hip while delivering a left-fist reverse punch.
- Shift center of gravity toward the rear leg.
- Push from the former front foot and straighten the leg as the hips turn the body.
- The former punching hand will follow the hips to become the new draw hand as the former draw hand punches. Do not hook your elbows.
- While doing this drill you want to feel as if you are floating on the floor with your rotations. Then you should feel the energy of your back leg driving from

the ground as your knee straightens out the same time as you punch.

### Drill #4

- In place square-body kicks: Left-leg-forward front stance, double down blocks to the sides.
- Front snap kick to the middle level with rear leg.
- Keeps hips in square-body position.
- Pause the returning kick after the snap back, feeling the strength and support of your support leg while the knee of the kicking leg is slightly bent.
- Complete both sides in sets of 10. Gradually increase speed.
- Full kicks: The kicking leg hip should be held at half-body until the last moment. It will build torque and drive the kicking leg as the kicking knee passes the body.
- The supporting leg must remain solid and not straighten until it becomes the driving leg to finish the step in toward the target.
- Keep upper body posture straight and do not tilt the pelvis to gain distance. Shihan Okazaki said, "Keep your upper body vertically straight. If you need to make distance, get closer!"
- Complete both sides in sets of 10. Gradually increase speed.

### Drill #5

- Kicking Drills: Practice each component separately then link them into a single *waza*. Supporting leg must remain solid and bent, and the body must remain upright with little movement forward or backward.
- Front stance in-place counter punch to the front. 135 degree rotation to counter punch. 135 degree rotation to original position
  - Front snap kick under counter punch arm, return to stance jab and counter punch in original position.
  - In-place simultaneous front snap kick from rear leg while substituting other-hand middle level punch before returning to original position.
  - From original position, jab from front-leg side, step in with rear-leg kick and square-body punch to the face, counter-punch to new starting leg. Repeat on other side.

The katas used to reinforce the basic principles of the day's lesson were Heian Shodan, Heian Sandan, Heian Yondan, and Bassai Dai.

## 2019 ISKF US Nationals

### *A Note from Coach Carol Glenn*

The 41st Annual ISKF/US National Tournament was held at the Orleans Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV on November 15-17, 2019. It was sunny and the temperature was in the 70s for most of the weekend. There were many things to do outside of the tournament itself, including nearby sightseeing, checking out the Las Vegas strip, fast-food to fine-dining, bowling (in The Orleans), amazing shows, and of course Gambling. There was even an opportunity to participate in a Karate-related research study (ask Sensei Jeff & Kim Weber).

The Mid-America Region was represented by nine Judges and 18 Competitors, six of whom were competing at the Nationals for the first time. We had Kata and *Kumite* Teams in all divisions, and we had two karete-ka take Judges exams.

This year, Mid-America came home with seven – 1st place medals, six - 2nd place medals, and five – 3rd place medals. Not everyone wins a medal, but win or lose, this competition is a great way to test your skills and to motivate you to continue training to improve.

During the traditional Sunday evening banquet, test results were announced and awards were presented.

- Steve Robbins was presented with the 2019 Meritorious Service Award for Mid-America.
- Tim Gay, Sr. passed the C Judges exam
- Andrew Wolff passed the B Judges exam
- Lynn Franco, from ISKF Santa Monica, was awarded the 2019 Best Fighting Spirit Award, in honor of Sensei Greer Golden.

Please join me in congratulating all our participants and award winners on their endeavor and thank them for representing Mid-America so well!

The best part of every National tournament for me is my Karate family. I get to meet new people and spend time catching up with friends that I don't get to see too often. Though we haven't seen each other for a year, it's like we've never been apart, the connections remain strong.

For those interested in competing in 2020, plan on attending the Mid-America Regional Trainings and Camps. Starting in March there will be a General Team Training, for anyone interested in competition, prior to the first training. In the second half of the year we will hold "Stand-Alone" trainings for those attending the National Tournament.



*Lynn Franco with Sensei James Field after receiving the Best Fighting Spirit Award*

*Image courtesy of Mid-America ISKF*



## Mid-America Awards its 2020 Scholarship Winners

### *Letters from Recipients*

For the 2020 training year, three \$250 scholarships were awarded to students who demonstrate a commitment to learning our art and who best articulated their favorite principle of the *Dojo Kun* by submitting a 250 word essay on the topic. Scholarships were awarded in the following categories: 11-17 years old, Collegiate, and Adults. The 2020 winners are as follows:

|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 11-17 Years Old: | Nathan Deininger, Brown County |
| Collegiate:      | Janet Meier, Ohio State        |
| Adult:           | William Hall, Cleveland        |

Winners from our 2019 training year sent in some kind words of gratitude about how the scholarship helped them in their training.

Dear Mid-America ISKF,

Thank you so much for your very generous scholarship. I was able to go to several events such as summer camp, spring camp, and the September regional training in Wyoming, as well as renew ISKF fees. These were very exciting events that made me a much better *Karate-ka*.

Summer camp was an especially great experience. The trainings were well led and Sensei taught some very exceptional karate. After lunch was training with the color belts. Even though I had just taken my dan exam and was pretty sure I passed, it was still a great training, so again, thank you.

Once again, thank you so much for your generous scholarship. I've been able to go to some truly exceptional trainings because of you. Because of summer camp, I'm now a black belt, so thank for awarding the scholarship to me.

Sincerely,  
**Alex Geoppinger**

The scholarship afforded me the opportunity to attend 5 different events (3 regional trainings, Spring Camp, and Summer Camp) in 2019 and experience world-class instruction from Senseis Martin Vaughan, James Oberschlake, David Jones, and Hiroyoshi Okazaki. I learned the different drills that I can use to improve my karate and, more importantly, focused on how the instruction was made. As an aspiring instructor, I was fascinated by the wisdom and how adeptly the drills were described and performed by the Senseis. I also started collecting karate and other martial arts books using the money I would have needed to attend the trainings. Since receiving the scholarship (and my *Shodan*) in December 2018, I have used the lessons I learned from attending the events and reading the books to lead three trainings at my dojo, when sensei Adam traveled to compete at Nationals in Las Vegas. I enjoyed and appreciated the teaching opportunity and I look forward to leading more trainings in the future. I am deeply honored to have received the MAK scholarship and wish that this scholarship program continues to benefit others as much as it has benefitted me.

Best,  
**Archie Tram**

On December 15, 2018 I was awarded a \$250.00 scholarship from Mid-America Karate, Inc. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a huge thank you to the region for their generous donation. Because of this scholarship I was able to attend all the region's clinics and camps with a special discount that made it much easier on my financial situation. There is something very special to be said about the generosity of the Mid-America Region. Let's continue to grow and spread the gift of karate-do to everyone.

**Laura Graham**

I want to thank Mid-America for awarding me the youth scholarship last year. The scholarship allowed me to attend more regional events. By attending these events, I was able to strengthen my karate skills which helped me gain confidence and compete at the national level in Las Vegas. I was also able to develop friendships with other competitors and learn from others outside of my dojo. I greatly appreciate the award and hope I did the club proud! Thank you!

**Caleb Horner**

## Follow the Leader

*By Sensei James Oberschlake*

The following is a process I sometimes use for teaching basics, basic sparring, and kata, so really...just about everything. It relies less on language and more on vision, concentration, visualization, imagination, and body awareness. It is particularly effective when teaching children or older children we sometimes call adults. Training with mirrors can enhance this method. I call this teaching method: "Follow the Leader."

**Step 1** Tell your students that you not only want them to do the technique correctly, but that you want them to do it like a black belt. Say, "Watch me." Then demonstrate the technique exactly as you want your students to perform it. (Modify speed and power according to student level). It is important for students to pause and await your next command. This gives them time to concentrate, imagine, and feel their body doing the movement with precision before it is performed. This is also great training for the instructor because it requires the instructor to practice perfect form.

**Step 2** Say, "Go" or "Do it." Then students mimic the modeled movement of the instructor to the best of their ability. Afterwards the instructor could provide some feedback and correction but relies primarily on the "watch and do" process to eventually achieve improved performance. If you are using mirrors, you could say, "Look at me in the mirror and look at you in the mirror. Now make you look like me."

### **Special Considerations:**

Parents tend to love this method because it indirectly teaches children to shut up, pay attention, and obey. ... old school.

If students struggle with doing the whole technique as one action, break it down into parts. After practicing several repetitions, try again performing the technique as one smooth motion.

The first repetitions are performed with less speed and power. Gradually increase speed and power as students become more proficient.

It is very difficult for students to watch something behind them and then turn around and mimic the movement toward their front. The instructor should

always move to the best place to be observed, before saying "Watch me" and demonstrating the technique. This is particularly important when using this method while teaching kata.

This method utilizes a natural and very powerful way of learning. When I taught high school English, I used to demonstrate this power to my students. I would open a book and flash pages of text to my students for a split second. Then I asked if I flashed from the same book the next day, how confident would they be that I had flashed the exact same pages. "Groans" was their typical response. Next, I said let's try again. Then I would flash from the same book, but this time I selected pages that had a picture on it. Everyone was confident they could easily identify those pages the next day. Why? Because there was a picture on it.

We are hard wired this way. There is more detail in a picture than can be expressed precisely in a volume print. Yet, our brain can capture and retain this unique image in an instant. It really is amazing.

This method requires students to concentrate, visualize and experience with their mind, and then experience with their body. This is a very powerful way to learn something.

After practicing this method awhile, I usually transition into teaching methods that require less teacher involvement: Students and instructor practice together at the same time. Students practice; instructor counts. Students practice on their own with no count. Each student performs individually in front of the class trying to emulate precise form and applicable dynamic principles.

The goal is ever to get the student to do karate correctly without you. When they don't need you, you have done your job.

I hope you will try to incorporate some variations of this method into your teaching. I think you will find it beneficial.

## Sensei Golden Memorial



**One of the Founding Fathers of Traditional Karate in America  
“The Johnny Appleseed of Mid-America Karate”**

**This monument was placed here by students and friends of  
Sensei Greer Golden, whose legacy lives on in thousands who  
may trace their lineage back to this profound and inspiring teacher.**

**“The Way: Who will pass it on Straight and Well?”  
Master Gichin Funakoshi**

Thanks to the generosity of his students, friends, peers, and instructors, the monument was erected for Sensei Greer Golden, who left us in 2019.

It is located at:

Riverside Cemetery  
3840 Sunbury Road  
Columbus, Ohio  
Lot 84; Section F; Grave 4

Thanks so much to all who made the Greer Golden Memorial a reality.

## Helping Those in Need

*By Valerie McKay*

For the second year in a row, Mid-America ISKF helped children and families in need in West Milton and Union Township, Ohio by collecting donations of money, food, clothing, and supplies at December clinic. This effort was organized by Valerie McKay and the Dayton Shotokan Karate club.

We received:

Food: 18 cans, 11 boxes, and \$290.00

This was given to Les Trittschuh, a representative of the Council of Church which gathered food for Christmas food boxes for 51 families.

Also:

Clothing: 8 pairs gloves, 18 hats, 7 coats, 3 scarves

Toys: 8

Dog treats, toys

This was given to David Jay, who took the donations to the police/fire station in West Milton. Again 51 families were being assisted at Christmas.

The donations were very gratefully received. Christmas was more joyful for these folks because we cared. I'm glad we were able to help them.

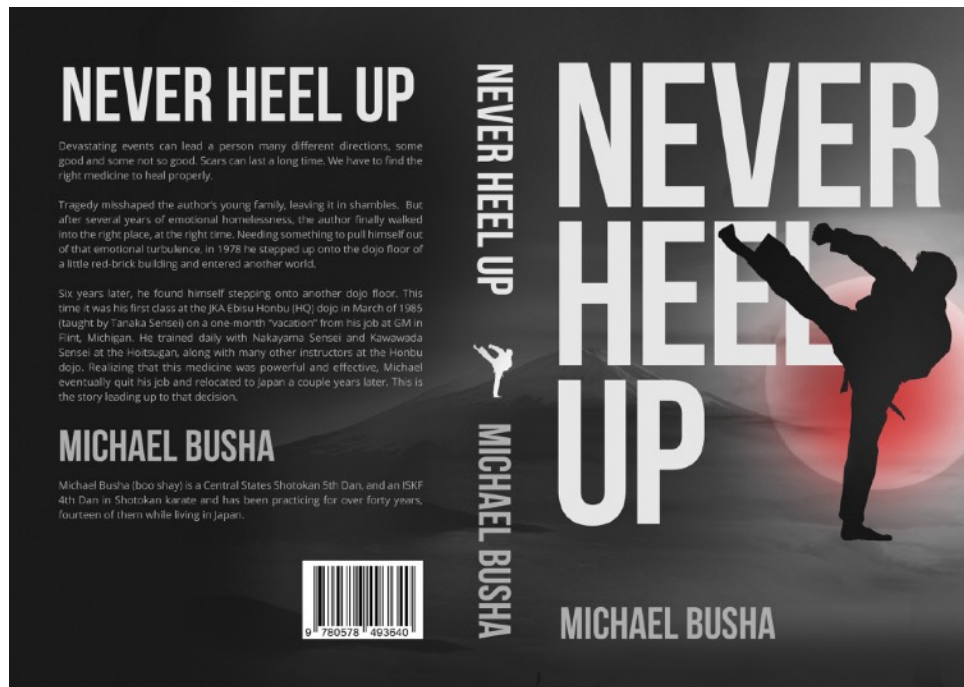


*Image courtesy of Karl Helsing*

Congratulations to Katharina Gleissberg Who Achieved Shodan at the 2019 Mid-America ISKF December Clinic



## Never Heel Up



Our own Michael Busha recently published a book about his life, karate, and decisions he made leading up to his study in Japan. [Never Heel Up](#) will be available at the end of February at Amazon in both paperback and eBook formats



## Sensei Vaughan



### Chief Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Martin Vaughan trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki for over 40 years and is our Regional Director. He is also President of the ISKF.

## Sensei Oberschlake



### President and Assistant Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei James Oberschlake trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki starting in 1974. He is also the Chief Instructor of the Brown County Shotokan Karate Club.

## Calendar

### January 18-19 - Kangeiko

Hosted by the Ohio State University Karate Club in Columbus, OH

### February 8 - Youth Shiai

Hosted by Shotokan Karate of Anderson in Cincinnati, OH

### March 14 - Sensei Golden Memorial Training

Hosted by Dayton Shotokan Karate Club in West Milton, OH

### April 18-19 - Spring Camp with Sensei David Jones

Hosted by Dayton Shotokan Karate Club in West Milton, OH

### May 16 -Regional Tournament

Hosted by the Ohio State University Karate Club in Columbus, OH

### June 12-19 - ISKF Master Camp

Camp Green Lane, PA

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Ms. Randall, 2nd *dan*, is a senior student at the Indiana ISKF club in Indianapolis, IN.