



Soon
Pretorius

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Cons give Karate a bad name

Please allow me to discuss two opposites in the ancient art of empty hand combat established in our country as early as 1945. I wish to give credit to a number of individuals who had formed and motivated an art still popular in our city today. Stan Schmidt sensei and Norman Robinson sensei are without question the two individuals who must receive a great deal of credit for the vision followed by relentless hard labour to establish an art amidst much criticism. They kept technical ties with Japan headquarters and training hours under inhumane conditions.

Nigel Jackson sensei added energy to the fast expanding fighting art with first hand knowledge and experience brought back after extended stays in Japan. He was not always well accepted by the Johannesburg establishments but his knowledge combined with superb technique could not be denied at any level.

Koos Burger sensei is still popular in the capital city with schools across the country. He enforced a child friendly environment combined with his adventurous spirit. This living legend had in many years influenced the lives of many students with high moral standards and persistence. These gentleman deserve credit in any hall of fame for the establishment and development of an art loved and trained by many individuals of all ages.

Much credit must be given to parents supporting our schools with unselfish inspirations, assistant instructors doing the hard work often without much glory and lastly our students, who faithfully pursue their dreams. Unfortunately reality enforces me to mention a number of exploits deservedly categorised under the hall of shame. This matter will not receive any mention in future columns but even in the disciplined world of Karate-do, all is not always well! We unfortunately have individuals in our country who believe titles give you strength and speed and respect. Individuals on constant mission to persuade the world of their technical superiority by adding totally inappropriate titles to their own names. They have unfortunately become the laughing stock of the Karate world.

Worse than the art of labelling must be individuals deceiving their instructors by underhandedly conning students with false promises and concealed information to establish another club. Most of these schools have a very short lifetime but the damage in trust has been done.

Good luck to all the new beginners and adult intermediate students preparing for grading next week. The long and tedious road has begun but unfortunately does not have any shortcuts or instant successes. "No pain – will gain" – sensei Stan