

TWENTY YEARS LATER:

Shorin Ryu's Dave Cloud

H.W. Keyes

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During the Vietnam War, St. Louis' Dave Cloud was stationed in Okinawa with the US Air Force. "The stress was intense," said Cloud. "Some of my friends were dying, and others were turning on to drugs and alcohol to cope with the pressures."

Cloud turned to karate master Shoshin Nagamine, who not only taught him the art of self-defense, but, also, passed on a legacy of discipline and positive thinking that continues to help Cloud even today.

"I went with friends to the place where they had been taking martial arts lessons," explained Cloud. "All the other students - all black belts that particular day - were sitting with Master Nagamine and having tea. I tripped over the entry platform and, with the floor being wooden, made such a loud noise when I stumbled

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"Previously, I had felt size was of importance," Cloud recalled, a former football scholarship recipient at Northeast State Teachers College. "That day I felt so small. I was going to leave but Master Nagamine asked if he could help me. He invited me in and I started training the next day.

"I became a karate junkie! I went every day," exclaimed Cloud. He remembered that

Master Nagamine charged \$5.00 per month for instruction and Mrs. Nagamine made everyone's gi for \$5.00. "The Nagamine family got me through the war, the loss, and I owe them a debt of gratitude."

Cloud last saw Takaoshi Nagamine, the master's son, in 1990 at Bill George's dojo in Harrison, Ohio. Today, Dave Cloud is Director of Safety and Security, Christian Hospital Corporation, St. Louis, and manages 200 employees. Along with his administration responsibilities of the past seven years, Cloud has two dojo locations. He has been involved with the YMCA since the 1970's and has taught more than 3,700 students.

"In the '70's, there was a lot of crime in the streets of St. Louis and in Webster Groves," Cloud said. "I thought if I could just find a place to teach karate, I might help get some kids off the streets and change their attitudes."

Cloud decided to teach karate in his grandmother's backyard and 70 students signed up for his first class. Soon thereafter, a local television news team came by and taped a feature highlighting Cloud's program for adolescents. Within days, the YMCA phoned and offered him an even wider audience.

"Karate brings peace of mind and a positive attitude that gives you the confidence to handle any circumstance," he said. "I work in a high-stress job but things don't get to me because I know that each night in my karate class, I'll be able to relieve the tension.

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"When I get stressed out, I can't wait to get to the dojo," Cloud affirmed. "I put the name of the problem on the bag and beat the bag and, when I have finished, the problem is no longer visible and no longer a part of my body."

Vanessa Poston, Hazardous Communications Coordinator, Christian Hospital Northeast, has known Dave Cloud since 1979. "I don't know what comes from within him... He is always up and it is difficult to tell when there is anything not going exactly right with him," Poston shared. "He knows what perspective to place things in.

"You just rarely ever see him without a smile. He is always so positive," she continued. "Dave has a difficult job in an environment where focus is on patient care. He is persistent and always upbeat and, therefore, very successful. He has a positive way of accomplishing goals that just amazes me."

After more than twenty years in the art, Dave Cloud has remained not just for the feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction but for the thank you's from students and their parents. "To see a kid grow is invaluable," Cloud acknowledged. "Once you enter the dojo, all problems should be left behind. You are there to train and keep your body and mind clean."

A long time friend and fellow martial artist, Bob Peel, stated that Cloud teaches a very traditional style of Okinawan karate. "He made it appealing to me by the fact that he had trained in Okinawa and gave to me and the other students a greater insight," said Peel. "Within yourself is the major challenge - using the things you have learned in the dojo and applying them to your life outside. Karate-do is a way of life."

And Cloud has set superior goals for those who study at his dojo. "The highest goals are to

obtain harmony, to be courteous and to continually turn the other cheek," he stated. "You don't block a punch; you redirect it. You don't let things get to you; you redirect them.

"When stress hits you, simply redirect it and do not allow it to settle inside you. Verbal abuse - redirect it and do not let it touch you. Karate teaches life skills," he concluded.

Bob Peel pointed out that besides teaching four classes a week, Sensei Cloud does additional things for his students. "Occasionally, for brown belts and others, Sensei will have workouts in the park - just to work on specific techniques. In his business life and his personal life, he is constantly moving ahead and always with regard to other people.

"Cloud is a very disciplined teacher and very demanding from the stand point that he wants each one to try to push themselves further than the last class," Peel continued. "He really cares about his students - you can feel that he wants you to achieve and move forward, to progress. Sensei cares about what the training can do for the individual as a person. His classes are rigorous and he is detailed, yet he always takes the time to explain."

According to Cloud, karate must be practiced with integrity and with seriousness or it will have no heart. "To do a kata only to achieve

a manner of movement is a waste of time," he stated. "Kata is like a waterfall, a flowing completely in tune with nature. I tell my students to strive to be a little closer to the waterfall each time.

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"Keep sharpening the pencil," he continued. "Make sure the lead can make the smallest of print. And if that printing becomes a bit blunt, go continuously back to sharpen the point. It is time to get back to the dojo. You must stay sharp," he concluded.

"What ever is pulling a student, it is the most important thing to him," Cloud calculated. "Once a student decides they want to be in the dojo, want to train, then I can work with them.

"The parents who push their kids into what they don't want to do, I believe to be trying to get the child to be what THEY weren't as children themselves instead of letting that child grow to be what he wants to become," noted Cloud.

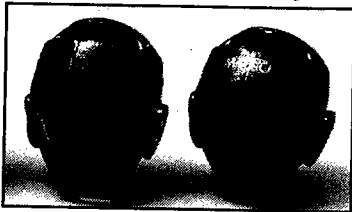
"To me, karate is the togetherness of the mind and the body. The reason for DO is to bring mind and body together," Cloud explained. "I don't think that anyone is perfect. By practicing, you are getting closer to a goal, an objective. Each day you strive to get closer."

Vanessa Poston spoke of the total dedication Dave Cloud possesses in anything he pursues. "He promotes aggressive effort - you must keep at anything you do," she interpreted. "You cannot be proficient in anything if you don't actively pursue it. You see this type of thinking in Dave's professionalism. If he says he will accomplish something, then you have no doubt he will pursue it with all his strength."

Bob Peel reflected, "Dave always seems to be very pleased with where he is today. He is very NOW oriented. I believe he'll continue to teach and train throughout his entire life."

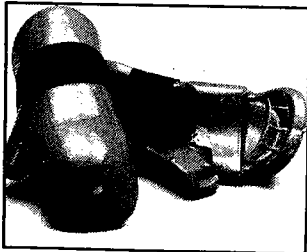
Dave Cloud admitted to having a passion for the art. "I would never knock another style because each has something good to offer," Cloud asserted. "Even if it is taught in John Doe's basement, if the sensei has integrity then some good can be obtained. The students, more than anything else, need a role model."

SIMPLY THE BEST!

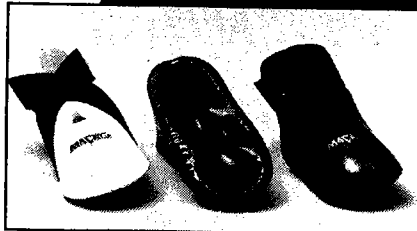


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