

Martial Arts World News

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MAGAZINE



GRAND MASTER **G.K. LEE**

Is the GTMA the Fastest Growing Organization in History?



Martial Arts Documentary Produced by Laurence Fishburne Wins Top Tribeca Film Festival Prize



GRANDMASTER
KAREN EDEN

“Helping Our Missing Sisters.”



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MASTER G.K. LEE ★
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AN OUTSTANDING LEADER ADVANCING TRADITIONAL MARTIAL ARTS — GLOBALLY —

GRAND MASTER
G.K. LEE

From 0 to More than 200 Schools in 18 Months, is the GTMA the Fastest Growing Martial Arts Organization in History, and What Are Their Keys to Success?

Grand Master Lee began his martial arts training when he was in the second grade and by the time he was 12 years old he had earned his first black belt in Tang Soo Do. He served his country in the military for 4 years in the Korean Army where he also taught Taekwondo. When he was 26 years old left South Korea to come to the United States. With many accomplishments for his efforts, Grand Master Lee introduced Protech to the traditional Songahm curriculum, became the 4th presiding president of the ATA organization, and earned his 9th degree black. Now he has taken the lead once again to present an exciting new organization for traditional martial arts called Global Traditional Martial Arts which is on a mission to provide a place for and pass along the old traditions while also moving into the future.

The logo for Global Traditional Martial Arts (GTMA) features the letters 'GTMA' in a bold, italicized font. The 'G' and 'T' are red, while the 'M' and 'A' are white with a red outline. The letters are slanted to the right, giving it a sense of motion and energy.

MAWN: Thank you Grand Master GK Lee, Chief Master Kathy Lee, and GTMA CEO Jeff Nodleman for sharing with our industry. It's really been fascinating to watch what you guys have been accomplishing over the last couple of years. It would be beneficial for our readers in the Martial Arts industry to get a good sense of what you've been building. Grand Master Lee, please tell us about yourself and where you're from, and the direction the ship you're steering is heading. Explain how you got started in the Martial Arts, what your early life was like, where you are now and what brought you to that place.

GL: I was originally born and raised in South Korea and resided there for 26 years. My family has been involved with Tae Kwon Do for a very long time. So from a young age I learned from my family and my original instructor as well. At 26 I moved to the United States and have been here ever since. I worked for the ATA organization for a long time. In fact, I was also the fourth presiding Grand Master in the organization. Eventually, to further advance traditional Martial Arts, we had a separation and we began Global Traditional Martial Arts (GTMA).

MAWN: A lot of the folks that we work with and we talk with are first generation immigrants from Korea in the Tae Kwon Do community. You were born during a time when Korea was emerging from a post-war mentality and the culture was really disrupted from all of that. You came from that environment to the US and have accomplished so much since you've been here. How do you think that that kind of childhood and your development in Korea influenced the direction you took and where you're taking this new organization?

GL: I learned from so many first generation Grand Masters.

These Grand Masters started during the invasion, when Japan took over Korea for 36 years. During that time was when my instructors learned, so we had a very hardcore type of training, not like here in the US. You guys have it very easy because you can easily get into a school by just paying money. Back then, we learned in a totally different way. We had to be very loyal. It was not about just having money and paying. My time was very different than these days.

First, the school was very far away so I had to go very early in the morning to learn, and then I had to go to my academic school. Today, you guys have a nice mat, but in the old days we had a hard floor that was hard wood. In the Winter time there was no insulation underneath from the cold weather. Then in the Spring and Summer, we almost never came out in the early morning. Normally, we would do one hour of morning training, then go to school riding on a public transportation bus and to go to school all day. We would come home at 9:30 in the evening. Unlike kids today, who come home around three o'clock, we had to stay there all day. We had to take two lunchboxes. It was totally different. Even instructors in the US have not had to go through much of that kind of toughness.

Now these days, there is a more 'sport' like culture in some martial arts. When I was learning, it was always about having respect for our seniors. We could not hit our seniors, so we were always controlling ourselves. These days they just hit each other, but we had to be very respectful with our seniors and our juniors. Today all we do is sports, but not at that time. We had to have a really strong mental toughness, not just focus on physical things. The mentality was totally different.



Grand Master G.K. Lee shares his wisdom, gained over more than 50 years in the Martial Arts through the New GTMA Organization.



Grand Master G.K. Lee welcomed to one of the many GTMA locations he's toured since the launch of the organization.

The first generation was very tough because they faced war all the time. I was very lucky because I met so many good instructors who were really knowledgeable. My seniors were a little bit different because they had a very strong ego and were prideful. They felt they had a special kind of Tae Kwon Do as the first generation who learned from Japanese masters. That's why they felt they always had to win, which comes from Japanese culture. It's why the first generation always held back and never showed their feelings. They lived in a time of war, so their history is so different from mine because they were born on a battlefield. That's why many Korean Masters are very, very tough guys. They are also very sad and don't want to talk about their history or their pasts. This is why the first generation teachers are tough guys and want to teach really hard. It's really different from here and today.

JN: I would like to add some things about the G-Shim style of Tae Kwon Do that GTMA is practicing now. We've created a very modern curriculum, specifically tailored for today's market, for today's students, and for the realities of today's culture. We have six color belt poomse forms and there are also nine black belt forms. Grand Master, put a little bit of that toughness into these forms. Everybody that has seen or done them notices that they're very different. There's also a difference that is an intangible thing you can't see, taste, or touch, but you know it's there. The application to some of the techniques are not just performance based. There is real self defense and real strength in a lot of these poomses. Which also makes them a lot more enjoyable to do for someone that's got bad knees, bad hips, bad back, and falls down a lot. I feel strong doing them personally as a martial artist and watching martial artists that are actually good at these types of things. You can see that there's an intent to every one of these types of strikes.

It's not about memorization or the performance. These are actual quality techniques that are practical.

GL: I'm very lucky. My family is considered one of the top Martial Arts families in the world. Also I have 54 years of time and I have had many great instructors. So I've got about 50 years of study and deep research which are put into GTMA. Most founders in the early years of their life develop a Martial Art, but for me it's after 50 years. I'm 65 and currently developing all the forms and many other valuable things. We even begin with the basics like your breathing and posture. I'm very proud of GTMA.

Anyone from five to ninety years old can do the same format. It's a pretty friendly form for the whole body. It's very good for body functions. I'm very fortunate to pass this on. My senior instructor gave me so many great things, and finally I can put it into a package to give to my juniors. That's why I'm very pleased, because it's a great opportunity to give my juniors so they can learn forever.

I'm not changing the name, it's still Tae Kwon Do being passed on and continuing to be a better product. It makes me very happy because I can help people. I felt very humbled and had much pain when I left my family, but God gave me a great opportunity to give back and to pass this on. This makes me one of the most fortunate people.

A lot of organizations, in the early days, got off track because they became so closed off that they are not open to curriculum, material, and learning things from outside of their own organization. It's like a top down only leadership model that can be incredibly bad, because it means all knowledge must flow through me. You become the lid of the organization. But when you take the lid off the jar, you are freed up to encourage people and build a culture that gets people to go find useful material, curriculum with



Grand Master G.K. Lee addresses the Leaders of GTMA about the future and goals of the organization.

character enrichment, and integrate them rather than reject useful things just because they didn't come from you or your organization. So now G-Shim Tae Kwon Do is the curriculum. It's the style we are now teaching inside the organization which is a rebuilt curriculum from the ground up. As a result there are better benefits for health and for students of different skill levels as opposed to the old ways.

MAWN: Maybe if you could expand on that: Why would you rebuild a curriculum like that? What were the objectives of that? And where does that bring us today?

GL: Some other organizations and their practitioners are more sports-oriented which also means more fighting. I have been introducing this new curriculum because we don't want to go back to 50 years ago. We are training the Do which means the way of living. You are learning the Martial to be mentally in top shape and you're killing other things besides a human opponent. You are moving forward in a good way. At the same time, I'm sad that some, primarily in non-traditional Martial Arts, are pushing themselves in a negative direction because they only want to win and beat up somebody, but they are not doing things in the Martial Arts "way".

Martial arts means you are tough internally and not merely on the outside. We don't want to be a bully, the aggressor, or someone who goes to jail. We want to be developing the whole person with the Martial Arts, not just teaching people how to fight. Martial Arts offers so much more to a student than just physically defending themselves, if they ever need to. I don't want to waste our Martial Arts tradition by just going back to 50 years ago by trying to prove how tough we are.

Mas Oyama, just like General Chae, would go out looking for a

fight, but that changed when he went to China and challenged 10 masters. From this he came to understand that Martial Arts is not just for fighting, but for discipline. His thinking was changed to an emphasis on how to be strong internally and how to take care of people and self. So now a good Martial Art instructor is very successful at teaching both adults and children. Also, they are good at teaching how to have that enormous spirit so they never give up and at passing on life skills. But those emphasizing only sport and competition are not teaching that kind of life skill anymore.

People disrespect traditional Martial Arts and say they're useless. I want to ask these people, How do you fight with a bear? Do you do it with an empty hand? Of course not, we have guns and other weapons. We don't go around fighting bulls, like Oyama did, but every day we are fighting inside ourselves to be our best. So in G-Shim Tae Kwon Do you train everything physically; empty hands and weapons, but more importantly, we train the character, the integrity, the spirit, and the wholeness of a person.

Which means we adjust our curriculum to the needs of the student. Now, with G-Shim, you can train if you're over 50, or under 7! Times are changing and we have to stay current. We have to think about the future, back in the former generation people would die at 50 or 60, but now we often live into our 90's. This is why the arts have to update a little bit. We have to update to be better for the next generations to learn it.

You know it's funny that the Korean Martial Arts don't get any credit. The Japanese say our punching and kicking copied them. The Chinese say our weapons were taken from them. All of them say we are copycats. As a result our juniors have no identity. But I have a saying about my training - "I have many Japanese, Chinese Masters and friends whom I have learned from and studied with."

Still I think about 70% of Martial Arts practiced in the United States is based on Korean Martial Arts.

Bruce Lee had it right when he said to “Absorb what is useful”. It’s about the modernization of the arts for where we are today. You have to look at society and culture and build something based on them and improve it.

JN: Grand Master specifically chose the name GTMA because it’s Global Traditional Martial Arts. It’s plural because you are learning from all different styles and funnel it all down into one system, which ends up being the G-Shim. One of the innovations Grand Master Lee has introduced into G-Shim is the multiple implementation of the forms. They can be done either open handed or with a weapon because they are designed that way. They can be done in a multitude of different ways, depending on where you are and what you’re doing.

KL: As a practitioner myself, I appreciate the difference because I’ve been there and I’ve had the opportunity to do it. So the more modern technique is great. It’s teacher friendly. It’s user friendly. It’s real Martial Arts in a way that I could only have dreamed of wanting, but didn’t know. Being able to train with this modern approach to curriculum, kicks and punches and more, is easier on my body than I ever thought it could be. With this new approach to both training and teaching, it is so much better because I can leave the classroom without beating my body up. It’s still effective in the real world, and does the job that it needs to do, but it’s just in a different format that is far more user friendly and teaching friendly.

JN: I have known Grand Master for well over a decade. One thing that was an epiphany for me is that this art was founded later in a Grand Master’s career. He built it as he grew, with a solid base of knowledge and experience, and started it after 50 years. It’s a very interesting thing to hear and will be part of all our marketing moving forward.

MAWN: That’s pretty interesting. Now that we’ve underscored what the art of G-Shim style is, let’s talk about the organization in

general. That’s been a big project, right? How do you execute it? How do we bring this product to the masses? How do we get students to enjoy this new concept? So when did GTMA start? What are its principles and mission, and where are we at now?

KL: The 3 of us were in the school’s office on January the 4th of 2020. It was a very special day going forward with the introduction of Global Traditional Martial Arts. It was the new and great way that we were going to leave our previous organization and become a new organization by taking our seven schools that we had in that direction. So that’s when and how we started. Then it seemed like it was the next day when we started asking who wanted to follow Grand Master and they started coming out of the woodwork. They were like, “We want to follow him in his direction.”

JN: However we didn’t even get to Grand Master until April 1st. We very quickly started to realize that an organization could be created. It’s a group of martial artists that understand the needs of the Martial Arts school owners. We are all martial artists, every one of us from the CEO down to the Grand Master. Every one of us has been on the mats.

It’s set up because we all understand the challenges of being a school owner. It’s a very simple system. It’s not like you have to get a license in this. Then you have to certify in that. You have to pay to be certified in this. And you have to sign up for this. All of that goes out the window, because at the end of the day, people just want to operate their schools. They want to be able to say, “Here’s what I need from an organization. I need to have this type of structure and this type of curriculum and be able to purchase these types of items. How do we do that?” So we started with the idea and it was Chief Master Lee who said, “The journey continues”.

That has been our mantra from day one. With any kind of skill or lifestyle that you’re learning, the journey is going to continue. You start here, you move to here, you gain experiences, you move to there. So we’re very excited and thrilled about where we all were as martial artists, just as we’re excited about where we’re



Grand Master G.K. Lee demonstrates a weapons form from the new modern GShim curriculum.



Grand Master G. K. Lee takes pride in the dynamic, modern, new GTMA curriculum, built for student retention and longevity.

all going to go and who we're gonna meet along the way. The journey continues as a mantra, I think is really very special for us as an organization because of who we've been meeting along the way. Our mission statement is: Love The Art, Preserve The Craft, Empower The Future.

That's our three step process of what we do first off. We all love the art. Everyone is here because we love the art. It's not about the monetization of how we can create a business. This is the business we want to be in. Preserving the craft is that we have a traditionalist that's guiding each and every one of us. It was his genius that put it together in this G-Shim format. Empowering the future is what we've done as an organization. We've got the best in the fields of business, marketing, and finance that all have a Martial Arts background to participate with GTMA. So we're doing it from a position of a martial artist which is unlike any other organization. Which is why I'm proud to say in our first fiscal year, which was January to January, we averaged a new location every 1.9 days. That's Starbucks numbers.

We got to 200 locations very recently and we're very excited about it. We went from just a group of schools trying to figure out what we wanted to do to this full functional, amazing organization at fantastic speed. We're all so grateful and humbled by all the support!

It was, and still is a family based organization. At our very first globals, which was in July of last year, we were still in the middle of the pandemic and we faced all of the same issues that everybody else faced.

Well, our stuff is in containers in the middle of an ocean somewhere. So we printed out over a thousand t-shirts and gave them away to people that didn't have uniforms that said, "No Uniform, No Problem. I'm here with my family." People competed in them. People tested in them. Parents loved them because they really express what it means to be part of GTMA. While it is a structured military Martial Arts organization with respect towards our craft and our seniors, there's also the understanding that we're all family here and we all want each other to succeed.

MAWN: When we talked last, you described how you have

this almost binary model where you have the GTMA member schools who are using the curriculum and to some degree all the operational processes. Then you also have another part of the model for affiliates, who maybe are not teaching the curriculum. So describe how the organization is structured and how these affiliate schools work?

JN: First, I'll explain about how we are as an organization. As a Martial Arts organization, one of the things that we're very proud about is that Grand Master directed us to not only get more modern with the technique, but with the Martial Arts organization. I can explain that by saying the biggest boom in Martial Arts history has been what The Karate Kid, an entertainment property that everybody saw, or every martial artist that's reading your magazine can go back to. And said, "I want to be like Chuck Norris. I want to be like Bruce Lee. That was something that I wanted to emulate." How do we incorporate that? Typically as Martial Arts organizations, they would glean onto a Mutant Ninja Turtles kind of thing, and go to a theater and put out their tent and say, "Come train with us" or get those kinds of things.

We wanted to take a step back as a Martial Arts organization. While COVID was a horrible thing, it was a great opportunity for all companies and organizations out there because it was like Boggle. You had to reshape the board, and let everybody decide how they're gonna run their operations and what they wanted to be able to offer their people. So in addition to the curriculum that we have, we've created programming like our Shadow Moogi Program, which is a program for our elementary school kids. They've got the dragons, the story behind them, and all that kind of stuff that goes with it. That could be a comic book and it could be a television show. We actually as an organization have a partnership with a well known studio, which we can't talk about right now, but at Globals will actually be airing a pilot television show. When this magazine comes out, our people will be able to see a GTMA co-branded television show. It will be on a subscription on demand television network, where they could participate in.

We've partnered with the Guinness Book of World Records. We're doing a Guinness Book of World Records attempt at our



Grand Master G.K. Lee at a special “family gathering” of GTMA students and leadership.

global event where all of our students are using the discipline and the leadership skills that Grand Master was talking about to raise money for our nonprofit, which is the H and L hope foundation. It gives grants basically directly to school owners, schools, or individuals that have either a physical or cognitive disability. So if someone needs an OSHA compliant ramp, we will give them a grant to get that done. If someone is working with a child with down syndrome and needs special training, we'll give them a grant so they can do that. So we're offering all these additional things. In addition to the Martial Arts side of things, like the ability to buy equipment at a better rate. Get uniforms at a better rate because you're buying in bulk. The business training and all that other stuff, we have the capability to do all of this.

So I explained that because we have three tiers. Our first tier are the clubs that test under 50 students, every testing cycle. They have the rights to the intellectual property, to use the trademarks and participate in training. Once you go up to 51 students or more, we consider you a school. Our goal is not to tax our people. Our goal is to support them the best way we can.

So the other side of that is our affiliate program. This is what we've opened up to the rest of the world. There are so many great organizations out there that range from a handful of schools to a big chunk of schools. They want to affiliate with a group that has these types of options. They don't have the ability to create a television show. They don't have the ability to buy in bulk or get other benefits that an organization like our can provide.

Then there's our tournament circuit, which we're very excited about has three different levels as well. We'll have our closed tournament circuit, which is just going to be for the GTMA schools. We'll have our invitational tournament circuit where we'll invite schools that we're working with. One in particular is Carlos Machado Jiu Jitsu. They are top notch and we are thrilled to be partnering with them. We are actually the only organization whose patch he allows to be placed on his uniforms. So we have a co-branded Machado GTMA Jiu Jitsu uniform. They are our exclusive Jiu Jitsu partners. So when we sell Jiu Jitsu in our schools, it's actually the Machado program. So as a GTMA affiliate or member, you can run the Carlos Machado program through your school at a lower rate than if you came to it as an individual. Eventually we'll start host-

ing open tournaments as well. So closed, invitational, and open. Which is very exciting because some of the other organizations, their strength is their Achilles Heel, is that they keep everything so huddled and closed off that they don't have the opportunity to branch out.

Like Grand Master said, Global Traditional Martial Arts, sees all those great different arts and gives those opportunities for the school owners. School owners come in every shape, size and flavor. Some of them only want to do hardcore and sparring. Some of them will only want to do the family friendly stuff. Some of them want to do the kids. Some want to do Jiu Jitsu. Some want to do Gum Do. So with GTMA as an organization, we can make all those partnerships and make it easier for schools to come on board, whether they want to teach the G-Shim curriculum, or they want to keep their style that they've been doing.

GL: GTMA benefits from very famous people. Bruce Lee and Jhoon Rhee, are all my seniors who had good names teaching and a great life. So we got a benefit, but our juniors have no benefit. This is why I got very upset and a little nervous. Maybe we're just done traditionally. Everything is dominated by MMA. It used to be that UFC and championship contests were no big deal to me, but when they changed the name and called it a Martial Art. Then traditional Martial Arts people have no place to go. Which means we are engaged in a strong competition and the cultures are totally different.

The emphasis is just fighting. Traditional values are gone. As a senior, I got so much benefit from my seniors. But now, I want to be able to give my juniors something better than they are seeing in MMA and other sport focused arts. That's why we need Traditional Global Martial Arts, with Martial Arts instructors who love tradition and want to change the world together. There are great competitions and tournaments for sport oriented styles, but traditional Masters, meaning individual independent Martial Arts have no place to go. That's why we created this. The tournaments and competitions we've created satisfy the more 'competitive' students, but also help students explore and express their martial arts in a warm, welcoming, supportive environment that's appropriate for everyone. That's why we name it GTMA so we can pass it on to the next generation because I owe it to my seniors. I owe my juniors. I need to give them a good format with a solid tournament, so we

can make heroes. Traditional Martial Arts is our life, so I want to see this moving forward.

JN: Also, the idea that everyone comes together with a place for traditional Martial Arts. That's why in July, our biggest event is called Global Celebration. It's not a world championship, but rather people coming together and celebrating the traditional Martial Arts.

MAWN: Let's talk about that event. What is it? Who can come, who's invited, what's it all about, what are the objectives of the event, what do people need to know about it?

JN: So it's our largest event that we have annually. This is the second year that we're doing it. Last year we had it in Grapevine Texas at the Gaylord Hotel. This year it will be in Orlando, Florida at the Gaylord Palms Hotel.

We're setting a very high bar of quality for what the GTMA events are. This one event is a culmination of a lot of different things. Our licensees come and there's physical and business training for them. Then our masters come to train together and there's a master's class. There's a graduation and we have a master's ceremony which we combine with a very big gala dinner right afterwards.

The Master's Ceremony is all about family. It's about the intimate thank you between the student and the instructor and the bond that they have together. Our families are literally right there, you can literally reach out and touch everyone. It's a beautiful ceremony to be a part of and it's an open ceremony.

Then we have our tournaments. We have our international testing this year. We got over 150 visas from folks coming in from South America. We've got schools coming in from Europe. We just partnered with several schools in South Africa. They're coming from all over, which is great. That's kind of been the GTMA way. We add a lot of fun back into these events.

One of the first things that I had the honor of doing was designing our ceremonial uniforms. We wear these at black belt events, testings, and tournaments. Grand Master's only direction that he gave me was "I want to be able to kick in them. I want to be able to move around in them." He didn't want something that was stuffy because if a student came over and asked for his help, he wanted to be able to give it to him. That's the mentality of this organization. It's about not being on different levels, but all being there together sharing and trading knowledge and joy of what being a Martial Artist truly is. That's kind of the feeling and the tone, which is why we went with celebration. This year obviously we've got a special event. Plus, there's a theme park that's right across the street that we may or may not be doing something fun in as well. It's not a bad place to bring your family and it's a magical spot.

MAWN: Great. So next, what does the future look like? What's the direction GTMA is heading? What does the future look like? What are the goals? What are the objections?

JN: Right now at the time of this conversation, we're only 16 months old with 205 locations in 13 different countries and 33 different states. So the future I see is incredibly bright. It's been really exciting because we started very early on with schools wanting to come to us for the reason that it was more personable. Now very quickly people are noticing that we have a great product. We have great leadership and the things that they're looking for. The



Grand Master G.K. Lee and a future GTMA Leader.

decision of why to join GTMA has switched to this is a better opportunity for me as a martial artist. Is it an opportunity for me as a business owner? There are other reasons to make the choice.

So the future is that's the reason people come to us as we continue to grow, we are making partnerships with some of the best in the industry. More importantly, we're making partnerships with some of the best outside of the industry. We're looking outside into a world where things that wouldn't necessarily be accessible to school owners, now are through GTMA. So as we develop these partnerships and start to do these kinds of wonderful things and open up our doors, it's like when Willy Wonka opened up the chocolate factory. We want people to be able to come on in and enjoy being a martial artist again.

We say, love what you do again. People that come to our GTMA events express, "This is just fun. Again, this is why I started in the first place." Our focus is to keep passion for being a martial artist as our core from the headquarter standpoint. So our future is just to protect Grand Master's vision and get as many people in the world to meet him.

So this is why the journey continues. It's not a disrespect to where you were yesterday, but that's where you were yesterday. You're living today. So if this is what you need now, that's great. As GTMA, we want to be able to provide that for you. We also want to provide it for you in the future, but if we can't, if there's something else you need, there are no chains holding you to this as well. It's an open door. We're all martial artists and this is what we're choos-



Grandmaster G.K. Lee and some of the most talented, experienced leaders in the Martial Arts lead GTMA (Global Traditional Martial Arts)

ing to do. I think it is a breathe of fresh air for the industry that I hope catches on with other organizations.

It's about servant leadership. It's the organization that serves the members, not the other way around. It seems intuitive to most of us, but often these things get off track.

MAWN: Yes. That sounds pretty interesting. If you don't mind, let's talk business for just a moment and let's extend the servant leadership metaphor. So what do you think about this? How would you help each individual school be more successful as a business and how do you help them retain their students?

JN: There are some styles of Martial Art that are just really hor-

rible for student retention. And there are some styles of Martial Art that are really bad for instructors to teach. There are some ways to organize memberships or ways to organize business operations that are very not productive to running a successful profitable school. There are some strategies that are very useful and productive for running successful profitable schools.

G-Shim was created at a point in his career where he already knew what he was doing. It wasn't early on. Even though he was a fantastic athlete, this is after decades and decades of experience. We're only 16 months old, but as someone said, we are the most established startup company in the history of Martial Arts. Our core group, if you put together their years of school ownership, would reach in 300 to 400 years of school operations.

So we're incorporating types of psychological things in our individual backgrounds too. We are striving to create a brand focus rather than a personality emphasis. For example, we want to avoid the situation where you have an age group that has bonded with an instructor. He's an 18 year old kid that the school owner has to keep and hopes he doesn't go off to college. Because then you're going to have to bring in another instructor or you're gonna lose a student base because they like the instructor and not the style.

Instead, if we create a brand where everything around relates to the brand. You'll have students enjoying who are anchored into more than 'just' the training on the mat, but a more holistic solution for students. It means we create an environment where they enjoy their classes, but then go home and read a children's book that's got great illustrations in it that reinforces the lesson of discipline from class.

We read a story of Jun So, who is one of our Shadow Moogi characters. Now that relationship is now made with Jun So. When mom and dad give a kiss good night, and they turn off the lights.



The GTMA's motto - "the Journey Continues"

The child may grab a stuffed animal to go to sleep to protect them, but who can protect them? It can be what they're learning, so they protect themselves with the stuffed animal Jun So.

These kinds of ideas are built into everything that we've done. We've created a simple system of five programs. Everything is designed to integrate into the classroom, then extend those lessons into the home.

This helps a school owner that may be a better martial artist than they are a business person or the one that's a better business person than they may be physically as a martial artist. Each one can work within this system and not only retain their students, upgrade them into different programs, and give them other opportunities. It is a way to augment the skills they have and expand their creativity in their own school. We have school owners that are not GTMA and they're this or that Martial Art, but they can teach our stuff.

We don't force them to use our logo. We want them all to use our logo, but we'd like them to get to the point where they choose that our flag is more recognizable and better for them as a business owner than their own personal brand. We have to prove that to them and that'll come over time.

So what they're doing now is they're saying, "I'm this brand of Martial Arts. I use GTMA programming. I have access to all this great content, and amazing resources and I can utilize it, but I choose what I want to do." We've created a system where you can pick and choose. Some prefer everything to be laid out in specific details, so we are available for them too. Our license team works with each school owner individually. It's really whatever they want or wish to approach it with GTMA. Then some go, "I want to be a part of the GTMA."

Additionally, one of the things that we've found with the Shadow Moogi program, which is really interesting is you'll get parents that come in and say, "My kid listens to you better here than they listen to me at home." So one of the things we do in the Shadow Moogi program is we deputize the parents. So there's a book that they get which they have to get certain stars and

mechanisms to rank up. But the last star that they need to graduate with the school, the school owner gives to the parents and they're given a mission to do it at home. The parent is the one that explains the lesson supposed to be learned and when it is achieved. If they get that star, they get to move on. So we're creating that Martial Arts culture, that traditional core of respect and getting the parents in on it as well. So it becomes family. That's what is great about Martial Arts, it's the only sport you can do as a family at the same time.

JL: How we can help the licensees is really what we focus on. We are constantly focused on solutions for our members' problems, and adding value to their programs, because we are martial artists for martial artists. We know what it's like in the 'day to day', operating schools for decades and being responsible for it, making the bills, making sure employees get paid, taking care of their families, and living a good life. It's part of our DNA, not an afterthought.

We can suggest, "This is difficult here, do this, try this. We're sure you'll find that this is very useful, helpful, and productive in your business and you'll be successful." All we want to do is make sure they're going to be successful. Everything has the goal of them having a productive life by enjoying the Martial Arts again.

JN: It's all about showing respect for what we do. You have to walk the walk and it starts at the top. It starts with our Grand Master. We are running the business like it's been done outside of this industry. Organizations this size don't typically do that from my experience.

GL: The secret is having a passion in my heart to motivate my instructors to have the same thing. My job is to touch every student in the same way. We are very open at GTMA, I'm very proud that our students and instructors always desire to come see me and I welcome them. We spend time together, work out together, and sweat together. My desire is to pass on knowledge and wisdom that I have gained from my Masters and connect to future generations. I learned from seniors, and always want to pass on the great thing I learned from them to my juniors. That's what GTMA is all about.

MAWN: Thank you so much Grand Master Lee.

