



Prior to starting his martial arts training in 1957 as a student of ju-jitsu, William H. Duessel served during 1945 in the U. S. Marine Corps and received an honorable discharge. In time some Shotokan techniques were used to add the karate elements to the training being done.

In 1962 he started training in Isshin-ryu Karate with Harry G. Smith.

In 1964, at the age of 37, he met Tatsuo Shimabuku and trained with him extensively. At the conclusion of the three months Shimabuku was visiting and training in the Pittsburgh area, the founder of Isshin-ryu Karate personally promoted Mr. Duessel to Sho Dan, and a picture recorded this event.



In 1970 he opened the first karate school in Pittsburgh, the Academy of Isshinryu Karate. Once opened in downtown Pittsburgh, the dojo consisted of more than 500 students by 1975. Mr. Duessel, in connection with Mr. Charles Wallace, became full time instructors at the dojo. They still train together today.

In 1973 Master Ungi Uezu stayed in his home for a month.

In 1974 he visited Okinawa where he was one of the last to train in Tatsuo Shimabuku's dojo and receive positive feed back from the founder of the style.

By 1979 the number of students began to drop as the karate rage subsided causing the dojo to close and classes were conducted at the Pittsburgh YMCA. This dojo lasted for thirteen years.

In 1985 Mr. Duessel retired and began to spend his winters in Florida. Since this time he continued to train and teach Isshin-ryu to students in Pennsylvania, Nevada, New Jersey, Florida, Texas, Ohio, New York and Maine.

In 1990 he was promoted to Ku Dan, 9th Degree Black Belt. With this promotion he

was the highest-ranking black belt under the son of the founder, Kichiro Shimabuku.

In 1993 the dojo was relocated to a commercial location in Greentree, where it still exists today.

In January of 1995 Hanshi was featured in Inside Karate Magazine as a featured master. The article by Brian Wilkes explained Master Duessel's philosophy and insights about Isshin-ryu Karate.

In 1995 he conducted seminars with Master Osamu Ozawa (8th Dan, Shotokan from Las Vegas). About the same time period for two or three years Master Ozawa, Master Fumio Demura (7th Dan, Shito Ryu) Master Murakami, Master Ochai, Master Oshiro and Master Duessel did individual seminars.



In 1996, at the age of 69, Mr. Duessel created videos of the hand and weapon's kata. A number of years later the format was changed to DVD to make viewing easier. In 2004 he published a book, **BEYOND BLACK BELT – HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR TRAINING**, in conjunction with Don Washabaugh, one of his senior black belts. Hanshi and Don Washabaugh are starting to plan a second edition with further teachings.



William H. Duessel's philosophy of life and karate may be understood as one reads, investigates and understands the "basic formulae" he has developed during his many years of studying Isshin-ryu Karate. Though Hanshi Duessel has stated that Isshin-ryu Karate is a physical art and thus it must be performed, we may gain insight into this humble karate master through investigating his thoughts. These key insights are found on pages 14 and 15 in his book, **BEYOND BLACK BELT**.

- *Uncontrolled power is useless.*
- *Perfect practice makes perfect.*
- *Kata are real fights against imaginary opponents.*
- *Form plus speed equal power.*
- *Use technique, not strength.*
- *Concentrate all power and energy into a small area.*
- *Strong focus is a result of good form.*
- *Retraction multiplies power.*
- *Look before changing direction.*
- *Keep your one-point.*
- *A weapon is an extension of the hand.*
- *Combine body-mind-spirit to create a powerful technique.*
- *You must be relaxed for your energy to flow.*
- *Show spirit in all techniques.*
- *All kata must flow.*
- *Where your thought is, and where your breathing is, lies your center.*

Other quotations by Hanshi Duessel:

- Katas have strong and soft parts. Katas also have fast and slow parts.
- Weapon katas must flow also.
- It is important to limit upper body movement when kicking.
- A kata done without proper flow is like a hollow shell and it will ill serve the karateka.
- Relax to develop speed; perfect form to develop focus.
- If a student desires to learn, he will motivate himself. The teacher should set the example. He should lead and guide the student, not get behind and push them.
- A black belt is like a school diploma. Even though you graduate, one must work to APPLY that knowledge.

- I strive to work up to the level of my rank – to honor it and be worth of it. Students of all levels should do this.
- We seek a high degree of proficiency in all aspects of the art; to just maintain is not enough.
- I really feel that I have some valuable information to impart. And I love to workout. I practice each morning. I do kata, work the weapons, and investigate the art. I do Sanchin plus body conditioning.
- Students wonder how I can remember so many details or execute so readily . . . well, I have the interest and the desire, and I practice consistently.
- If you are serious about training, you must find balance. Your family, your job, your country or religion should not be neglected to practice karate. But if you follow the karate principles, you can attend to all of these successfully. Don't find an excuse for not attending karate class.
- A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained is like his teacher.
- Setting a good example is more valuable than giving good advice.
- We must apply what has been taught.
- The more intense the crisis situation under which you learn, the less you learn.
- Practice without pressure and you will learn more efficiently and the better you will perform under pressure.
- WILL – HEART – DEDICATION - - (we understand the concepts of Heart & Dedication) to understand Will we must reflect deeper.

Awards Hanshi has received are listed below:

Universal Martial Art Hall of Fame, July 2000 - Grand Master of the Year

Isshinryu Hall of Fame 2000-Inductee

Isshinryu Hall of Fame 1998 - Lifetime Achievement Award

Eastern USA International Martial Arts Association 1997 Hall of Fame
Lifetime Achievement Award

As is evident thought this brief article, Hanshi Duessel is always a student of Isshin-ryu. He has dedicated himself to the art and those who truly wish to learn and advance their knowledge. As Hanshi stated at the end of the article by Brian Wilkes, "What is ahead of me? To keep going, to keep teaching people, because I think I still have plenty to offer."

Below are two pictures demonstrating some of the long rich history of which Hanshi has been a part. From his entrance into Isshin-ryu Karate in 1962 to his direct training with O'Sensei in 1964 to his trips to Okinawa, Hanshi has been a student, teacher and master of the style he loves. His daily training, knowing he

will be 85 May 30, 2012, makes it evident that there is much to learn, which can only be done through devoted dedication to keeping the style he learned from the founder of the style alive, as it was taught. Without men like Hanshi, Tatsuo Shimabuku's Isshin-ryu Karate will cease to be alive.



This picture from 1964 depicts a demonstration performed with O'Sensei Tatsuo Shimabuku and Hanshi Duessel.

This picture, also from 1964, depicts the people who trained with O'Sensei Tatsuo Shimabuku in Pittsburgh, PA.

Back row left to right: Harry Acklin, William H. Duessel, Joe Pennywell, John Pringle, James Morebeto (all black belts)

Front Row left to right: Lou Race (brown belt) O'Sensei Tatuso Shimabuku (red belt), Vince Berklick (brown belt)



Respectfully submitted,
Kyoshi John E. Hughes, Hachi Dan
www.Isshin-ryu.com