

Joseph Michael Amodeo: Lessons from an exceptional journey

Grandmaster Amodeo was a skilled martial artist, an instructor, a mentor, a teacher and a visionary— as well as a loving husband and a friend and father to many. *His* was an unforgettable journey worth continuing.

He grew up fighting

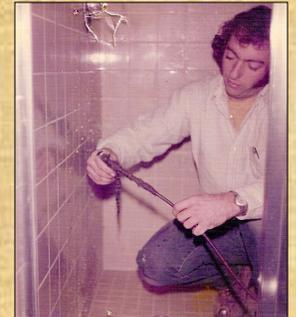


The youngest of four boys and the son of an immigrant grocer, Michael lost his mother to cancer when he was just a young boy. Such early trauma would have been a simple excuse to live a troubled young life. Little Michael was forced to dig deeper than most kids his age. It was a trait he would bring into play time and again throughout his life journey.



The journey is its own reward

Considering a journey as defined by Webster: “the act of traveling from one place to another”— it would be easy to define the young adult known as Michael Amodeo as a poster-child for a man obsessed with the essence of travel. His many early professions included everything from a barber and a rancher to a morning DJ personality and a plumber. You name it...he tried it. Michael was a fan of the power derived from “seizing the moment” and although these earlier vistas weren’t his true calling, he excelled at most.



Finding his element

An important aspect of any journey is finding your sweet spot, that element where you feel at home no matter where you rest. It was in the field of martial arts, specifically Tae kwon do, that Grandmaster Amodeo discovered a higher calling. He began his martial arts training in the 70’s and studied several different forms including Tang Soo Do, Wing Chun, Hapkido, Hanmudo and Tae Kwon Do. His legacy of more than 30 years shows a long trail of accomplishments. He earned his Black Belt in TKD on Sept. 16, 1984 and through strong dedication to the sport, he rose in rank to become a Kukkiwon Certified Sixth Dan Black Belt.

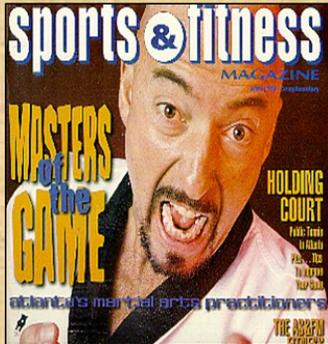




One of Grandmaster Amodeo's favorite quotes was
*"What we do for ourselves dies with us,
 what we do for others is immortal"*

He embodied that saying and would share his knowledge for the betterment of Martial Arts. He had a special ability to reach people; he knew how to guide them toward discovering their inner warrior spirit.

Soon after earning his Black Belt, he became an instructor and later he was voted 1992 Instructor of the Year. Throughout his career, he officiated at many state championships as well as the Georgia Games. He served two terms as Secretary General for the Georgia State TKD Association.



1996 Georgia State Taekwondo Officers
 Left to right William Johnson, Treasurer; David Bartow, Executive Director; Michael Amodeo, Secretary General; Young Seon Seo, President; Craig Peebles, Vice President; Jenni Matsuoka, Former President and current Advisor to the President; and J. Y. Shim, Vice President; (absent from picture) Vice President Tok Song Lee

After over thirty years and more than a thousand students later, an army of martial arts enthusiasts count themselves as better because of the specific teachings they received from him. His path to helping others find their warrior spirit was taught primarily through example.



He excelled in helping students discover this inner power and counseled them on applying their new found strength in all aspects of life. Still, many students recall another gifted approach equally fondly. He had a knack of knowing just when to inject a touch of playful humor as a reminder that even serious challenges must be taken lightly on occasion.



Grandmaster Amodeo adjusts foot position for a young Jeff Bishop and many years later pins his badge after he graduates from the Cobb County Police Academy.



Wayne Bishop accepts help with his technique as a young student of Grandmaster Amodeo and many years later receives acknowledgement for his support of Tae kwon do .



Digging deeper: The Amodeo Way



Grandmaster Amodeo maintained a strong sense of discipline in his approach to all aspects of life, including his martial arts. Still, with all his training and with all his prior experiences, he felt there was something absent in his fighting technique. It was in 1987 that the seeds to this missing element were planted upon his meeting Betty...Michael's future partner in life and the love of his life. It was through their connection that he unearthed the incredible power of love and explored its many possibilities in battle.



The Birth of a Warrior Spirit

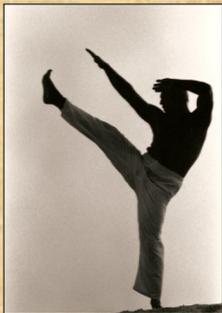
Betty and Michael marry in Jamaica 1993

While Grandmaster Amodeo already understood that his body was an instrument of attack and that his mind served as a fortress for defense against transgressions, he found that love was the perfect conduit between both offense and defense. He soon realized that love was actually at the heart of martial arts: love for yourself, love for others and love for the art of Tae kwon do. It was through this final, unique aspect of his fighting that he unleashed a greater power known as the "Warrior Spirit". Where mind, body and spirit work in tandem to set free eternal strength from within. He subsequently dedicated his life to sharing these insights and teaching his students how to discover their inner force and apply their new found vigor in all aspects of life.

And renew their vows in Florida 2005

The Final Test of His Warrior Spirit

Confronted with a dismal prognosis for lung cancer in 2004, Grandmaster Amodeo continued to teach Tae kwon do and rarely missed a day of work. At first, he kept his final challenge to himself as he worked his battle plans. He approached his illness like everything else in his life, with a positive attitude and indomitable spirit. Later, even as his strength waned he continued to teach and inspire.



It's worth noting that this warrior's approach to his impending demise offered perhaps his greatest lesson regarding fighting from the heart. His courage in the face of death demonstrated that how we live, shows *something* of our warrior spirit. However, how we die, shows *all* of it.

Grandmaster Michael Amodeo's journey ended on May 20th, 2006. One of his few regrets in life was that his illness cut short plans to achieve the rank of Grand Master. However, in recognition of his Warrior Spirit and in appreciation for all the lives he touched and inspired in the world of martial arts, The United TKD Association awarded him that final honor posthumously.



His Journey Continues

Grandmaster Amodeo was unique. He possessed a distinctive vision of the martial arts that moved beyond traditional realms of mind and body. He taught his students the power of love: love for themselves, love for others and love for martial arts. He lived just as he taught and demanded discipline and respect. In return, he kindled those same traits into both young and old students of the martial arts. His personal integrity and humble spirit made a positive impact on everyone who came to know him.



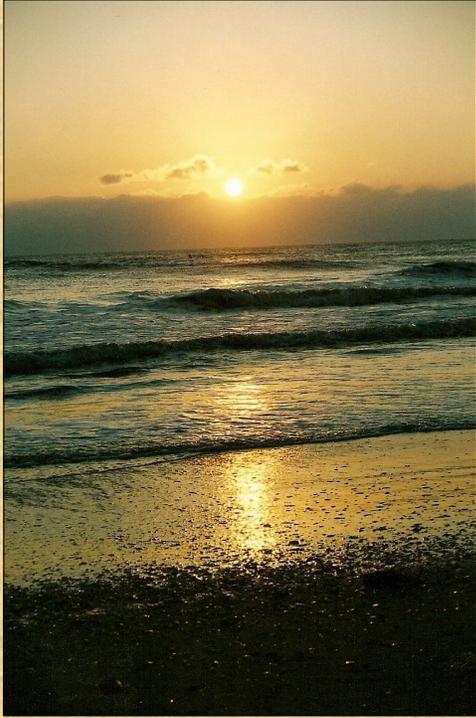
Memorial Wall at Gateway Martial Arts to honor a Great warrior spirit



Masters Bill and Candy Lenix along with Grandmaster Young Seon Seo present memorial plaque to Master Betty Amodeo in honor of Grandmaster Amodeo.

The passing of a warrior spirit.....

by Betty Amodeo

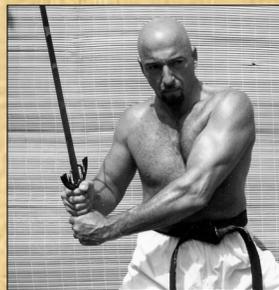


This sunset picture was taken moments after scattering Michael's ashes in the gulf of Mexico. The sun seemed to pause as if to let me know the sun would never truly set on this warrior named "Michael".



The following morning I was awakened by the bird pictured . He tapped until I opened the door and acknowledged him with a series of photos. Many believe that white birds are the embodiment of liberty and the transcendence of the soul. They are also associated with immortality, victory, power and bearers of messages of guidance. The message was clear to me; Michael was letting me know he was ok and I was inspired to share the spirit of this special warrior by continuing his mission to help each student find their inner warrior spirit.

***Please help make that possible through your support of
The Journey Fund....thanks so much!***



**In Loving Memory
of
J. Michael Amodeo
1947-2006**



Photo by Russell Carpenter