

## Remembering a True Karate-ka by Katherine Thiry

We have lost a good man in Moe Dinner. While I am sure that he will be greatly missed in all of the communities of which he was an active and contributing citizen, Moe is particularly missed by those of us in the Washington Karate Association who knew him for three to four decades. Moe, who began his karate training at the age of 55, died last week at the age of 93. There was a lot that transpired in those interim years. An active and successful business man, Moe continued to travel world wide as a representative of Karate, his favorite pastime; he continued to earnestly to donate his hard earned dollars to deserving causes and institutions as the generous philanthropist he was. Having lost his wife to cancer, Moe never forgot his role in helping to support cancer research. It was just one of countless and long objectives to which he held fast. The list of his work was as long as your arm.

Moe will always be an exemplary model for those of us who strive to be citizens of our communities. We remain standing at an age that Moe was just beginning a new chapter in his busy life. He lived completely and earnestly until his body simply called time. Time and energy were valuable commodities to Moe; He lived and loved accordingly. Those of us, who had the privilege of knowing him, know this to be true as the beneficiaries of his friendship. We felt his loyalty, respected his unconditional love and became better people for having been the object of Moe's pithy observations along the way.

The last time I was able to communicate with our fifth degree black belt, was last August before leaving for Europe. Moe was secured to his wheelchair and struggled like the black belt he was to be able to utter enough words that would stand on its own as a gracious conversation. This was so typical of his style. Even though he was speech impaired from a stroke that stole his strong gruff voice like an entitled thief, he held himself accountable. His body was so frail, yet his spirit was left undiminished and it was undeniable that Moe was a man to his marrow. We visited as a family and Moe immediately noticed our daughter's growth. A knowing smile crept across his face in recognition of her 5'8" stature. Just yesterday he held Elizabeth. He stood proudly as her Godfather and she was cradled by him as a newborn. Just yesterday, he knelt down upon his knees, looked her in the eye and handed her the "keys" to her Barbie car. On this occasion, many years later, it was Elizabeth who knelt beside "Uncle Moe" down upon her knees while she held his hand. The roles having been reversed entirely, we each felt the



growing lump in our throats as we simultaneously recognized the final chapter that was upon us. Not a stranger to the last throes of life, we have witnessed too many good friends and relatives facing their impending death. Moe was a champ and a gentleman. What a karate-ka, he. Not a tear, no lamentations or the slightest complaint. Not a single indication that he was anything but grateful. Moe was simply happy to see us and made it his job to make us feel comfortable. It didn't work. We all broke into tears as we got into the car.

The neurological pathways of a true karate-ka leave an indelible mark. An automatic response is just what we karate-ka strive for in all of those thousands of hours on a dojo floor. We work and work to become a fully integrated Karate-ka technically. If we are really tough, we never depart from the tenants of Karate-do either. Moe, having met the technical and moral criteria, will always remain as a testament to Karate-do discipline having fought and prevailed over what could have been a very strong ego. Rather, he remained humble and kept life in perspective.

Moe and I marked by hand movements, his favorite and hallmark demonstration kata: Annanko. He remembered it all. The connection was there and we were all grateful for it. There are things that you never forget. After the classes finished in Bellevue, Moe would drive from the Ballard dojo to the Bellevue dojo at 9:30 at night so that we could refine his kata. His robust announcement of "ANNANKO" is forever part of our school. It is forever in my mind.

Known for his bright pale blue eyes that somehow balanced his glass shattering kiai, I was astounded that at 93 his eyes were as vibrant as ever. They were not diminished in the least. If eyes are indeed a window to the soul, Moe's soul was predictably clean and clear.

There are countless stories about Moe. Suffice to say for these purposes that he wasn't a "talker" but a doer. Moe never failed to show up, jump in and never minded much except for a lapse in manners and/or protocol. He was a kind and generous father that loved unconditionally. As I recall, he never spoke ill of anyone and dismissed most personal lapses to human frailty.

As karate-ka, most of you will never know Moe. It is my sincere hope, however, that you remember the most important lesson of Moe's legacy: he was proud of being a karate-ka and throughout his challenging life, he considered Karate-do his way of life. Karate-do suited Moe Dinner well and Moe Dinner returned the favor by being an elite Karate-ka. We always pointed to Moe by way of example....and we always will.

Ossu, Moe.