

Featured Teacher, August 2022



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CAA divisão 2

I started training martial arts in 1970, at the age of six, in São Paulo, the city where I was born, and for seven years I was able to enjoy the first teachings of Japanese Budo. In 1980 I started to practice “Capoeira”, a charming Brazilian martial art to which I dedicated myself for fourteen years, and I taught classes from the end of the 1980s. In 1987 I joined the International Institute of Philosophical Martial Arts Bodhidharma, starting to train Nei Kung with master Michel Echenique, and shortly after I Ai Do. For about ten years I could understand that the ultimate goal of martial arts was within ourselves, and its external expression was a reflection of internal self-control. From then on, I knew that martial arts would be part of my life.

In 1997 I joined Aikido with Sensei Wagner Bull. At that time, I was living in São José dos Campos and it took approximately two hours to get to the dojo in São Paulo. In 1998 I was allowed to teach a small group of friends very interested in Art. In 2011 I started to develop my own Aikido training program, but without leaving the organization that I had been a part of quite actively. The year 2015 was fantastic, as I attended in a Tai Chi Chuan workshop with master Carlos Paganini, from Chile, and seeing that all the balance, stability and harmony that I

was developing in Aikido this master did with a deep philosophical knowledge, so I started training with him, graduating as a teacher in 2019.

In October 2019 I decided to travel to California and wanted to know the work of the Senseis: Linda, Michael among others, because I felt that they were training in a way more in line with my vision of Aikido. I was looking for great posture, and the development of technical skills that could keep me relaxed, taking care of my partner, and later reverberating that into technical efficiency. Talking to Sensei Wagner shortly before traveling, we came to the conclusion that it was time for my development to take another direction, I thanked him for the guidance I had during all those years, and on the other hand I felt satisfied with everything I had contributed to his organization. Fate was unfolding before my eyes and I was sure that something special was coming, and despite not knowing what I would find, my heart was beating with conviction and excitement.

My Most Memorable Aikido Experience

I had a lot of good times in Aikido, but the trip to California was magical and some facts were quite profound. The day I arrived in Los Angeles, I attended Sensei Mariye Takahashi's class at the Aikido Academy SGV, and after the class we had a conversation circle with everyone present about the philosophy of Aikido. On my last day in California, I also attended the class at Aikido Academy, and then I had the honor of having dinner with Sensei Mariye Takahashi and talking more about philosophical topics and about the book she had won from Sensei Morihei Ueshiba with the dedication he had done. Also honored were the classes in Palo Alto with Sensei Robert Frager, having the opportunity to talk about Sensei Morihei Ueshiba and Aikido.

My first class at Santa Cruz Aikido was with Sensei Linda Holiday, halfway through the class I realized I was in a deep state of peace and tranquility that I had never witnessed anywhere in all these years as a martial arts practitioner. I noticed that this could be due to the fact that everyone was training for the purpose of personal improvement. They weren't concerned with protecting their partner or making him feel immobilized by feeling the pain seeping through his joints and muscles. Merit of Linda Sensei, who conducted and orchestrated the class so that it could take place in harmony, a characteristic that permeates the Santa Cruz dojo.

The following week, when I was training Randori in Ryo Katadori with two more black belts (two attackers coming from the front and simultaneously grabbing us by the shoulders), I felt it was the ideal technique to exercise my deepest idea of Aikido, keeping me calm internally, balanced and stable posture, not clashing with my partners, and maintaining harmony and union with them. After some time, Sensei Linda Holiday stopped the practice, and only asked me to

continue it with my partners. At the end she praises my posture and attitude during the execution of this technique. It was magical, I was pleased to see that my conception of Aikido made sense. That was my most memorable moment.

But the journey continued, and I was able to make new friends and have other very deep and special moments. The following weekend, I attended Frank Doran Sensei's 60 Years Aikido Seminar in Redwood. I was able to meet Sensei Michael Friedl, and I had the satisfaction of training with him, in another remarkable moment, since the techniques flowed in a harmonic way, directly meeting my way of understanding the fluidity and mutual learning between practitioners. That same fluidity and harmony I shared with another person I didn't know, later I found out it was Sensei Kimberly Richardson, it was also special.

Finally, we reach the year 2020, with the Covid-19 pandemic. I was able to participate in dozens of online classes from Sensei Michael Friedl and Sensei Linda Holiday, which became great references for me and my students, and I had the opportunity to participate in several online events and classes, notably with the Senseis: Frank Doran, Robert Nadeau, Mary Heiny, Patrick Hendrix, Craig Fife, Kayla Feder, Jane Nason, Ian Nevelius, Kimberly Richardson, Jack Wada, Ruth Kedar, Ricardo Jenez, Larry Bardach, Alan Holiday, among others.