

Watch Out for a Lady

Master Carol Burris

It all started in the 90's at our dojo in small town Athens, TN. I had trained for over twenty years and realized that most women were not as lucky as I was to have a Sensei that encouraged women to excel in their karate training. The ladies in our dojo embraced the ideas of leadership and so the Ladies of Isshin-ryu started. My goal was to help women know they could be more than just a casual member of their dojo. Those first workouts were attended by a few ladies from upper East TN, Middle, and of course East TN, primarily IKA members. We worked on developing techniques and concentrated on making our experience in karate even better. As time continued it was apparent that more ladies were interested in the same ideas. We all wanted to become more than just members of our dojos, so what better way to do so we worked harder and harder in developing our karate, and many took on leadership roles in various aspects of their lives. Many of those females began feeling empowered to do whatever they chose to do at the time. I encouraged the females attending to go into their respective communities to spread Isshinryu. We were off to a fulfilling time.

Those first years were all day training sessions with varied female instructors from the dojos represented. We realized the all-day sessions would be just as meaningful to everyone if we adjusted the time to shorter sessions. Presentations were direct and to the point and this allowed everyone to return to their homes. Years of the Ladies of Isshinryu continued. I realized how valuable time with other females in our karate had become to all the ladies. At that point I thought what better place for Ladies of Isshinryu to connect than at the Isshinryu Hall of Fame. The governing board of the IHOF liked the idea of my bringing this to the already fabulous weekend of Isshinryu Karate. Females empowering females during the 1-hour session has proven successful and been received well.

I've contacted instructors from all over the United States and most of the ladies have graciously attended and/or presented during the 1-hour session of Ladies of Isshinryu. The venue gives females the opportunity to train with other females who love Isshinryu, who are from other parts of the U.S., who are from other lineages, and who have devoted their time in study of our style. We leave with new ideas to take to the

dojos, insight as to how others train, and most of all time to just be with other females who love Isshinryu. Friendships have been made and reunion time at the Isshinryu Hall of Fame for the Ladies of Isshinryu is something to behold.

Each passing year promises to be another great time at the Hall of Fame for the Ladies of Isshinryu. 2022 will be no exception: Masters Lori Clough from Delaware, Veronica Sandaubrae from Oklahoma, and Stephanie Allen Huskey from Illinois are slated to present. All three of these ladies are outstanding Competitors, Instructors, and as individuals. Come prepared to work hard and absorb much from these ladies. The event will be held on Friday, July 15, 2022, in Gatlinburg, TN at the Gatlinburg Convention Center from 12:00 – 1:00. The Hall of Fame banquet will start at 6:30 that night followed by the tournament at The Gatlinburg Convention Center on Saturday, 7/16/22. A weekend of Isshinryu with our Isshinryu family... I really can't think of a better way to spend a long weekend.