

**Biography****Robert N. Wheatley****Wheatley Taekwon-Do Academy****1790 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street****Reno, NV 89509****January 1, 2004****---FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE---**

**RENO, NEV.**--After more than 35 years of studying and teaching Taekwon-Do, Master Robert N. Wheatley understands that his most difficult challenges are ahead of him as the recently elected President of the United States International Taekwon-Do Federation (USITF). The USITF is affiliated with the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF) which has schools in 115 countries.

"Growing a national organization dedicated to teaching the true traditional form of Taekwon-Do as developed by General Choi Hong Hi, is an exciting opportunity," said Master Wheatley. "I am humbled by the support of many martial artists and schools across the country and will dedicate my best efforts to make the USITF an effective and strong organization.

"At the same time," Wheatley continued, "I am very aware of how difficult it can be to persuade martial artists to adhere to the standards of the USITF. Each martial artist has strong opinions about techniques and teaching. The USITF will work to demonstrate to Taekwon-Do practitioners the benefits of General Choi's scientific methods."

Master Wheatley is a 7<sup>th</sup> degree black belt and is an official International Instructor/Examiner of the ITF. He has been teaching in America since 1983.

A native of Ireland, the 54-year-old Master began studying various disciplines of martial arts while attending school in London from 1966-1970. Although he practiced and developed proficiency in Kenpo, boxing and Jiu-jitsu, Master Wheatley did not take formal exams in any of these arts.

Upon his return to Ireland in 1970, he was introduced to the spectacular kicking and flying techniques of Taekwon-Do. Under the instruction of Master Rhee Ki Ha, Master Wheatley and a handful of students began practicing Taekwon-Do. By 1973, Master Wheatley had begun teaching as an instructor for the Republic of Ireland Taekwon-Do Association in Dublin and Arklow, County Wicklow.

Master Wheatley's career in Ireland, England and America garnered numerous awards including:

- First in patterns and second in power breaking at the 1975 Irish National Championships, which were presided over by General Choi and many other Korean masters, including Master Rhee.
- At the 1977 Irish/European Championships, Master Wheatley took first place in power breaking, third place in patterns and he captained the overall winning sparring team for Ireland. Competitors from Ireland, England, Scotland, Germany, Wales and Canada participated in the event.
- At Ireland's South Leinster Championships in 1980, Master Wheatley was awarded first place in power breaking, second in sparring and third in patterns.

Besides competing, Master Wheatley studied under General Choi for nearly three decades at numerous seminars, private instruction and courses, including General Choi's final Masters Course in Vienna, Austria in 2002. (General Choi passed away June 15, 2002.) As a result of this lifelong study of Taekwon-Do, Master Wheatley formally tested and has been awarded numerous belts and titles:

- 1<sup>st</sup> degree black belt was awarded to Master Wheatley in 1976.
- In 1978, he tested successfully for 2<sup>nd</sup> degree black belt under General Choi. Also in 1978, Master Wheatley passed his first International Instructor's exam under General Choi.
- In 1979, Master Wheatley qualified as an International Umpire and Referee under General Choi in Dublin.
- Still residing in Ireland, Master Wheatley successfully tested for 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt in 1981. An Irish newspaper praised Master Wheatley as, "One of Irelands most physically active and respected martial artists."
- In 1982, Master Wheatley passed the second International Instructor's exam and was recognized as an official International Instructor of the ITF. An additional Instructor course was completed in 1991 and he began teaching Instructor courses in subsequent years.
- After moving to the United States in 1983 and becoming an American citizen, Master Wheatley successfully tested for his 4<sup>th</sup> degree black belt under a panel of Korean and American examiners headed by the President of the United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF) Grand Master C. E. Sereff.
- In 1984, Master Wheatley was appointed California State Director and Regional West Coast Director for the USTF.
- In 1986, the "Who's Who of Martial Arts" honored Master Wheatley with a features listing in their annual publication.
- His 5<sup>th</sup> degree black belt was awarded in 1987 under General Choi, Park Jung Tae and Grand Master Sereff.
- Appointed as ITF Ambassador to Mexico in 1987 by General Choi.
- In 1989, Master Wheatley was inducted as the first Irishman and European into the Karate Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio.
- In 1992, Master Wheatley was elected as Vice President of the USTF and was awarded his 6<sup>th</sup> degree black belt and overall high-test score for the USA under a large panel of examiners headed by Grand Master Sereff.
- In 1994, Master Wheatley entered his team in the U.S. Nationals held in Las Vegas where they won many individual medals and took home the overall team spirit award. At the world championships in Malaysia, General Choi announced that Master Wheatley was to be awarded the Outstanding Instructor Medal for the ITF.
- At the 10<sup>th</sup> World Championships held in Russia in 1997, Master Wheatley was selected to be an official judge for the event.
- In 1998, Master Wheatley was promoted to 7<sup>th</sup> degree black belt and Master Instructor.

- Because of his career-long focus on power breaking, Master Wheatley was appointed as the official power development and breaking instructor for the USA in 1999.
- Master Wheatley was elected President of the USITF in 2002.

Teaching the art of Taekwon-Do has been the life-long avocation for Master Wheatley and he has founded numerous schools during his career. In 1979, for example, he opened the renowned Greystones School of Taekwon-Do in County Wicklow, Ireland. Greystones became known throughout Europe for its high standard of technique, superb fighters, national champions and large membership.

After moving to America and becoming an American citizen in 1983, Master Wheatley successfully ran schools in Santa Barbara and Lompoc, Calif. He also opened another Taekwon-Do studio at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. This studio became the Region One headquarters for the USTF. After moving to Reno, Nev., in 1995, he opened Reno's Wheatley Taekwon-Do Academy.

Because of his dedication to teaching Taekwon-Do, Master Wheatley has been asked during his career to apply his talents to instructional material developed by the ITF. In 1984, he assisted General Choi and was featured in the production of the 15-volume encyclopedia of Taekwon-Do. In 1990, he also assisted General Choi in the production of a series of instructional videotapes for the USTF. In 1999, at the request of General Choi's son, Master Choi Jung Hwa, Master Wheatley assisted in the production of the Taekwon-Do Legacy CD rom videotapes. He was featured performing Taekwon-Do techniques for power breaking and power development.

Throughout his career, Master Wheatley has traveled frequently throughout America and Europe to conduct seminars and courses on Taekwon-Do. In 2000, he ventured farther afield when he instructed a one-week Millenium World Camp for the International Taekwon-Do Foundation New Zealand. His seminars on power breaking are particularly popular.

Master Wheatley has a 23-year-old son, Paul, who is a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt in Taekwon-Do. Now married to Mala, a native of India, Wheatley's stepchildren, Arjun and Shivani Dhingra are also students of Taekwon-do. Shivani, 15, will be testing for her black belt in 2003 and 24-year-old Arjun is a 4<sup>th</sup> degree black belt. Mala is the regional director for Maple Star Group Homes and is a marriage and family therapist. She holds a green belt in Taekwon-do.

Although, it might seem unlikely that Master Wheatley has any time to spare for hobbies, he is a pilot, musician, and composer and writes poetry.

In addition to his duties as president of the USITF, Master Wheatley continues to teach classes in Reno and is training in preparation for his 8<sup>th</sup> degree black belt.