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Division 2

I started doing Aikido around 1977. I received my shodan from Morihiro Saito Sensei while studying in Iwama, Japan. Shortly after leaving Japan, I started to train with Doran Sensei. I have been with him ever since.

I first heard about aikido in 1977. I had recently graduated from college, where I had been a member of the badminton team, and I was looking for a new physical activity for workout and competition. My dad had always wanted someone in the family to do a martial art. I asked a friend of mine, a local city bus driver who was also a karate instructor, if he thought karate was a good art for me. His response was that I was "too small" for karate. He thought aikido might work better for me.

Sometime later I located the Aikido of San Francisco dojo and dropped in to observe a class. At that time classes were being taught by Senseis Frank Doran, Robert Nadeau, and Bill Witt. I remember commenting that the "skirts" were pretty and that it seemed like everyone knew what they were doing and could someone like me, who knew nothing, do this?

My aikido training began at Aikido of San Francisco, where I practiced for about 2 years, achieving the level of 3rd kyu. In 1979 or 1980, I moved to Iwama, Japan to study with Morihiro Saito Sensei. I studied in Iwama for 9 months and received my shodan rank. Saito Sensei had told us all to seek out other teachers in order to gain some insight into the different phases of

O'Sensei's life and how his aikido changed as he got older. I took this advice to heart.

When I returned to Northern California I continued my aikido practice with various teachers at Aikido of San Francisco, the Aikido Institute in Oakland, and Aikido West in Redwood City. Training at Aikido West, I noticed that Doran Sensei kept "hitting" me in the nose and it eventually dawned on me that there was a hole in my training. Since then Aikido West has been my home dojo.

I served as Secretary/Treasurer, first for the Aikido Association of Northern California (AANC) and later for the California Aikido Association (CAA), for a total of 20 years. I also served as the Administrator of the CAA and served this Aikido community as an officer for over 35 years. I am also dai sempai of Aikido West and serve on the board of directors.

My most Memorable Aikido Experience

In 1980 I was working at the UCSF Hospital Radiology Department as an X-ray technologist on the grave-yard shift, from midnight to 8:30 am. In those days, the technologist manned the department alone with no one else on the floor except for the on-call radiologist who slept in a locked room until needed. I was in the file room starting to take a nap between cases when I felt a pair of hands on my throat. My aikido training kicked in and I grabbed the small finger, broke it, loosening the grip enough for me to slip to the floor. I punched the first thing I saw, his crotch. He flew back about 4 feet into the computer. My weapons had been resting against it as I often did suburi practice at night. The weapons fell, I grabbed the closest one, my bokken. My attacker ran, I chased him until I realized that he may have a gun and security should be alerted. With the assistance of City police, the UCSF security chased the man into Golden Gate Park where they lost him. I finished my shift even though the security wanted me to call in back up and report to the emergency room. I told them that I only had a sore neck which was minor compared to other boo boos I had acquired at the Aikido dojo. After this attack, silent alarms were placed in the Hospital, the Radiology department no longer allowed any technologist to man the graveyard shift alone and I was moved to day shift.