

Masters Night Celebrates Sixty Years Of Service


🔍 [American School of Martial Arts](#) has been serving 🔍 [Burbank](#) since 1964 and continues to thrive in the city. [Best online courses](#)

By **Rick Assad** - December 9, 2024



Rob McIntyre (left) is the owner and instructor of the American School of Martial Arts Burbank and performed a demonstration with master Drew Alcala. (Photo by Rick Assad) [Best online courses](#)

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For sixty years, the American School of Martial Arts Burbank, formerly known as Young Suh School of Self Defense, has been in the city serving the community and recently held a Masters Night.

The celebratory anniversary event lasted an hour and a half and featured the school’s five Suh Do Kwan masters putting on demonstrations and explaining its philosophy.

Additionally, high ranking students and a youth demonstration team also took the floor as the appreciative crowd of about fifty that included Burbank Vice Mayor Nikki Perez, sat enthralled.



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When grandmaster Suh retired, he handpicked Don Baird as his successor in July 1976.



Many students and instructors were recognized for their hard work at the recent American School of Martial Arts Masters Night celebration. (Photo courtesy Ever Huerta)

Baird, a grandmaster who lives in North Carolina with his wife, grandmaster Maria Baird, then hand-picked Rob McIntyre to be his successor in 2021.

The martial arts aren't about beating someone senseless, but to know oneself.

On the wall of the studio, this is painted: "Train only to master yourself."

"I think it's important for people to know martial arts because it is so much more than just learning to fight," explained McIntyre, who recently became a master. "It teaches you about yourself and how to develop a diligent mindset."

McIntyre realizes the world can be a hard place, but knowing the martial arts helps one remain calm in a sea of unrest.

"The world can be difficult, and we need to be tenacious and always keep moving forward," he said. "We always say this to our students. "Kung Fu is not something you do. It's something you are." We encourage them to take life lessons learned in the school outside the world."

"Martial arts can help strengthen your body and mind. It improves your balance both physically and mentally," he noted. "We are always trying to find our center. Martial arts help ground you and allows you to center yourself."

Students vary in age from four years old and upward and everyone benefits.



Rob McIntyre and Jack Morrisette put on an exhibition for an appreciative crowd at the 60th anniversary of the American School of Martial Arts. (Photo by Rick Assad)

"Students come for all different reasons. Some are just looking for physical exercise," McIntyre said. "Some are looking to learn self-defense and some literally are looking to find answers in their own life. We want to help students find what they are looking for."

McIntyre was appreciative of everyone who showed up for the event.

"Events like Masters Night are important to help promote the school for sure, but this school has been serving the community for six decades," he offered. "My grandmaster [Don Baird] always preaches that we are here to serve others. Whether that be in school or in the community. We want to be active in the community and continue to carry the legacy of this wonderful martial art we are learning."

Starks is a third-degree black belt and likes what martial arts stands for.

"Martial arts, our art specifically, teaches someone more than self-defense. It teaches you about yourself. You're learning to connect your mind and body but there is a beautiful discovery of the spirit while on that journey," she said. "Grandmaster Baird would often say,

"An event like the Masters Night was important to bring our community of artists together while allowing us the opportunity to showcase what we love about it," she stated.

For Starks, being a student and then a teacher has been entirely fulfilling.

"What drew me to martial arts was my now husband, David. He had been training for at least two years, and I saw how much it changed his life, and I was looking for something to do outside of work," she said. "Going to school events with him, everyone was so welcoming and kind and often asked, "When are we going to get you on the training floor?" Finally I did, and it was life changing for me, too. David proposed three months after I started training Kung Fu, and we were married at the [Burbank](#) school by grandmaster Baird, six months later."

McIntyre has been at peace practicing martial arts and finds it enlightening.

"I took over the school at first degree black belt, which is an incredible undertaking," he said. "My teacher also took over the school at first degree. I am following in his footsteps. I look at being a master as a rank of service. I am here to give back to the school and help our students."

If interested in more information about the school, here is a link to the website.

<https://www.asmaurbank.com/event-details/masters-night>.



(Photo courtesy Ever Huerta)



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