

Lifetime Achievement Award

Grandmaster Lawrence Lee



The martial arts community was greatly saddened when Grandmaster Lawrence Lee lost his battle with cancer on the 2nd of July.

Lawrence Lee was the founder of the kung fu system Tong Kune Do and was a foundation member of both the first kung fu organisation formed in Australia (NSW Kung Fu Association) and the first governing body for Chinese martial arts (Australian Kung Fu Federation Limited). Lawrence served as both President and Vice President of the AKF.

Rising to prominence in the early seventies with featured appearances in the record breaking documentaries 'World of Kung Fu' and 'Kung Fu Killers' Lawrence established a kung fu school network encompassing schools throughout every State and Territory in Australia as well as New Zealand, New Guinea and Malaysia. Even to this day it is the largest chain of kung fu schools to ever be established in the world.



Lawrence appearing as part of a week long feature in the Daily Mirror (1974)

Lawrence appeared in many newspaper and magazine articles throughout the seventies and eighties and in the early days of growing public awareness of Chinese martial arts Lawrence was the public face of kung fu.



Lawrence Lee from Pix People Magazine 1976

Lawrence was one of the kung fu teachers responsible for the conduct of the first official kung fu tournament to be conducted in Australia, at Wisemans Ferry in 1974, but perhaps his most notable achievement was when he became the first Chinese instructor to openly teach Non Chinese students. Lawrence successfully dealt with several 'challenge matches' aimed at shutting him down but it was his public stance and statement that "the difference between a racist and a fool is exactly nothing" that ultimately quietened his critics from the traditional Chinese Kung Fu Community - his courageous and principled stand broke down the centuries old racial barriers that typified the teaching of kung fu, his public comment. Lawrence's contribution, in breaking down racial barriers, was featured in the documentary 'Bruce Lee-The Path of the Dragon'



Walt Missingham, Lawrence Lee and Lawrence's son Ryan

Even up to his death Lawrence was active with completing a book as well as television commercial work.

KWA President Walt Missingham, a life long friend of Lawrence's, commented:

“ I would not be understating it to say that Lawrence was one of the most significant influences on the public development of kung fu in Australia. His energy, vision and spirit in large part contributed to the highly viable, multi cultural martial arts landscape that exists in Australia today ...he will be greatly missed.”