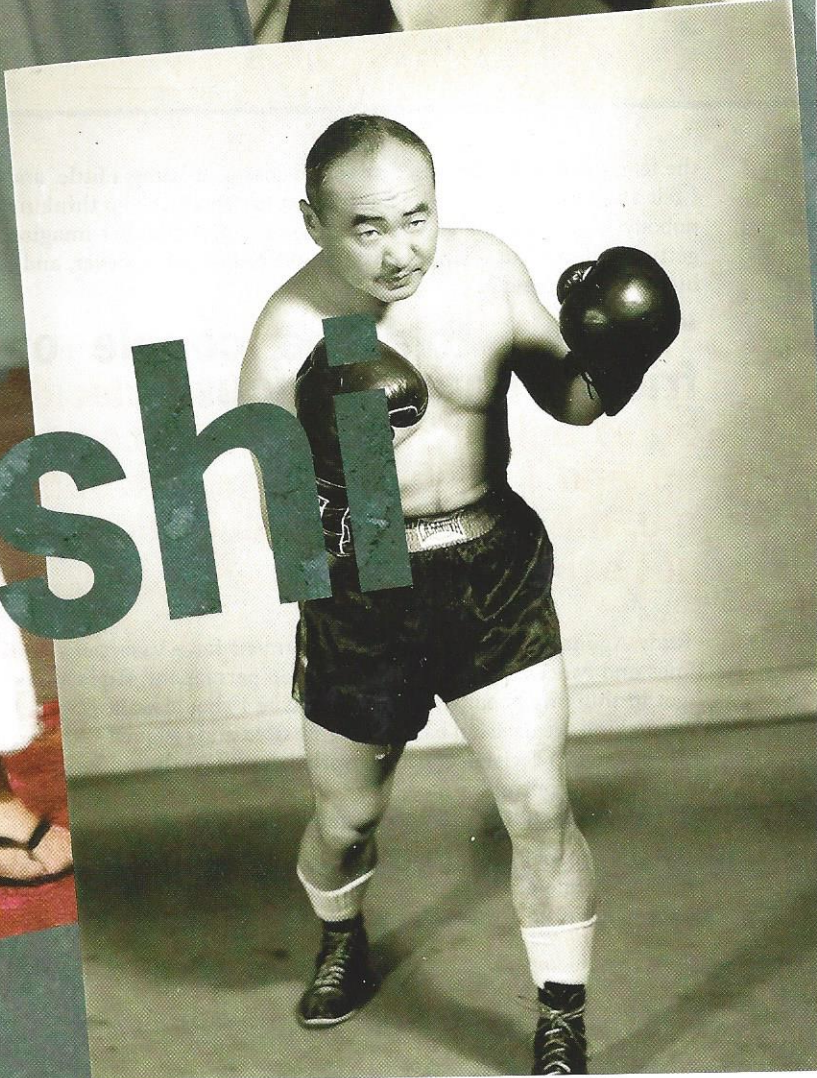
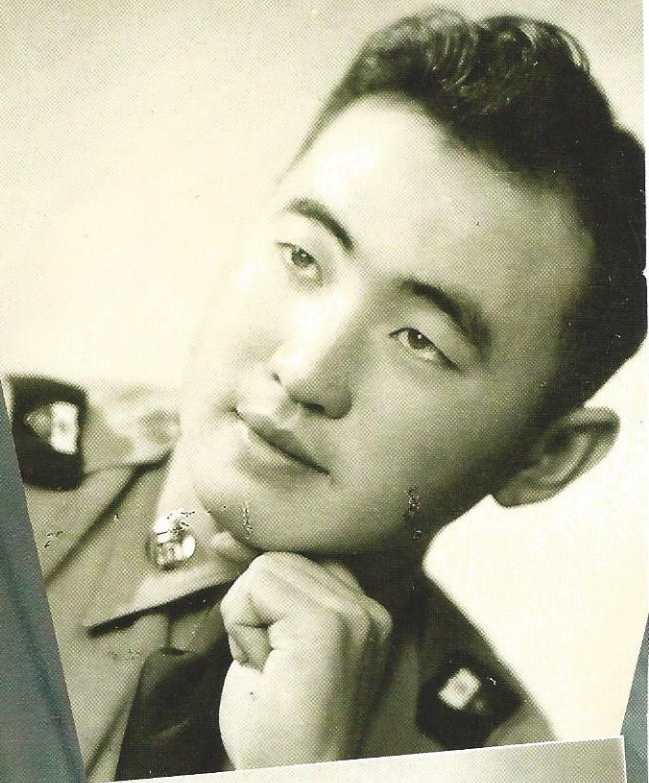
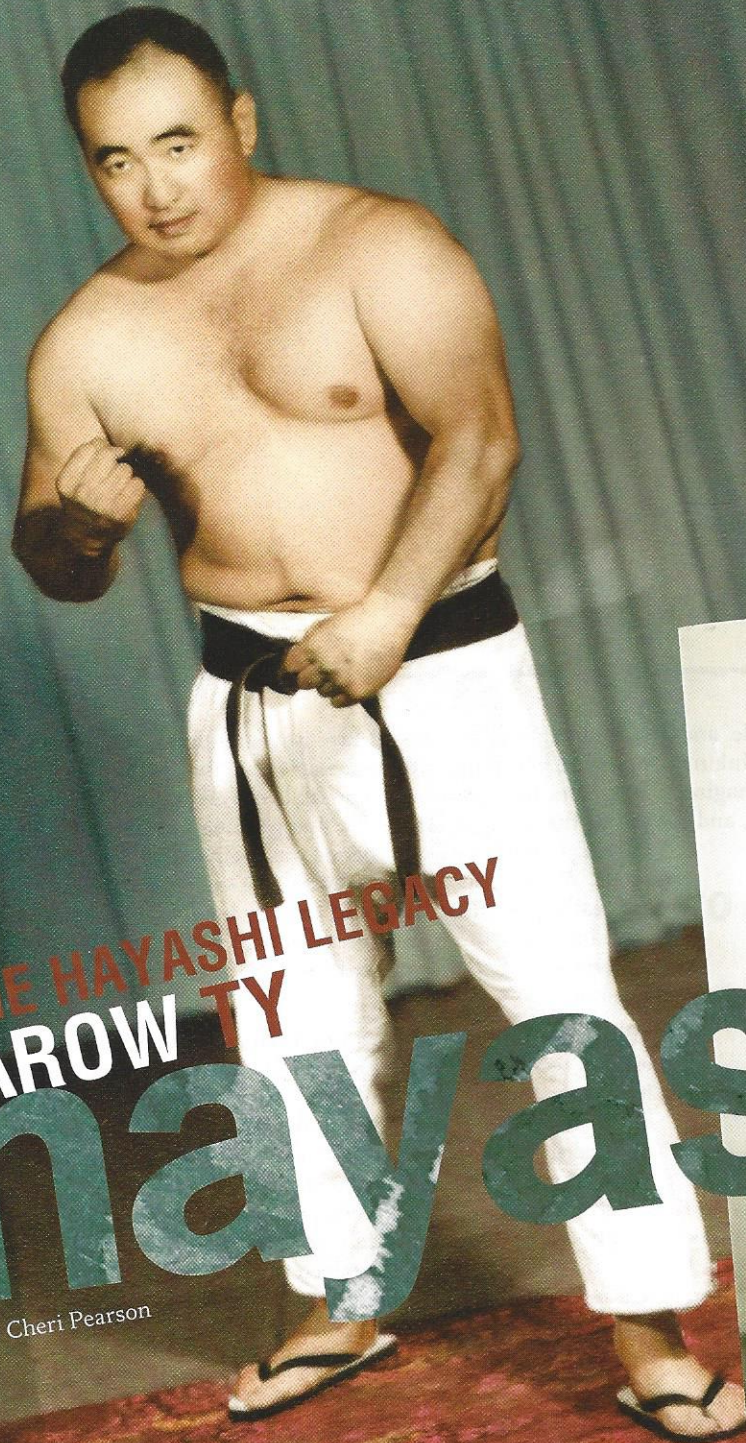


FEATURE | HAYASHI



THE HAYASHI LEGACY
TAROW TY

Hayashi

by Cheri Pearson

His father was a long way from El Paso, the city that became his home after racism and hysteria uprooted his life, but as Taichi Hayashi released the ashes on a beautiful lake near Mount Fuji in Japan, he experienced a spiritual peace from the knowledge that he had brought his father home.

Tarow Ty Hayashi was a young teen in Washington when his dog was shot and killed as he was hauled off to an internment camp. After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Roosevelt ordered a massive evacuation of more than 115,000 Japanese through the War Relocation Authority of 1942. It was what would later be characterized as “war-time hysteria.”

The perimeters of these internment camps were fenced, armed guards were posted, and all were in remote, desolate areas far from any populace. A 1943 statement from the War Relocation Authority described their living conditions as “tar paper-covered barracks of simple frame construction without plumbing or cooking facilities of any kind.” Two thirds of the Japanese forced to abandon or sell off businesses for pennies on the dollar and enter these camps were United States citizens by birth. A key supporter, Gen. Earl Warren, would later write in his autobiography: “I have since deeply regretted the removal order and my own testimony advocating it because it was not in keeping with our American concept of freedom and the rights of citizens. Whenever I thought of the innocent little children who were torn from home, school friends and congenial surrounds, I was conscience stricken.”

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 provided redress of \$20,000 to each surviving internee (making for a total of \$1.2 billion) and allocated an additional \$400 million in 1992. However, it is estimated, with home and business losses, that the Japanese lost \$4 to \$5 billion by today’s monetary standards in the forced relocation. The emotional toll of upheaval, racism and confinement was defined as incalculable, and it would not be until 1992 that the United States government would issue a formal apology signed by President George H.W. Bush.

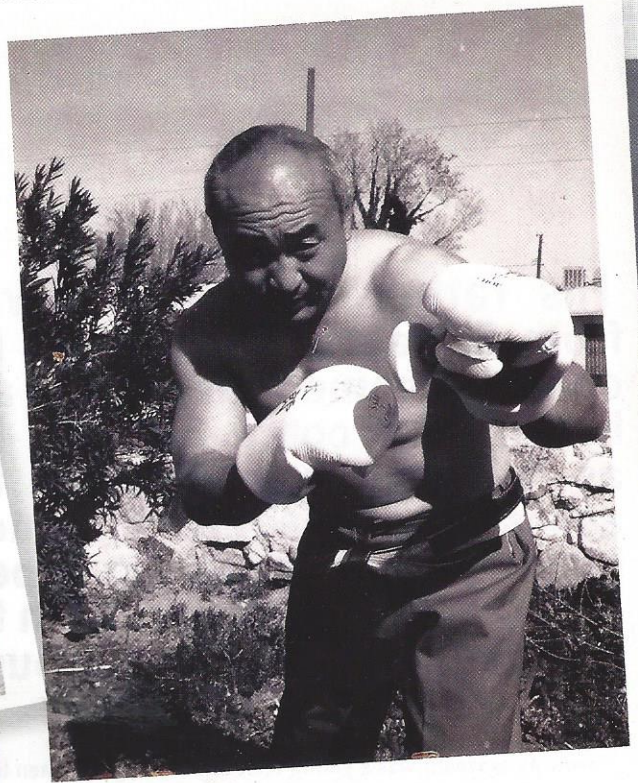


It was in these very same camps that Tarow Ty Hayashi learned martial arts. The Japanese tried to maintain some semblance of normal life and pooled their collective abilities, creating communities within these camps. Together, they were able to offer services from education to grocery stores. Hayashi would practice every day, learning the ancient arts from the Japanese elders whose focus was to develop the body, mind and character of young men and to keep their restlessness channeled.

All of the camps, except for one at Tule Lake, were closed in November of 1945. Ironically, Hayashi was drafted by the United States government in 1950. He served for two years and then was held in reserve until 1956. After he was released, he drifted on a long journey around the country and finally decided to settle in El Paso. He felt welcomed by its diversity.

Tarow Ty Hayashi became known as one of El Paso’s most outstanding martial artists. He founded the International Zen Martial Arts Federation of North America and was inducted into the El Paso Boxing Martial Arts Hall of Fame. He trained recruits for the El Paso County Sheriff’s Department, worked with soldiers at Fort Bliss and instructed for the University of New Mexico and El Paso Community College. His martial arts school, Zen Buddhist, located in the basement of his home, was claimed as “El Paso’s Finest Martial Arts School” by Jerry Appel in the *El Paso Times Journal* in 1980. Hayashi was now known as *sensei*, or professor.

The official credits to his name do not properly reflect the teachings he instilled in his students or who he was as a person. He was considered stern and strict. Serenity Garcia remembers that his favorite number was 1,000. “It was always 1,000 punches or kicks,” she recalls. He instilled in her the discipline to not give up, to persevere and, if you are down, to get up and keep going.



“The tempering of steel is in the forging,” Hayashi once wrote. “A person who competes, win or lose, most assuredly will grow to be a tougher metal.”

Greg Allen, deputy chief of police, began studying with Hayashi at the age of 16. “At the time, I was without the guidance of a strong father figure to steer me on the right path, and Mr. Hayashi laid my foundation,” says Allen. “He steered me in the right direction...I wouldn’t be where I am at without him.”

‘A coward dies a thousand deaths, and a warrior only dies once,’ Hayashi would say. “He was my warrior, and he touched so many people through his dojo,” says Taichi Hayashi, the martial arts master’s son and a respected *sensei* in his own right. Thousands of El Pasoans passed through the dojo in the 46 years Hayashi taught. The late, great *sensei* embodied his *Bujutsukan* Code and passed it on to

others: “I shall know the depth of the principles of gentleness yet the cold tenacity of determination even in the face of death. I shall walk amongst my fellow man with purity of heart, a free conscience and a deep love of God and his creations. I shall have the strength of character that nothing shall disturb my peace of mind. I shall be too big for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble. I shall, at all times, face the world boldly and accept the challenges of this life.”

Taichi remembers that his father had a kindness for all creatures, that he respected punctuality and chivalry and that he believed “your word is your honor.” At that time, practice in the dojo was for two hours at a time, three to four times a week. Taichi went through his father’s training and quickly learned that “game playing” was not tolerated. “I was rebellious. I had to train every day, and his favorite numbers were for you to do a hundred or a thousand of the same move,” Taichi recalls. His dad kept him going, and it was not until he was 15 that he began to enjoy it. By 17, he was training harder. By 19, he had received his black belt.

Taichi’s confidence and skill grew, and he was sent to a training camp at the Olympics for the experience. He had to compete along with 200 other black belts from 20 countries. It was there that he learned humility. “In Randori, you have to fight every five minutes, and it is impolite to refuse a fight,” says Taichi. With a wry grin, he recalls getting “slammed all over the place” and coming back



to El Paso devoid of the chip on his shoulder. Since then, he has been to Toyko, Europe, Mexico and many places in the United States for competition. He is now a fifth-degree black belt and was the Golden Gloves representative for El Paso in 1993. He has won many medals, attended many World Masters Championships and helped to establish El Paso as a serious producer of competitors. He taught at the YMCA for many years until he decided to open his own dojo in 1993. Since then, he has had to move his business twice to accommodate the increase in enrollment.

His dojo, Hayashi's Martial Arts Academy, offers many classes, from kids Judo to adult Judo-Jujitsu, kickboxing, *Tai Chi/Aikido*, free-form combat and Chinese weaponry. He also offers self-defense programs for women. Judo has the highest enrollment and operates on the theory of maximum efficiency versus brute strength. Judo translates well into the social lives of its students outside of the dojo as it is about being deliberate in council and swift in action. It is not about "breaking your opponent" but achieving success through fluidity of movement and "dream throws," says Taichi. Anger and worry are considered a waste of energy.

"Very few people appreciate hardship, and the discipline may be unpleasant, but it still helps you to get ahead," says Greg Allen, who is now an accomplished *sensei* himself. "Everyone needs something meaningful in life, and through study, you realize that your biggest opponent in life is yourself."

Taichi has a natural talent for teaching, and the respect is evident among his students. During one class, he asks the children to line up, and they don't do it quickly and efficiently. Taichi makes them do extra push ups and then asks them to line up again. Quickly, their little feet line up perfectly along the lines of the mat. He then looks them directly in the eye and tells them that he expects them to show their parents the same respect.

Taichi has taken on a mission to help protect children in El Paso. In addition to general classes that build strength, discipline and self-esteem, he provides an important service by offering area schools an introduction to martial arts and an awareness protection program. In addition, he holds bimonthly seminars in his dojo for parents and children. They watch a video demonstration on awareness and avoidance of dangerous situations and escaping from it. They then practice techniques of self-defense to be used as a last resort.

Taichi Hayashi carries on the legacy and tradition of his father, Tarow Ty Hayashi. Grandchildren of his father's students have now become his, and Taichi's daughter Kayla has become the third generation of Hayashis to master martial arts. His father never elaborated on his confinement in the internment camps and never let it hold him back or define him as an individual. He gave back in a way that touched and enhanced the lives of thousands of El Pasoans. The torch and knowledge have been passed on; the legacy of Hayashi is well protected. 