

JOSEPH HEDDERMAN

May 4, 1935- March 31, 2018

Pioneer in local martial arts instruction

By Janice Crompton
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Joseph Hedderman lived the philosophy he taught, often reminding his students: "Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect."

The 82-year-old husband, father and longtime martial arts instructor at the Allegheny County Budo-Kai died of lung cancer March 31 at his home in South Park.

Mr. Hedderman was a pioneer in the local martial arts community, becoming one of the first to teach karate-do, in 1959. Karate-do (pronounced "dough") refers to a type of karate that focuses on developing character and spirituality as much as the physical form of martial arts.

Mr. Hedderman grew up in Lawrenceville, the son of the late Leo and Wanda Hedderman, and learned jiu-jitsu as a 15-year-old.

"He was going out with a new girlfriend whose ex didn't like it and wanted to beat him up," said Mr. Hedderman's son, Anthony Hedderman of Bethel Park. "When he found out this kid wanted to beat him up, he

figured he needed some help."

Mr. Hedderman was instructed by Dewey Deavers, who founded Allegheny County Budo-Kai — one of the first schools for martial arts in North America — in Oakland in 1927.

He continued his tutelage under Mr. Deavers for decades, eventually earning the rank of ninth-degree black belt in karate and 10th-degree black belt in jiu-jitsu.

It took his father 40 years to obtain his black belts, Anthony Hedderman said.

"It was his whole life," his son said. "He worked out three or four days a week."

Mr. Hedderman began teaching martial arts at the Allegheny County Budo-Kai when he returned from the Army in the late 1950s and eventually took over as head instructor of the non-profit center after Mr. Deavers died in 1973. The center was moved to South Park in 1986.

Mr. Hedderman dropped out of school in the 10th grade to become an electrician to help support his family. He enlisted in 1957 and served for two years and earned his GED di-

ploma. Mr. Hedderman learned karate-do at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri.

In 1987, Mr. Hedderman met Linda Lynn and the two hit it off instantly.

"He bought me a drink and we started talking and we found out that we had a lot of things in common," including four children each from previous relationships and a love of the outdoors, Mrs. Hedderman said. "We had a great time and ended up at Eat'n Park until five in the morning talking."

The two married March 16, 1991, and spent happy years traveling and enjoying their grandchildren, Mrs. Hedderman said.

"He was very much a family man and he loved his children and grandchildren," she said. "He would get into the sandbox with them. He liked to be outdoors; almost all of our vacations were to national parks."

Mr. Hedderman worked as an electrician at Franklin Electric until his retirement in 1997, but martial arts was his passion. He continued serving as a volunteer instructor at the center until December, when he could no longer ignore his failing health, said An-

thony Hedderman, who is also an instructor at the school.

His father took the lessons of karate-do to heart, his son said.

"He was easy going, down to earth and very pragmatic," Anthony Hedderman said. "He was very humble for someone who achieved what he did."

Anthony Hedderman said he will miss his father's presence and life lessons.

"It will be strange without him being there," he said of the center.

In addition to his wife and son, Mr. Hedderman is survived by daughters Roslyn Whiteside of Bethel Park and Lia Cook of Elizabeth Township; another son, David Hedderman of Mt. Lebanon; stepchildren Melissa Scullion of Stevensville, Md., Amy Prater of Hughesville, Pa., Kevin Brown of Mechanicsburg, Pa., and Heather Brown-Downing, of Bethel Park; a sister Dolores Sciuillo, of Verona; and 19 grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a brother, Leo Hedderman.

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