

ABRIDGED KARATE HISTORY
JOHN R. HUTCHCROFT
7th Dan, Matsumura Seito Shorin-ryu (Koeppel Ha)

John Hutchcroft, 7th dan, Matsumura Seito Shorin Ryu, Koeppel Ha, began training in 1968 with Sensei John Black, Shorei Goju Ryu, in Carmen, Illinois. John met Mr. Black at junior college and was forever changed after his first karate practice. He was promoted to shodan in 1972. Later he studied Shorei Kaji Kempo with Mr. Charles Bridgewater, earning his shodan in 1974. The following year he began training with Mr. Randy Holman, Mr. Phillip Koeppel's senior instructor, in Peoria, Illinois. He remained Mr. Holman's student for the next 11 years. Mr. Hutchcroft opened dojos in Waterloo, Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa and Burlington, Iowa as his work career moved him around the state. He competed on the USKA Tournament circuit in kata, kumite and kobudo, sometimes attending 25 tournaments a year.

In June, 1980, Sensei Hutchcroft was recognized and rewarded for his tournament efforts, and was inducted into the Trias International Society Hall of Fame at the USKA Grand Nationals in Miami, Florida. In March, 1982, Grand Master Robert A. Trias (Father of Karate in America) appointed John Chief Instructor for Shuri Ryu, one of nine instructors thus appointed at that time. He fondly remembers that his friends, Mr. John Pachivas and Mr. Ridgely Abele were appointed Chief Instructors that same day as they sat shoulder to shoulder, awaiting Master Robert Trias's decision on their appointments. By 1984, he had attained the grade of 5th dan.

Later, in 1984, after close introspection, Mr. Hutchcroft began examining his karate and started training in Matsumura Seito Shorin Ryu with Sensei Holman, Master Phillip Koeppel, Sensei Yuichi Kuda and Mr. Ron Lindsey. That same year he resigned as Chief Instructor for Shuri Ryu so that he could dedicate and focus his efforts to learn Shorin Ryu. In 1990, he was promoted to 6th dan. He continued practicing and teaching Shorin Ryu in Lansing, Michigan while working full time and attending law school. In 1995, Sensei Hutchcroft was accepted as a direct student of Master Phillip Koeppel.

Mr. Hutchcroft is one of the 12 founding members of the Bushido International Society Hall of Fame. He was elected the society's first president and served for 10 years as president. He has been honored with the Melvin Wise Memorial Bushido Award, The Ray Bloom Memorial Leadership Award, The Phillip Koeppel Award of Excellence and was the 19th person inducted into the Double Bladed Axe Society in 1997.

Sensei Hutchcroft has an impressive competitive record but no longer pursues tournament karate, *but* he occasionally competes to demonstrate his ryu ha's karate. He has won the following tournaments since his retirement from competition in 1985:

USKK Grand Nationals: First place Master's Kata; 1994, 1997, 2000, 2002

USKK Trias Cup Champion: 2002

USKK European Championships: First place Master's Kata; 1997, 2001, 2005, 2009 (Athlone, Ireland and London, England)

Sensei Hutchcroft continues to learn, train and teach at his private dojo in Holt, Michigan. He teaches seminars in many locations in the midwest and west. Two of his senior students, Mr. Mike Wall and Mr. Guy Holtzman, have become members of the United States Karate Alliance Hall of Fame and Bushido International Society Hall of Fame.