

Patrick McParland was recently awarded his 7th dan black belt in Mugendo Kickboxing by the system founder Professor George Canning, 10th dan black belt.



At the World Mugendo Univeristy, Dorset Street, Dublin . . . system founder 10th dan Professor George Canning (front, left) presents Patrick McParland with his 7th dan black belt certificate, while George Canning Junior, 9th dan, (front, right) looks on. Also in attendance were senior student from the University. Back, left-right: John Kennedy, Rory Mulhall, Donal Cleary, Jeremy Colville, Tim Crowley, Nicky Ryan, Craig Brady, Barry Lawlor and Michael Kerrigan.

McPARLAND IS LIVING THE 'UNLIMITED WAY'

FOR PATRICK McParland it was a dream come true as he was recently awarded his 7th degree black belt and promoted to 'assistant trainer' at Professor George Canning's World Mugendo University on Dorset Street, Dublin. Just on 20 years ago, the new 7th dan began his training with Professor Canning and he said that that "was the best thing I ever did in my life so far."

"I started my training at 15-years-old because I was suffering with severe back problems," McParland explains. "I went to doctors and physios but none of them could help me. The sessions did give me some relief but only for a couple of days. Usually I'd come home from work in the evening, have my dinner, then go lie on the floor or go to bed because of the discomfort I was constantly in."

"My uncle was talking to a friend of his one day and he mentioned the condition I was in. The man told my uncle that he himself had a back problem and he went to a 'Karate man' in Dublin and he had him sorted in less than two minutes. So, my uncle told my dad and I the story to see what we thought. Within a few days my uncle was driving me to Dublin to see this 'Karate Man'."

'Was very welcoming'

McParland remembers that day very well. "My uncle didn't know Dublin really and I didn't know where I was either. After so many wrong turns we finally arrived at the premises," McParland added. "We met a man at the door who was very welcoming and he introduced himself as Professor George Canning. We explained the problem I was having and within minutes he could tell me what was wrong with me. He carried out manipulation and chatted to us for a few minutes after which we left."

For about a week or so the young McParland has no pain or no discomfort. However, his discomfort did come back. "My father then kindly took me back to Dublin to the professor to see if anything could be done," McParland explained. "The professor put a plan to my dad that he'd come up to me every Sunday and I would travel to Dublin on a Saturday to train in the professor's Mugendo Kickboxing club."

"This arrangement was a huge change for me. I was always interested in martial arts but kept it to myself. I even set up a dojo in the shed on the family farm and it all started from there for me," McParland said. McParland's training was going good. It was always something different and interesting but it was very tough he said. "It was difficult for me as my back was weak and still giving me discomfort. Some of my family were telling me to stop going down to work out in a cold and damp shed, so I went off the idea of training and stopped for about three months."

'Months or even years'

"As a result my health disimproved and I was heading back to where I started, so I decided one Friday evening to phone the professor to ask if I could go back training. He kindly said 'yes'," McParland said. "What my parents and I forgot was that the professor said at the beginning of our training that it could take months or even years for me to get better. I knew there was something different about this man and I believed that he knew exactly what he was talking about."

McParland got back into training again and after months of hard work his health improved greatly. "At times it was almost unbearable for me," he explained. "However, Professor Canning pushed me until I became stronger and eventually became free from the discomfort which I'd been in for many years." Now, after nearly 15 years, McParland still has a regular training regime in place. "I never miss my training sessions," he said. "I generally train alone at home in my dojo throughout the week without my sorely missed Mugendo Kickboxing participant Lee McKay who moved to warmer climates some time ago."

McParland varies his training routines. "The format of my training is variable, from fun to difficult. I focus on the core values associated with the art of being a fighter rather than repetitive and limited forms and movements," he said. "I spend a lot of my spare time starting usually at 5 a.m. training calisthenics and stretching. This workout frees my body up so that I can concentrate on more detailed fighting techniques."

'Own individual potential'

He continued: "Training strength, agility and power are primary goals for me. It has taken me many years and many hours to reach my own individual potential and I continue to strive for improvement. At 35 years-of-age I feel I'm only beginning. Travelling far and wide and training in foreign dojos has illustrated to me the standards and skill set we follow in the Mugendo Kickboxing system are world class."

McParland said that his Mugendo Kickboxing training, not only restored him back to full health, but is beneficial to him in other ways. "I work as building site manager for the family business, McParland Brothers Construction, where we recently completed a large housing estate in Co. Louth last year. The discipline, protocols and understanding I've learned training in the Mugendo system gives me the structures, knowledge and confidence to run a clean and efficient building site and manage the many personalities which are involved."

'Quality of life improves'

"I've a keen interest in organic living and grow much of my own food," he added. "I always have a strong focuses on proper nutrition which allows me to excel in my physical and mental fitness. I've come a long way, from nearly being in a wheelchair to becoming a European Kickboxing champion. Receiving my 7th dan black belt is a great achievement for me."

"I plan to continue my regular training and as part of my development and in the support of the Mugendo system take up a more active teaching role. As time goes by I watch many people enter Mugendo Kickboxing and almost in all instances their overall quality of life improves, and sometimes dramatically improves. I'd like to thank Professor George Canning, his son George Canning Junior, and all my dojo colleagues at the Mugendo University for the many years of enjoyable, good quality training. I'm know that there are many more years of learning and training to come and I really look forward to them," McParland concluded.

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Mugendo Kickboxing 7th dan black belt Patrick McPalrand runs through a stretching routine during one of his daily training classes.