

My Tribute to Martial Arts Legend:

Orned “Chicken” Gabriel

(August 26, 1950 – April 13, 2025)



by Sifu Herb Patus

Up Close and Personal: A Compelling Story

The accomplishments of this martial artist turned preacher are many.

In 1978, Chicken was a member of an American kickboxing team that traveled to Japan, fighting for championship belts.

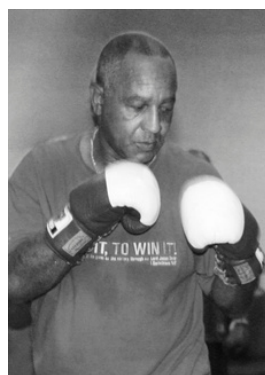
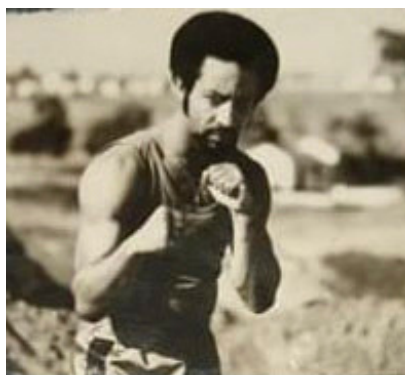
The Japanese champion that Chicken faced had defeated thirty-nine of his previous challengers—most of them by way of knockout—until he met Chicken, who broke the reigning champion’s leg, thus bringing the championship belt back to America.

Chicken received his black belt from Richard “Dick” Willett, a Tracy’s Karate Kenpo Master. Soon after, he began his own Kenpo organization, the United Karate Federation (UKF), where he continued to excel.

Chicken produced great fighters, such as Steve “Nasty” Anderson, who became an eleven-time Heavyweight National Champion in martial arts fighting.

Many others who trained under Chicken became nationally ranked competitors, professional fighters in boxing and kickboxing, or went on to open successful schools or businesses.

The training, knowledge, confidence, and peace that one receives through the martial arts can catapult them to great success.



Your Actions Create a Ripple in Life

The ripple effect is inevitable. When you drop a pebble into still water, it will always create a ripple.

"What kind of ripple are your actions going to create—positive or negative?" This is a phrase that Chicken would often use.

My name is Herb Patus, one of Chicken's UKF Tenth Degree Black Belts.

With this being said, I would like to describe the life-changing ripple that occurred in my life when Chicken dropped a pebble on me. That ripple turned into a tsunami wave that changed my life in a miraculous way.

Thank you, Chicken.

I also began my Kenpo training at Tracy's Karate on El Cajon Blvd. Due to my busy work schedule, I transferred (as a Brown Belt) to Chicken's UKF school in National City, where I lived—it was closer to home.

I trained there for a short while, then fell into tough times. I got into an accident with a semi-truck that left me in much pain for quite some time.

The pain was excruciating and difficult to diagnose and treat, as MRI imaging machines were not yet available for commercial use until 1980. As a result, my treatment consisted of an ample supply of opioid pain pills.

We know better today that opioids are not meant for long-term treatment. The longer you use them, the less effective they become—yet the more reliant you become on their addictive nature.

As the opioids became less effective, my pain level increased, and I turned to alcohol for relief. First it was wine, then hard liquor, which seemed to help. It wasn't long before I added tobacco to the mix—all in search of pain relief.

I found myself in a quagmire that I could not get out of. My once strong body had turned to mush, and I had no idea what to do. I was laid to waste, and I knew it.

A Knock at the Door

It was a Saturday morning. I was lying on the couch, grieving—when there was a knock at my door.

It was Chicken.

I can still, to this day, remember his face as he stood there. He was twenty-nine years old (I am one week older than Chicken), almost at his peak in life.

My Tribute to Martial Arts Legend: Orned "Chicken" Gabriel

He wore a small traditional afro and his signature goatee—he wore it well. I could see the strength in his face and neck. He was a sight for sore eyes. As he looked at me, his eyes were like laser beams that penetrated the very depths of my soul as he said,

"We haven't seen you for a while. How have you been?"

I was so ashamed of myself and what I had become that I could hardly look him in the eyes. My physical body was so dilapidated from pain, alcohol, and drugs that I would avoid looking in mirrors.

"When are you coming back to class?" he asked.

I replied, "Times are bad, but I'll be back when things are better."

He said, "You are part of our family. Come back to class—for it is the pathway to things getting better."

I remember telling him that I had no money. But that did not sway him. He said, "Don't worry about money. Just come back. We were close to testing you for black belt."

And then he left.

My urge for the black belt was a driving force.

When he left, I closed the door and instantly began to weep bitterly. It was uncontrollable. I hoped he did not hear me as he walked away. I sobbed for hours.

Chicken had dropped a pebble on me that caused a ripple.

Time For A Decision

This is not who I am—but rather what I had become.

Chicken's visit made all the difference. It was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back.

Decisions are powerful. They've led many to twenty-to-life prison sentences, even the death penalty. But they've also propelled others to incredible success.

If I was going to make a change in my life, it would be now or never. I felt like it was the Lord who led Chicken to knock on my door—to retrieve a lost sheep. And I was that sheep.

I am so grateful for 70 x 7.

I decided that all I really needed was:

"A little air.
A little water.
A little food."

(Another saying Chicken would often use.)

From Decision to Action

I dumped all my opioids, alcohol, tobacco, and hard drugs into the toilet. I had to flush twice to get the job done.

It would take a week to detox, then return to UKF classes.

Opioids are in the same pharmaceutical classification as heroin, so I knew it would be tough.

Many times, I had witnessed heroin addicts detoxing in the old San Diego County Jail. My several SDCJ stays usually involved alcohol—but not always.

The jail used to be hard-core. Addicts were jailed, then left on a bunk to detox. I’d watch as they broke into cold sweats, shook, squirmed, moaned, and groaned. It was horrible to see.

They have since cleaned up and reconstructed the jail due to the actions of Congressman Duncan Hunter. Addicts are now placed in a medical infirmary for proper treatment.

My Detox

Not only was I detoxing from opioids, but also from alcohol, nicotine, and other harder types of drugs (painkillers).

It was extremely tough—constant heavy sweating, shaking, chills, extreme nausea, loss of appetite, and the sensation of worms crawling under the skin.

Several times a night I would have to change my sweat-soaked sheets, drop down and do push-ups to failure, take a shower, then return to bed.

I would often get up during the middle of the night to run around the block once or twice, do push-ups to failure, shower, change sheets, then go back to bed.

The path to normalcy—and the black belt—would be laden with sweat, blood, and puke.

Always Go Into Battle Prepared

Fighting a drug addiction will break you physically as well as spiritually.

My years of athletics and martial arts training had my body accustomed to the physical beatdown. However, when it came to the spiritual aspect—I knew I needed God on my side.

My complete recovery would have to consist of:

- The Bible
- Kenpo training
- Exercise (weight training and running)

Approximately one week after Chicken knocked on my door, I returned to UKF for training. I began to study the Bible intently, which led me to search for a church home.

My Tribute to Martial Arts Legend: Orned “Chicken” Gabriel

Ultimately, I found a Bible-preaching fundamental Baptist church in National City. I made this my church home—and still attend to this day.

It was the ripple effect.

Thank you, Chicken, for knocking on my door in 1979.

Chicken the Master Sifu

Upon my return to Kenpo training, I was still going through withdrawals—and Chicken knew it. I could not hide my shaking, sweating, and weakness from him.

He was extremely wise, as he pushed me to my limit—but not over. He read me like a book; it was as if he could look into a glass of muddy water and see dry sand.

Ultimately, Chicken got me back into shape, then tested me for my black belt. Ironically, I began Kenpo training on May 16, 1973, and received my black belt on May 16, 1981.

Eight years to the day.



My Own School

I spent much time being an instructor for Chicken, as he also trained me in the business aspect of operating a martial arts school.

I started out being his student (and always will be), but soon we became best friends.

I had opened a very nice school in Encinitas, California—but getting established was difficult, and finances were an issue.

I got to the point that I finally decided to close the school. I called Chicken on a Friday to inform him of my decision, but he said,

“Wait a minute, don’t do that. I’ll be there Monday, and we’ll get things right.”

Chicken showed up as he said he would—and began to make things happen. He walked around the neighborhoods shaking hands, kissing babies, and handing out flyers.

He was extremely charismatic and could talk a dog off a meat truck.

As a result of his efforts, several people signed up for classes.

The Grandest of Grand Openings

Chicken then arranged a grand opening for me with the Chamber of Commerce that included a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The pastor of my church was there to pray for God’s blessings, then cut the ribbon.

My Tribute to Martial Arts Legend: Orned “Chicken” Gabriel

Just when I thought things couldn't get any better, Chicken had arranged for Muhammad Ali to show up as a special guest.

WOW! What a privilege.

Thank you, Chicken.

Muhammad Ali arrived in a limousine, walked in the front door, and asked, “Whose school is this?”

I was standing near the entrance and raised my hand, but before I could say a word, he threw a lightning-fast jab that barely touched my nose.

What amazing control!

I could feel the wind and hear the snap of his wrist—loud and clear.

At that point, I had a renewed sympathy for Joe Frazier.

Pack ‘Em In

Chicken then proceeded to recruit many of the upper belts for sparring on Saturdays to liven up the atmosphere.

The action was so intense that the windows would fog up and drip with sweat.

People packed into the lobby and even stood in line outside the door, wanting to sign up for classes.

I signed up many students—all thanks to Chicken.

Thanks to Chicken knocking at my door in 1979, *my life dramatically changed*. I began producing instructional martial arts DVDs and sold hundreds of them internationally.

Massage College (2003–2004)

In the origins of Kung Fu, a student would first learn to *heal* the body before learning to *harm* it. I decided to follow suit.

I took a break from martial arts training in order to attend the highly esteemed *Mueller College of Massage and Holistic Health*, where I received an eye-opening education on the human body.

I graduated as a *Certified Massage Therapist*. Soon after, I became *nationally certified and state licensed*.

This would never have happened had Chicken not taken the time to knock on my door in 1979. It was the ripple effect from the pebble he had dropped on me.

My Fifth Degree Black Belt Thesis

"Acknowledgement of Chicken"

In order to receive a Fifth Degree Black Belt from our Kenpo organization, the student is required to compose a 15–20 page, college-level thesis on any subject concerning the martial arts.

I turned in my 20-page composition titled:

"Karate and the Christian: The Parchments—A Fifth Degree Black Belt Thesis."

Then I kept writing.

That work ultimately became a *316-page book*, which I later published.

Thank you, Chicken, for the ripple.

In the acknowledgment portion of my thesis, this is what I wrote about my instructor and close friend Chicken: *Master Instructor Orned "Chicken" Gabriel*

Chicken, thank you for showing me "I can," even when I didn't think I could. For explaining to me the true meaning of Proverbs 23:7:

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Webster's Dictionary does not contain the words that can properly describe the appreciation I have in my heart for all that you have done for me in my martial arts career.

To me, you will always be a champion.

Then Came COVID (2019)

Even in bad times, there are those who can take advantage of them and prosper. I was determined to do just that.

With the world locked down and not much to do, I decided to write a series of Bible studies for the furtherance of the gospel, to be posted in PDF format on my website:

www.kenpoconnection.com

Even the parks and beaches were closed to the public, so I would park my car (a 1993 Honda) on the street near the park to do my work.

I was equipped with a Bible, a Bible concordance, a cell phone, and a briefcase containing office supplies.

It was there I would sit—8 hours a day, 6–7 days a week—conducting intense research and study that produced my five Bible studies:

My Tribute to Martial Arts Legend: Orned “Chicken” Gabriel

1. *David and Goliath (A Case for David)*
2. *Jonah*
3. *Deity*
4. *The Greatest Overlooked Miracle in the Bible*
5. *Massacre in the Church: Where Is God?*

These approximately 200 pages of Bible study took about six months to complete.

Had Chicken not knocked on my door in 1979, none of this would have ever happened.

It was the ripple effect.

Still Locked Down with COVID, No End in Sight— However, I’m Warmed Up, On a Roll, and Ready to Write

My UKF training kicked in: *never quit, never give up.*

I decided to use my massage college education in kinesiology (the study of muscles—origins, insertions, and actions) to produce a *weight training manual* that would pass orthopedic muster.

And I did.

I continued sitting in my car—8+ hours a day, 6–7 days a week, for another 7 months—in order to produce: *Kenpo Connection: Isometric / Isotonic Weight Training Manual*.

I spent approximately one year—at 6–7 days a week, over 8 hours per day—to produce these two publications.

I Can’t Thank You Enough, Chicken

Still and evermore grateful to Chicken for knocking at my door in 1979 and dropping that pebble on me, I included him in the acknowledgments for the training manual.

This is what I wrote concerning him:

Orned “Chicken” Gabriel

My karate instructor who has taken me through the journey to a *10th Degree Black Belt*, where I learned to never give up, to keep on keeping on, and that it is never over until you say in your mind that it is over.

Thank you, Chicken, for the discipline that was instilled into me via your teaching—discipline that I not only carry through life, but also into the gym with my weight training, and into my *Kenpo Connection* weight training manual, to share with the world.

I salute you, sir.

Chicken My Instructor

Chicken was responsible for the majority of my promotions, including my most recent and final—earning the *Kenpo 10th Degree Black Belt*.

For this, I was required to write a dissertation (a 10th-degree thesis, if you will).

This dissertation has to be your best, because it demonstrates one who has accomplished their work to the fullest professional completion, including:

- Why you chose Kenpo
- What Kenpo has done for you
- What you have done for Kenpo
- A full explanation of your journey through Kenpo

Thank You, Chicken, for That Blessing

The 10th Degree Dissertation allowed me to combine Kenpo with my Christianity—so should one read the *Kenpo Connection* Weight Training Manual, they would not be surprised to find, at the end, an invitation to read the account of *David and Goliath: A Case for David* from the perspective of a modern-day warrior.

Hopefully, this will spark an interest in reading the rest of the studies as well.

My goal in all I do is to promote the Gospel.

Eternal Gratitude

Without Chicken knocking at my door in 1979 and pulling me up out of the muck and mire—as well as the incredible UKF-disciplined training I had received—none of this would have ever happened.

I cannot thank Chicken enough for the pebble he dropped on me, causing the tsunami ripple that greatly affected the direction of my entire life.

Thank you, Orned “Chicken” Gabriel.

Fighter Teacher

“It is the teacher and not the fighter that gets remembered,” Chicken would often say.

He was both.

Chicken was a natural-born fighter who never knew what it was like to quit or give up in any way. He taught his students likewise.

He had the uncanny ability to look through a student—to see and meet his needs.



Chicken Called to Preach

On December 12, 2021, Chicken was ordained as an evangelist by Bethel Baptist Church in San Diego, CA.

As for me, I have assumed the work of authoring and publishing Christian books and publications.

Other than my mother and father who gave me life, I can't think of anybody who has helped me achieve my hopes and dreams more than Orned "Chicken" Gabriel.

He was my best friend.



The Final Call

His last few years of earthly life were plagued by major health issues, yet he kept the faith—trusting in the promises of God.

He finished his race never complaining, never giving up, praising *the name of Jesus with his last earthly breath*—until Heaven called his name.

I have been privileged and honored to be his student and friend for these many decades. Even on his deathbed, he was still teaching me—how to face death with courage and with the assurance of Scripture.

And indeed—*Earth is a better place today, because Chicken passed through.*

God bless you, Chicken—until we meet again... and thanks to John 3:16, we will.



Sifu Herb Patus
10th Degree Kenpo Black Belt
United Karate Federation (UKF)

