



NICK NANOS

Every once in a while, an exceptional wrestler will create an opportunity to develop and advance our sport in a unique and provocative way. Such a path is often strewn with adversity and steep challenges, making the accomplishment all the more outstanding. Through hard work and determination, Nick Nanos persevered through difficult circumstances to take wrestling where it had never gone before.

Nick began wrestling as a 7th grader at Jerusalem Avenue High School in Bellmore, N.Y. During his formative years as a wrestler, legendary Hall of Fame coaches Sprig Gardner and Ken Hunte played key roles in Nick's development on and off the mat. Coach Gardner's encouragement gave Nick a strong sense of personal worth and belonging as a wrestler. Coach Hunte offered his home as an overnight refuge for Nick and his brother during turbulent family times. Coach Hunte served as a father figure to Nick. While Nick was a senior at Mephram High School, Coach Hunte helped in the preparations for Nick to attend State University of New York (SUNY) at Oswego in the fall of 1965.

Nick had the good fortune to enhance his wrestling skills under the tutelage of Coach Jim "Legs" Howard at Oswego. Nick developed quickly and became a two-time SUNY Athletic Conference Champion at 115 pounds winning the title and qualifying for the nationals in 1967 and 1968.

In 1969, Nick began his coaching career at Valley Stream Memorial Junior High School. He established a year-end tournament that gave all of the junior high student wrestlers in Valley Stream an opportunity to gain valuable experience. From 1969-1981, Nick's wrestlers fed into Hall of Fame coach Harold Earl's Valley Stream High School's championship team.

While Nick was coaching, he also developed tremendous martial arts skills and became a black belt instructor. In 1976, as a black belt instructor, he began to include wrestling in his classes and seminars. He was

instrumental in the incorporation and integration of wrestling both standing and on the ground, into traditional standup Korean, Japanese, Filipino and Okinawan martial arts. Nick was among the first to introduce wrestling to karate enthusiasts. Nick's martial arts students all received first hand instruction as to why wrestling was the foundation of all great fighters. Nick was teaching and influencing martial arts, decades before the emergence of the Ultimate Fighting era. Today, all mixed martial artists train for years to develop solid wrestling skills. Nick holds several advanced Black Belts himself and has taught more than 30 Black Belt students in many disciplines, most with advanced degrees of excellence themselves. We look back now and realize what a trailblazer Nick was to this relatively new sport.

Although Nick has spent many decades developing wrestlers and martial artists, his ultimate passion is in healing people. To this end, Nick has studied extensively in the area of holistic medicine and traditional Chinese medicine. Nick continues to utilize his healing skills at his office of Oriental Martial and Healing Arts.

We welcome Nick Nanos to the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

