

Black belt recipients to demonstrate skills

Hard work and dedicated practice will soon be acknowledged as 11 local residents prepare to accept their status as first-degree black belts.

Kingwood residents Alex Hostettler and Bill Thorpe along with Humble and Atascocita residents Hedy and Michael Moor, Allen Wallace, and Johnny Brooks, will be honored with the promotion May 23 at 2 p.m. at the Kuk Sool Won of Kingwood.

Also testing for black belt recognition will be Humble High School graduating senior Justin Galindo; Terri and Jennifer Waters, who attend New Caney Middle School; and Jake and Cory Campbell, who attend Kingwood Middle School.

The event will be the first of its kind at Kuk Sool Won of Kingwood, the Korean martial arts center in Kingwood.

It will include a demonstration by visiting masters from across the greater Houston area.

In attendance will be Master Barry and Choon Ook Harmon, Master Dixon Kunz, Master Alex

Suh and Grandmaster In Hyuk Suh. Other senior instructors will also be present.

Head instructor and owner of the Kingwood school, Richard Roper, explains that the students and school are privileged to host this event.

"Usually students receive their promotions together at the World Kuk Sool Association Headquarters in Houston," says Roper. "However, we are being honored by having permission to promote our first group at the Kingwood school. This makes it a very special event that we have opened to friends and family alike."

Roper goes on to explain that the promotions are only achieved after years of study and discipline.

"It takes, on average, three-and-a-half years to reach first degree black belt," he says, "During this period a student will learn and practice all of the physical aspects of martial arts training as well as acquire technical knowledge of almost 300 individual self-defense techniques. Only after students have achieved the required struc-

ture and have tested many times are they promoted to black belt."

Kuk Sool Won is a comprehensive martial arts system that can trace its Korean roots back for centuries. Its modern equivalent, however, was founded in 1958 by Grandmaster In Hyuk Suh.

Suh first studied Korean martial arts under his grandfather, who was a former head instructor at the Korean Royal Court Martial Arts School.

He then spent the next 40 years refining the more than 3,600 techniques that would comprise Kuk Sool Won before bringing it to the U.S. in 1974.

Since then, Kuk Sool Won has gained international recognition and has grown to include schools in Asia, Europe and the U.S.

"Kuk Sool Won is considered to be a complete 'martial arts system' comprised of many, if not all, aspects of martial arts training and tradition," says Roper, "not only does it include the use of hands and feet to block and strike but also grappling techniques, meditation skills and the use of traditional

weapons such as sword and staff."

Kuk Sool Won first caught the attention of Hedy Moor, a 46-year-old working mother of two, when her daughters joined in March of 1996. Soon the whole family was involved. "It has become something we can all do together," says Moor. "Our family was always going their separate ways and this just became a family event."

Moor credits Kuk Sool Won with having something for everyone.

"We have more stamina now," she says, "It was one of the best things we have ever done for ourselves."

Kuk Sool Won of Kingwood is located at 23976 Hwy 59N, next to Luby's.

The school offers both morning and evening classes Monday through Saturday.

For more information call 281-359-KICK or visit the Kuk Sool of Kingwood website at www.kuksool-kingwood.com.