

My journey to becoming a Hall of Fame inductee

by Louie Dimou, 2024 Inductee

The recent workshop I had the privilege of leading at Gala 2024 in Adelaide was an incredible opportunity, not just to meet the other attendees, but for me personally as well. It allowed me to share the knowledge and passion I have accumulated over the course of my 42 years of training in Taekwon-Do. Teaching other martial artists, each from their own unique disciplines, was an experience that felt both surreal and deeply fulfilling. The chance to share my expertise with others was something I had long aspired to, and to do so amongst such respected martial artists was truly an honour. The workshop wasn't just a moment of teaching, it was also a moment of connection, as I was able to learn from others and exchange ideas that enriched our shared passion for martial arts.

Reflecting on my martial arts journey, I realise just how far I've come and how deeply it has shaped me, not just as a practitioner, but as a person. I first fell in love with martial arts as a teenager and it wasn't until three years ago that I discovered AMAHOF and its significance in recognising the achievements and contributions of martial artists around Australasia. To be inducted into the Hall of Fame this year and to win the award was something special; an achievement that I take immense pride in. It serves as a testament to the dedication and perseverance that has defined my 42-year journey, which began when I first stepped into the dojang at the age of 17.



Louie Dimou receiving his 1st degree black belt, pictured with Father of Taekwondo in Australia, Master Chong Chul Rhee on November 22, 1986

From the very start, I was passionate and committed to martial arts. I wanted to learn everything I could—techniques, philosophy, discipline, and the values that come with the art. Martial arts has always been more than just physical training for me. It has been a way of life, instilling discipline, respect and a sense of purpose. It's been a guiding force in shaping who I am today.

One of the defining moments early in my career came during my first black belt grading. I failed, but instead of being discouraged, that failure fuelled my determination. I realised I had more to prove to

myself, and that failure was simply part of the process of growth. I came back stronger, more focused, and with a renewed sense of commitment. My second attempt was a success and I passed my black belt grading with pride. This experience taught me the invaluable lesson that failure is not the end, but rather a stepping stone toward success, provided you have the mental strength to keep pushing forward.



Louie Dimou with his school (dojang) after joining the International Taekwon-Do Federation Union (ITFU) in July 2024

Another significant milestone in my journey was taking over the school of my previous instructor in August 2018. It was a challenge I never anticipated, but one I embraced wholeheartedly. Over time, I succeeded in growing the student base and built the school into a thriving martial arts club. This accomplishment wasn't just about increasing numbers, but was about building a community where students could grow, learn and develop their own love for martial arts. It taught me invaluable lessons in leadership, teaching, and perseverance.

As I continued teaching my students, my focus had to also expand and consider my personal growth. I earned my various black belt degrees, constantly pushing myself to reach new heights. Most recently, I earned my third-degree black belt, which is internationally certified. Each belt and each grading represents a step in my growth—not just as a martial artist, but as an individual. It was a long and challenging road, but each achievement along the way has shaped me into the person I am today.

The most important lesson I've learned over the years is the importance of mental strength. It's not enough to simply be skilled in martial arts, you must also have the resilience and determination to face challenges head-on. Whether it was overcoming the failure of my first black belt grading, taking over a school, or pushing myself to reach higher degrees of black belt, the mental fortitude to keep going has been key to my success. Martial arts has taught me to never take anything for granted. Every opportunity, every challenge is a chance to grow, and I've learned to seize them without hesitation.



Louie Dimou training with his 1st degree black belt student, Jakob Brown during an AMAHOF workshop on Hall of Fame weekend

Looking ahead, my goals are clear. I want to continue running a successful martial arts school, one that is not only focused on teaching techniques but also on instilling the values of martial arts in my students' lives. Martial arts has so much to offer in terms of personal development—discipline, respect, focus, and the ability to overcome adversity. I want to pass these values on to the next generation of martial artists. In addition, I want to continue expanding my own knowledge and skills, not just within Taekwon-Do, but in other areas of martial arts as well. The journey never stops, and there is always more to learn.

In line with AMAHOF's mission, I am committed to promoting Taekwon-Do and martial arts in general. I want to keep inspiring myself and others through the actions of other martial artists, just as I've been

inspired by the martial arts community throughout my life. It's a never-ending cycle of learning, sharing, and growing.



Louie Dimou pictured with AMAHOF Director and 8th degree Master Steve Weston from Southern ITF Taekwon-Do in Tasmania

Finally, I'd like to offer some advice to aspiring martial artists, particularly those just starting their journey. First and foremost, stay calm under pressure. The ability to stay composed in difficult situations—whether it's in training, competition, or life will serve you well. Secondly, control what you can control: your effort, your attitude, and your execution. Don't waste energy on things outside of your control. Thirdly, always strive for the mastery of the basics. The fundamentals are the foundation for everything else, and they should never be overlooked. Don't rush your development, let it happen naturally. Progress takes time and every step forward is a victory in itself.

To those starting out, remember that martial arts is not just about the physical—it is about building character, strength of mind and the discipline to face life's challenges with courage and resilience. Stay focused, stay dedicated and above all, enjoy the journey. The rewards are greater than you can imagine.

Bio: Louie Dimou, Head Instructor (Boosabum) of Port Pirie Full Impact ITF Taekwon-Do and martial artist of 42 years is an international certified 3rd degree black belt. More information available at <https://www.fullimpactitftaekwondo.com/>

