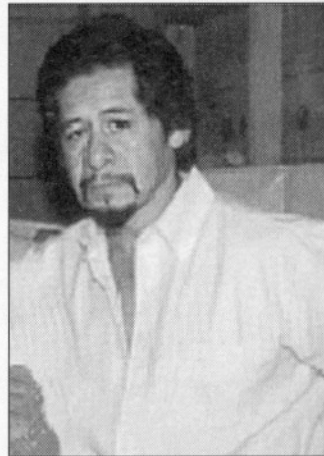


*One important aspect of Bruce Lee's Bay Area (Oakland) period was that of "family". For it was there that Bruce began his own family, and that is where he, and his good friend and assistant instructor, James (Jimmy) Lee and their respective families lived under one roof as an extended family household for several years. During this time there was also another family that was a part of Bruce and Jimmy's lives — the Macias family. Both Felix Macias Sr. and his son, Felix Jr., reaped the benefits of direct tutelage as original first-generation students in Jun Fan/Jeet Kune Do (JF/JKD). This is their story.*



*Felix Macias, Sr.; the original bearer of the Oakland JKD torch.*

**JEET KUNE DO:** Sifu Macias (Sr.), where are you from?

**FELIX MACIAS SR:** I am a native Californian, and have spent the majority of my life in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**JKD:** How did you first encounter James Lee?

**FMSr:** In the early 1960s a mutual friend first introduced me to James Lee. From the very beginning James and I began to develop a good friendship.

**JKD:** How did you become one of Jimmy's JF/JKD students?

**FMSr:** I was invited to see what JF/JKD gung-fu was all about at sifu James Lee's Hayward (CA) training facility. Sifu Al Novak co-taught there with Jimmy as well. When I observed first hand what James was doing with his training, I became immediately interested in learning to also do what I

was seeing. That was where my life's journey down the path of martial arts and self-discovery began.

**JKD:** Did you ever study with Bruce Lee as well?

**FMSr:** I consider myself to be a student of James Lee's, however, I was fortunate enough to have been invited to several "closed-door" training sessions conducted directly by Bruce Lee himself.

**JKD:** Fortunate indeed. What were your impressions of Bruce?

**FMSr:** I remember at one of the private sessions (I was the only non-Chinese there) Bruce was demonstrating some hand and foot techniques. He was so fast that every kick and punch he threw made a sound like a towel cracking the air. No one could touch him, and no one dared!

**JKD:** How was James as an instructor?

**FMSr:** James was very intense and devoted to his art. He was very innovative with training, techniques, and in designing and building different apparatus to enhance one's technical training as well as conditioning the body.

**OAKLAND JKD STUDENTS**

BOB BAKER	RODNEY GEE	FRED MEREDITH
ERNIE BENEVIDEZ	BARRY HAY	AL NOVAK
GARY CAGAANAN	GARY HUM	JIMMY ONG
RICHARD CARNEY	ALLEN JOE	STAN PIASIK
HARRY CHIN	JEROME LAI	MANUEL RODRIQUEZ
BILL CHRISTENSEN	GEORGE LEE	GORDON TOY
DAVE COX	ERIC LEE	HOWARD WILLIAMS
TOM AND JAN DE LAUREL	GREGSON YIMM LEE	ALVIN WONG
GARY DILL	RUSSELL LEE	Dr. ARNOLD WONG
LEO FONG	MOON LING	CURTIS YEE
MIKE FONG	FELIX MACIAS, Sr.	ED KIM YEE
Dr. LLOYD FREITAS	ALLEN and MARIO MADGANGAL	EDWARD YEE
ROBERT GARCIA	BOB MARSHALL	DAVID YOUNG
		HANK McGUIRE

JKD: And outside of the training hall, how was Jimmy?

FMSr: Outside of training he was a very good friend of mine and a mentor to me as well. James provided as much guidance as possible on any problems that might arise for his students, in martial arts as well as general life.

JKD: What do you think of the current JKD scene?

FMSr: When I look at some of the JKD of today, I see an art that was never fully developed due to the untimely deaths of both Bruce and James. I feel that to truly expand upon, and further develop what they had started, people need more knowledge of how to cultivate their natural abilities to adapt to and cope with different arts, types of opponents, and situations. Anyone can learn to fight and defend himself, but James wanted his students to be able to freely adapt and apply what they had learned. Life doesn't give you well-regimented and structured situations, so to truly honor the spirit of what James and Bruce started, and left for us to carry on, your training should allow you to be

**"(Bruce) was so fast that every kick and punch he threw made a sound like a towel cracking the air."**

— Felix Macias Sr.

able to instinctively adapt without thought or hesitation to the infinite number of unforeseeable complications and situations that may arise.

JKD: Sifu, do you have distinct memories of Bruce and James Lee?

FELIX MACIAS JUNIOR: One of my earliest memories was when I was about eight years old. I didn't believe my father when he asked my brother and I if we would like to meet "Kato" from the "Green Hornet" television show. Naturally, being kids, we were pretty excited when he convinced us that he was serious. That evening he

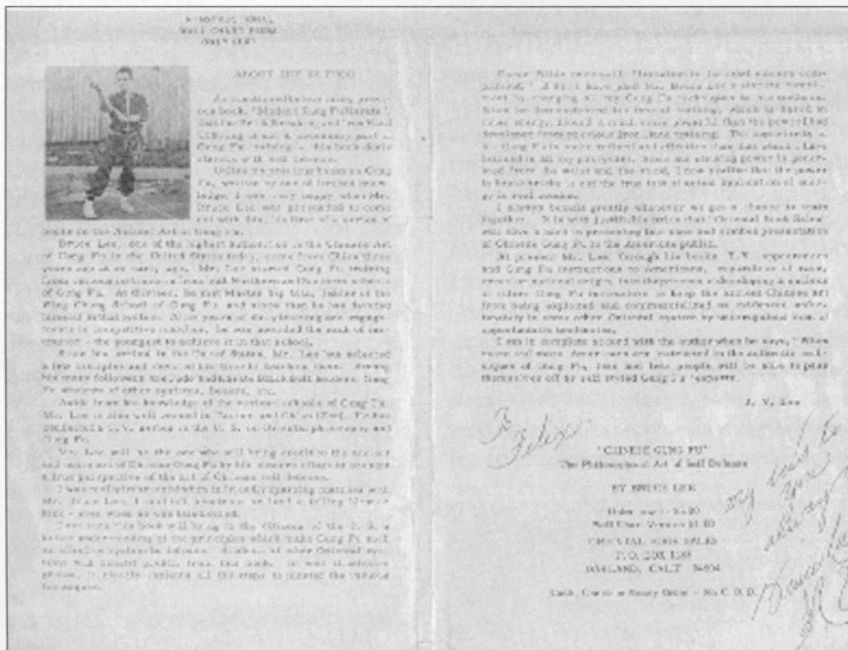
took us over to James Lee's house. When we walked in, there was Bruce/Kato sitting at the table signing autographed photos of himself. Boy was I nervous and excited when my brother and I were introduced to him. He shook our hands and asked if we would like autographs. As I nervously walked toward Bruce I accidentally stepped on his brand new suede boots. He just looked at me and smiled. I was so nervous that my dad had to nudge me to take the photo from Bruce. That was my first meeting with Bruce Lee.

JKD: How and when were you introduced to the actual gung-fu training?

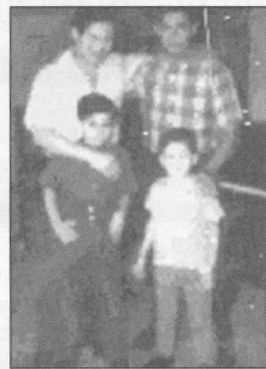
FMJr: I remember during another trip to Jimmy's house being very excited when James offered to take my brother and I down to the training area and start teaching us how to kick, punch, and move. Those were my introductions into Bruce and James Lee's gung-fu. This was while I was still only eight.

JKD: How did your training advance after that?

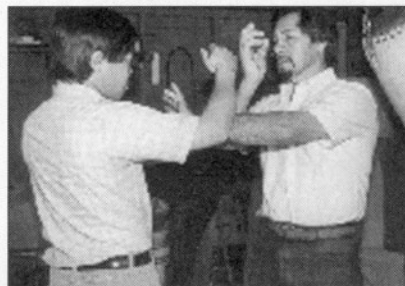
FMJr: Right after James started



Felix Macias' personal autographed copy of Bruce Lee's first book published by James Lee.



James Lee (left) with his student Felix Macias, Sr. (front row) Felix Macias, Jr. and Larry Macias, 1968.



Felix Macias (right) with his student, the late Robert Fong.

teaching my brother and me gung-fu, I also began training with my dad. By the time I was 14 years old I was training seriously. I maintained my training strongly and diligently until I reached my early 20s.

**JKD:** What happened then?

**FMJr:** That was when I decided that it was time to go on my own. As good as the fighting methods that Bruce and Jimmy developed are, and they are very good, they did leave behind the legacy of an art that was never fully developed. I had a vision of the direction that I thought the development of the JF/JKD should be taken.

I felt that a lot of the other guys were mixing in too many different arts and were getting away from what was originally laid out by Bruce.

**JKD:** So, given those feelings, how

**"As I nervously walked toward Bruce I accidentally stepped on his brand new suede boots. He just looked at me and smiled."**

— Felix Macias Jr.

did you proceed?

**FMJr:** I started to examine what I had been taught by Jimmy and my father, and looked for ways to tighten up the movements and make them even more economical and adaptable than they had been. I wanted to make it as fluid as possible without being mechanical in nature.

**JKD:** What do you mean by adaptable?

**FMJr:** It is difficult to explain what I mean without one being able to feel what I am talking about. What I have done is to take a technique and make it so that it will flow and fill in the gaps left by one's opponent. Whenever you are confronted by a situation wherein you must defend yourself, you are being presented with a problem. Since you will probably not know the experi-

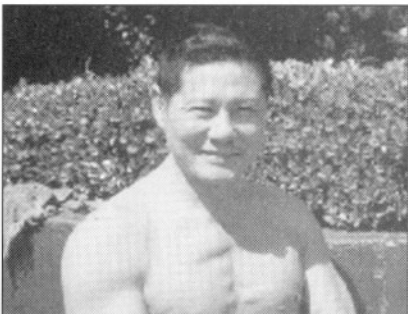


*A group shot at the Oakland home studio of James Lee on Monticello Avenue.*

ence of your opponent, or the way that he fights, you must be prepared and able to handle any situation that comes. Using our unique brand of gung-fu, with very little adjustments, we are able to adapt to whatever the opponent(s) throw our way. When presented with a problem, many other arts will turn to another for the answers to their shortcomings. We are able to work the problem out by adapting what we are doing without having to look to outside sources. I have an answer for the problems that they create, and create problems for the answers that they think they have.

**JKD:** Ultimately, JF/JKD is about finding self-expression using martial arts. How do you encourage your students toward that goal?

**FMJr:** I encourage my students to develop their fighting skills by first starting them with the basics as a structure for building a fighter. Teaching them basic techniques and principles gives us a base to work from. Once they have the basics down we move into more advanced techniques. These techniques are designed to enhance the self-statement of the students in their fighting skills as well as teach them that they don't have to copy or imitate anyone. I



*1972. James seems very vigorous and healthy. At this time he was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer.*

**"I always knew that Bruce was going to be the biggest martial arts box-office attraction the world has ever known."**

— Felix Macias Sr.

give my students a framework to work within. How they utilize the tools I have taught them inside of that framework is where they find self-expression and are then able to make their own personal fighting statement. Because no two people are exactly the same I feel that it is so important that my students be able to adapt and adjust to different body types and body mechanics for both their opponents and themselves. This leads to "total domination" of our opponents. By total domination I am referring to the controlling of both the situation and the opponent. We strive to exploit the weaknesses that our opponents possess.

**JKD:** Sifu, why are you coming out now?

**FMJr:** I want to bring what I have done to the public and share my knowledge. We have worked very hard over the years to cultivate an art that we feel is more directly in the spirit of what Bruce and Jimmy started. I would prefer to stay away from the political mess associated with making claims using the name JKD. I want to show people a fighting method that doesn't succeed on claims of a commercialized name, but rather on how effective a fighting art it truly is. I would also like to honor the Chinese community as well as the memory of Jimmy and Bruce for their contributions in the martial arts that have been such a big and valuable part of my life.

**JKD:** Given your above statements, what do you prefer to call your unique version of gung-fu?

**FMJr:** Simply, "The Way Of The Intercepting Fist."

**JKD:** What final message would you like to impart to our readers?

**FMJr:** I am just a gung-fu man who found and went his own way. ☯