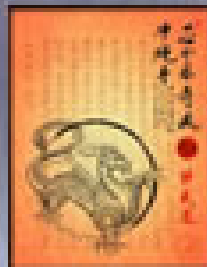


# Filipino Martial Arts



Amara Arkanis



+ Shen Wu Dao

= Sword Stick Society  
International

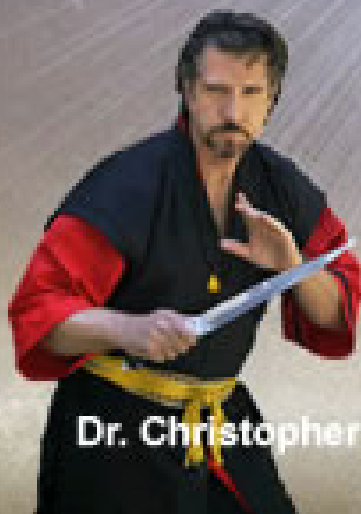
Digest

Special Edition  
2009



Punong Guro Mark Lledo

1974 - 2008  
Remembered



Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano



Punong Mataw Guro  
Luis Rafael "Louelle" Lledo

**Publisher**

Steven K. Dowd

**Contributing Writers**

Emmanuel ES Querubin

Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano

Louelle Lledo

Tristan Jay Mendoza

Nickie C. Esmero

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**Students of Amara Arkanis**

Rick Argenti

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Tristan Jay Mendoza

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Rodrigo "Ding" P. Bago

*President Elect, Kiwanis Club of Indang - Walang Tinag*

Punong Guro Ipe Penales, Jr.

Guro Isaac Vida

Felipe M. Penales Jr.

**Educational Depot**

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The FMADigest is published quarterly. Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts of the Philippines. Other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts and other related subjects.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

The authors and publisher of this digest are not responsible for any injury, which may result from following the instructions contained in the digest. Before embarking on any of the physical activities described in the digest, the reader should consult his or her physician for advice regarding their individual suitability for performing such activity

## **From the Publishers Desk**

### **Kumusta**

Swords & Sticks International is about armed and unarmed, traditional and contemporary martial and healing arts. The Society represents the creative talents of Mataw Guro Lou Lledo of Amara Arkanis and Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano of Spirit Warrior's Way, and their many years of dedication and commitment to the preservation, promotion, and perpetuation of the spiritual, health, and combative elements found common in all martial arts.

Mataw Guro Lou Lledo a dynamic and humble individual and very knowledgeable in many martial arts has combined them to bring about a unique style which is Amara Arkanis and with this art which is flexible can incorporate any other martial art. A true teacher Mataw Guro Lledo writes the Educational Depot column for the FMADigest.

Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano is a Chiropractic Physician; he has continued to further his studies to include Chiropractic Orthopedics while incorporating his experiences in traditional Oriental Martial & Healing Arts in the diagnosis and treatment of his patients. Presently, his research is in the area of Martial, Medical, & Spiritual Qigong for Life Enhancement.

This Special Edition was put on hold due to the passing of Mataw Guro Lledo's son Mark Lledo and he left for the Philippines to take care of his sons' personal business and arrangements for him to be laid to rest. Punong Guro Mark Lledo was to be the heir of Amara Arkanis.

It is hoped you the reader will enjoy this Special Edition and if possible be able to meet Mataw Guro Lledo in the future and realize and see the energy and commitment this practitioner has to the Filipino martial arts and all martial arts in general.

**Maraming Salamat Po**

## About Sword Stick Society International



Welcome ... to the New Horizon of Swords & Sticks, Armed and Unarmed, Traditional and Contemporary Martial and Healing Arts. The Society represents the creative talents of Mataw Guro Lou Lledo and Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano, and their many years of dedication and commitment to the Preservation, Promotion, and Perpetuation of the Spiritual, Health, and Combative Elements found common in all martial arts.

**www.swordsticksociety.com** Coming from a medical and military background, what makes Sword Stick Society International unique is the blending of many approaches while maintaining the main focus on teaching accurate and effective skills through building the Biomechanics and Science of Anatomy, Physiology and Physics, the Art of Self Expression, and the Philosophy of the Spiritual Warrior. A Code of Ethics, Discipline, Humility, and Honor are the Core Virtues that we strive and live for.

Although we may only cross this path once... enjoy your experience with us, do your best, thirst and search for knowledge. Know thyself in that you may know and motivate others.

Through humbleness, we discover the finest qualities in all things big and small ... By knowing ourselves, we can begin to know others. Uncover the hidden talent within as you follow the Path of Life in search of ... The Way.

"It is not the Style, but the Person... that makes all the difference"

**Amara Arkanis**  
**Filipino Fighting Art of the Mandirigma**  
By Emmanuel ES Querubin



Amara Arkanis is a three-faceted art: The first Facet is the Armed Fighting with the use of weapons.

There are three main weapons group of Amara Arkanis, and several variations of these main weapons. The three main weapon groups are:

- \*Rigid / stiff weapons
- \*Flexible / pliable weapons
- \* Projectile / casting weapons

As early as the start of civilization, the use of a crude type of weaponry had been recorded in history. The discovery, first of fire, then gunpowder, marked the evolution of more

sophisticated weaponry.

Despite these discoveries, the use of basic rudimentary weapons, such as the sword, bow and arrow, spear and the like, was developed to a higher level, instead of being shelved in the back burner. Even now, with laser-guided bombs and bullets, the ordinary foot soldier still carries a trusty knife for use when all his advanced gadgets fail and knife fighting is still a very important part of a soldier's training.

Although based on native origin, the development of Filipino homegrown weapons, were influenced by several conflicts with foreign invaders. In fact, the Igorot axe, found to have the most efficient hacking design with the center of gravity at the head, was a "copy" of the Arabic scimitar knife. Delfin Bernarte's design of the medya-luna was inveigled by the Igorot axe. These designs can be traced back to the time of Alexander the Great, and possibly even earlier back to biblical times.

To defend themselves, the Filipinos devised offensive and defensive techniques in the use of various instruments available and developed the fighting art the Spaniards called Armas de Mano, later Pilipinized to Arnis de Mano. Louelle Lledo now calls his art Amara Arkanis.

The second Facet is the Unarmed Fighting. There are three classifications of Amara Arkanis unarmed fighting:

1. Kicking and striking
2. Throwing and takedowns
3. Joint reversal and submission techniques

These unarmed fighting techniques are based on Sikaran, Kuntawan, Silat and the techniques of Bernarte Brokil Sistemang Praksiyon but highly influenced by Japanese Goju-ryu Karate.

The third Facet is the Healing Phase. The two divisions of this aspect are:

1. Internal - which includes meditation and self-hypnosis
2. External - which includes accu-pressure, spine-manipulation, bone - setting, massage and application of herbs.

Like the "killing" aspects of Amara Arkanis, the "healing" aspect is also a carry-over of Bernarte Brokil Sistemang Praksiyon. Delfin Bernarte was also the town "manggagamot"

(healer). He has a collection and concoction of local herbs, vegetables and fruits that he prescribes from stomach ache to various diseases. His most prescribed brew is ampalaya (bitter melon), banaba and bayabas leaves tea. For muscle aches and pains he blends ginger root, garlic and coconut oil. He also dispenses plain coconut oil for various ailments.

A close examination will reveal that all these facets are the interwoven foundation of a complete martial art. All the techniques in the armed and unarmed systems may be executed with or without any weapon. The fact is, weapons such as sticks or knives are regarded as an extension of the hand, which is an extension of the mind.

For educational and learning purposes, Amara Arkanis, being a Martial Arts Education Program, the unarmed techniques and the armed techniques are presented separately so a better understanding of the art is achieved. The student, however, must always remember that all and every technique, particularly hand techniques, may be executed with or without weapons.



Twenty-eight years ago, in 1980, Luis Rafael C. Lledo, Jr., better known as Louelle Lledo, in his desire to bring back the original mandirigma spirit to the fighting arts, established Amara Arkanis, a product of the continuous evolution of the fighting arts he has learned. It is not a style but a martial arts education program.

When Lledo founded Amara Arkanis Filipino fighting art, he held the rank of Ika-6 Na Antas Sagisag Na Itim (6th degree Black Belt) in Japanese Karate and the title of Punong Guro (head instructor) in the Bernarte Brokil Sistemang Praksiyon in the Filipino fighting arts.

The first seeds of Amara Arkanis were born in 1959 in Zamboanga City on the island of Mindanao, in Southern Philippines. Lledo was first introduced to the rudiments of the fighting arts by his grandfather, his father and his uncles.

His great grandfather, Antonio Marquez Alvarez, a descendant of the Spanish conquistadors, taught him the European style of fencing while he was still very young. His father, Luis Lledo, Sr., then an intelligence officer of the Philippine Air Force, taught him the military, albeit dirty style of hand-to-hand combat. At an early age, Lledo also became an expert in combat shooting, both with rifles and handguns. After school, Lledo, apprenticed in a boxing gym operated by his uncles Ramon and Antonio Lledo, local boxing promoters and champions of Zamboanga City, where he learned the manly art of boxing.

Lledo, although not of royal heritage, but nonetheless from an influential family, was also schooled in the secret Muslim fighting arts of Kuntawan and Silat. He became adept in the arts of Kuntawan and Silat. At the same time, Lledo took up Karate under Joe David of the Kyokushinkai style of Karate and was awarded his 1st Degree Black Belt as he celebrated his 18th birthday.

In his desire to learn more about the fighting arts and to pursue a degree in Medical technology, he went to Manila and trained further in the different arts and styles



of fighting. He sought the instructions from the masters including Delfin Bernarte an expert in Brokil (Pampanga style of Arnis).

**Delfin Bernarte Originator of the Bernarte Brokil Sistem Praksiyon with Louelle Lledo**  
(Heir to the System and Founder of Amara Arkanis)



1972 was a memorable year for Louelle Lledo. Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi of the Japan Goju-ryu Karate Association came to the Philippines upon the invitation of the Philippine Karate Association, the ruling body of Karate in the Philippines. Being an exponent of the Goju style of Japanese Karate, Lledo was assigned to provide assistance to Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi and the entourage of the Japan Gojukai during their stay in the Philippines. Lledo had the unique opportunity to train with the seniors of the Japan Goju-ryu group under the watchful eyes of Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi. Due to his diligence and skill in the fighting arts, he was promoted to the 4th Degree Black Belt in Karate in the same year.

It was also in 1972 that Delfin Bernarte's dream of passing on the stewardship of the Benarte Brokil Sistemang Praksiyon to a family member came to reality when Lledo, and Flora Bernarte (Delfin's daughter) tied the knots of holy

matrimony.

It was also then that he became acquainted with Remy Presas, who was in the initial stages of establishing the Modern Arnis Federation of the Philippines, and Remy's brother Ernesto Presas.



Louelle Lledo with Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi of Japan Karate-do Gojukai and with Grandmaster Hwang Kee of Korean Tang Soo Doo, Moo Doo Kwan.

In 1974 Lledo was named head referee during the International Invitational Karate Championships, hosted by the Philippine Karate Association.

For the first time, Karate Grandmasters from Japan, Okinawa and Korea were gathered together in the Philippines for the occasion.

Again Lledo had the opportunity to attend to Gojukai Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi and the seniors of the Japan Karate-Do College.

Lledo likewise had the opportunity to learn the concepts of Korean Tang Soo Doo from Grandmaster Hwang Kee, who extended his stay after the International Invitational Karate Championships. Although there was a local Tang Soo Doo group in the Philippines, Grandmaster Hwang Kee, like Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi, requested PKA President Dante Nagtalon to have Lledo accompany him during his stay in Manila.

Aside from Karate, Lledo trained not only in Brokil but also in various Arnis styles. He trained in the traditional system of Arnis as propagated by Master Porfirio Lanada and the innovative system of the Daniel Rendal Innovative School of Filipino Fighting Art.

Masters of Arnis de Mano found a way to treat and temper a type of hardwood known as bahi, making it tough and strong as steel. It was a popular belief of superstitious Filipinos that the master imbues the bahi with his spirit, personality and his anting-anting (amulet). This bahi and anting-anting were passed on to the successor in a highly secret ritual just prior to the master's demise. It is said that unless the anting-anting is passed on to the successor, the master's final moment will be agonizingly

long in coming. It was rumored that Delfin Bernarte's bahi and anting-anting were passed on to Lledo, something that Lledo neither denies nor confirms. He, however, admits that he was named successor to the Bernarte Brokil Sistemang Paraksiyon.

In recognition of his skill in stick fighting, Remy Presas awarded Lledo the 5th Degree Black Belt in Modern Arnis.

Lledo's training in the martial arts included Tai Chi Chuan under Ed Cayetano. Fortunato Sevilla and Francisco Alvina were Lledo's instructors in Judo and Ju-jitsu. He learned the concepts of Korean Tang Soo Doo from Grandmaster Hwang Kee. Lledo learned Sikaran, various styles of unarmed combat and Soong Leong Kwan (Double Dragon School), Kung-Fu, from Emmanuel Querubin, who learned it from Chan Keng Wan, the last living master of Soong Leong Kwan Kung-fu.



Lledo also trained in the traditional system of Arnis propagated by Porfirio Lanada (behind Lledo) and the innovative style of Daniel Rendal.



Lledo's associates and training partners, particularly Inocencio Glaraga of the Kalaki School of Kali, Yaming and Arnis, Yoli Romo of the Philippine Pamantukan Penjakali Stick Boxing Society and Rodel "Smoking Sticks" Dagooc of Modern Arnis Philippines, further enriched his experience with other systems of stick fighting.

In 1975, Lledo was accredited as an international referee by the World Union of Karate-Do Organizations. (WUKO), the world ruling body in Karate and was called upon to officiate in the Third World Karate Championships held at Long Beach, California.

While in Long Beach, Lledo became closely associated with Ed Parker, father of American Kempo. Parker played host to Lledo and other officials of the Philippine National Karate Team, whom he chauffeured around in the Cadillac given by Elvis Presley. Parker and Lledo spent considerable time exchanging ideas and techniques during the training sessions of the Philippine Karate Team which Ed Parker always attended.

Parker became an honorary member of the Philippine National Karate Team which placed fourth in the team competition in the 3rd World Karate Championships.

In 1975 there was a reversal of role. Lledo became a guest of Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi at the latter's Japan Karate-Do College in Tokyo, Japan. Lledo continued his brief but intensive training under the senior instructors of Gojukan which started in 1972 and 1974.

The exchange of information and techniques with the various martial arts leaders and practitioners during his foreign travels and in their visits to the Philippines further enriched his understanding and experience in the fighting arts.



Ed Cayetano instructs Louelle Lledo in application of Tai Chi Chuan techniques using a double cane.

In 1980 after Delfin Bernarte passed on the stewardship of the Bernarte Brokil Sistemang Parkasiyon to Louelle Lledo and named him Punong Guro, Lledo established an eclectic system of fighting geared towards an individual's psychological and physiological makeup. It is not a new combative art rather it is a further evolution of the various martial arts that Lledo trained and learned.

Lledo's ultimate goal in establishing the system is to develop a person's character through the rigid and

strict discipline required in training in the fighting arts. To give the system his personal touch and to reaffirm its ultimate goal, Lledo named the art Amara Arkanis.

Amara means balance (positive/negative). Arkanis is a unification of the armed art of Arnis and the unarmed art of the fist (Kamao). Taken together, Amara Arkanis is the art of achieving balance in life through the fighting arts.

Amara Arkanis is an on-going, ever-growing, never-ending active learning martial arts education process. It is an art that evolved from fighting systems that were developed in the battlefield. Like its predecessors, techniques of Amara Arkanis are deadly and fatal. The only difference is the end result.

The main purpose of the early fighting arts was to kill the enemy instantly. The trophy was being alive and there was no such thing as being second best.

In competition where rules have been established, the aim of Amara Arkanis is to win the gold medal. In self-defense situations, the goal is to neutralize the threat, without necessarily permanently maiming or killing the opponent.

The philosophy and psychology of Amara Arkanis is consistent with the philosophy and psychology of ancient combative arts. The techniques and application are still the same. The weapons, however, have changed. From Kalis to Itak then to *bahi* and rattan cane, padded sticks are now utilized. Protective body armor is also adopted to prevent injuries. Even with these safety precautions, every technique of Amara Arkanis has the potential to be fatal.

Another innovation of Amara Arkanis from its predecessors is the way the art is being taught. The ancient Filipino fighting arts were taught one on one, by the teacher to the student giving birth to different styles and various schools. There were no organized drills and systematic patterns of techniques. From day one, the manner of training was fight situations where the teacher engages and the student tries to evade. Until the teacher decides that the student is ready to fight and test his skill, the training is engagement and evasion. This type of training is long and hard and a lot of times unproductive.

Until as late as the 1950's, students get their "certification" as an arnisador (arnis de mano practitioner) by actual combat with somebody from another school or style. Those who survived live blade fights carry their scars as a badge of honor. Although far and few in between, live blade contests are still held in secrecy. Following the practice of other martial arts, Arnis has now grades, ranks and different color belts.

When Lledo formalized the curriculum of Amara Arkanis, he called on his experience both as a martial artist and a physical education teacher. He knew that in order for the art to flourish and expand, the traditional way of teaching must give way to the modern method of propagation with emphasis on martial arts education program rather than any particular style or school of thought.

Lledo's legacy in the martial arts reached far and wide. In 1990, Lledo was awarded the title of Senior *Renshi* and was named Philippine director of the International Goju-ryu Karate-Do Federation. The IGKF is an independent Okinawan-sanctioned *Goju-ryu* organization, headed by Hanshi Tino Ceberano.

Lledo's expertise in teaching the fighting arts was recognized when he was appointed chief defensive tactics instructor of the Headquarters, Philippine Integrated National Police Training Command, and National Capital Regional Training Center at Fort Bonifacio in Metro Manila. After graduation from the National Bureau of Investigation's Academy he was made chief combative strategies instructor of the

National Bureau of Investigation (the Philippine version of the FBI). He also headed a team of intelligence and security agents for then Mayor Bagatsing of the City of Manila, and trained the Civil Intelligence and Security Unit of the City of Manila in the combative arts.

The State Colleges and Universities Athletic Association (SCUAA) Region IV voted Lledo president of the SCUAA Martial Arts Organization while The International Modern Arnis of the Philippines, founded by Remy Presas appointed Lledo Regional Commissioner.

Lledo holds a rank of captain in the Philippine Air Force Reserves. He traveled around the Philippines giving instructions and seminars in the Amara Arkanis School of the Filipino Fighting Art. He was also Chief Combat Instructor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Division and the 304th Security Squadron of the Philippine Air Force.

In 2002, Lledo migrated to the United States carrying with him the title of Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Department of Tourism's Office of Philippine Indigenous Fighting Arts.

In January 2003, Lledo was bestowed the Grandmaster of the Year Award of the Filipino Fighting Arts, by the Action Martial Arts Magazine Hall of Fame. The following year in 2004, Action Martial Arts Magazine again honored Lledo with the coveted Excellence Award in the Preservation of the Martial Arts.

Lledo's skill and integrity spread like wildfire in the East Coast. Together with Dr. Christopher Viggiano, a Chiropractor by profession and founder of the Shen Wu Dao School of Martial and Healing Arts, they established the Sword Stick Society. The Society's main objective was to bring together the various schools of martial arts.

Under the auspices of the Sword Stick Society, a martial arts gathering was held and for the first time different schools of Filipino Fighting Arts assembled in an atmosphere of camaraderie and unity.

For Louelle Lledo, it was just the beginning. In 2006 the American Society of Internal Arts (Tai Chi) invited Lledo to give a workshop about Amara Arkanis. He has since then been an annual guest lecturer.

In September 2008, for the first time, Lledo bridged the gap between the Filipino Fighting Arts and Chinese Fighting Arts. The Traditional Wing Chun Kung-fu Association of the East Coast headed by Keith Mazza, with the blessings of Wing Chun Grandmaster William Cheung, invited Lledo to do a very successful joint workshop.

The success of this workshop and Lledo's expertise in the martial arts got the attention of the Wong Fei Hung Ga Kung-fu International Association and in their 13th Annual Championships invited Lledo to officiate.

In January 2009, for the third time Action Martial Arts Magazine Hall of Fame will honor Louelle Lledo with another award as Ambassador of Goodwill of the Martial Arts for bridging the gap between the Filipino and Chinese Fighting Arts.



Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo conducting Amara Arkanis workshop at the Traditional Wing Chun Kung-fu Association.



Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo (in red) with Sifu Keith Mazza (in white) with the participants in the Amara Arkanis workshop at the Traditional Wing Chun Kung Fu Association training hall.



Matawguro Louelle Lledo of Amara Arkanis with Traditional Wing Chun Kung Fu Sifu Keith Mazza.



[www.amara-arkanis.com](http://www.amara-arkanis.com)

**Zikdokan Amara Arkanis - International  
Filipino Martial Arts Education**

Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo, Jr.

25 Foxglove Drive

Delran, NJ 08075

(609) 456-3589

**Email**

**Shen Wu Dao**

"Spirit Warrior's Way"

Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano

Shifu/Shihan Christopher M. Viggiano is a Chiropractic Physician since 1989, who has a family oriented practice in Hackettstown, N.J. After receiving his doctorate, he continued to further his studies to include Chiropractic Orthopedics while incorporating his experiences in traditional Oriental Martial & Healing Arts in the diagnosis and treatment of his patients. Presently, his research is in the area of Martial, Medical, & Spiritual Qigong for Life Enhancement.

Dr. Viggiano's martial arts training began at an early age with his exposure to Boxing, Tae Kwon Do and Hapkido under the direction of Mr. Joe Riccio-Sandan in 1975. From 1977 to 1980, he continued his Korean studies with Mr. Pete Van Rossum-Sandan and was introduced to Philippine Stick and Knife Fighting Methods at this time. In 1979, Dr. Viggiano began studying under Grandmaster Robert L. Murphy, who is the Founder and Grandmaster of the system, Isshin Shorinji Ryu Okinawa-Te. Soke Murphy devised this Family system from tremendous research and experiences resulting in developing a practical convergence of Traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Okinawan and Contemporary Martial Studies for the unification of the Mind, Body and Spirit. This system relies significantly upon Japanese and Chinese Swordsmanship and Qigong while including modern sciences to develop the Warrior Spirit within.







It was in 1980 that Master Murphy, a friend and student of Master Jou, Tsung Hwa, introduced Christopher to Master Jou, which enhanced Christopher's interest and study of Taijiquan and the Internal Chinese Arts. In 1980, Christopher achieved his first black belt in the Korean arts and through honor, sincerity and dedication was accepted as a personal apprentice of Soke Murphy and in 1987 received a Master's Certificate and License to teach the Isshin Shorinji Ryu Okinawa-Te System. It was from 1985-88, Dr. Viggiano propagated the teachings of Soke to fellow chiropractors in Iowa and a documentary training tape was produced. In 1989, Soke

Murphy and Dr. Viggiano together brought to the public a new approach to training by establishing an offshoot of the Family System, named American Bushido, which flourished in the 1990's.

In 1994, a life-threatening illness left Christopher partially disabled and blind. During this period, he received Qigong healing sessions and inspirations from Master Jou, Tsung Hwa, who helped guide him to self-recovery through the principles and practices of Taijiquan and Qigong. As a professional musician, in 1997, Christopher produced a meditative musical CD composition dedicated to Master Jou and infamous teacher and friend Master T.T. Liang (1900-2002) entitled ... Peaceful Spirit.

Because of his closeness with Master Jou, Tsung Hwa throughout the years, Christopher was honored by the Jou Family to carry their beloved one to his final resting place after a tragic car accident in 1998.

Dr. Viggiano, his family, and students have been an integral part of the Annual Zhang San-Feng Festival at the original Tai Chi Farm, Founded by the late Master Jou, Tsung Hwa (1917-1998), since the early 1990's and continues to this day to be part of the prestigious teaching staff at this event now under the direction of the American Society of Internal Arts.

To better represent his current training methods and spiritual direction, in 2000, the Shen Wu Dao Martial & Healing Arts was Founded with the full blessings of his most influential teacher, Grandmaster Robert L. Murphy. In honor of Grandmaster Jou, the Shen Wu Dao School's projects include the continual development of the "Master Jou, Tsung Hwa Tai Chi Memorial Park", a new martial arts training center co-founded with Shifu Bruce La Carrubba and crafted in the Spirit of the original Tai Chi Farm by numerous contributors. It is a wonderful escape nestled in Sussex County, New Jersey where connecting back to Nature, sharing, and enlightenment is the primary focus. Here, the Annual Master Jou Birthday and Tai Chi Celebration held every July is in its seventh year.





Another new horizon had begun in 2005 as Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo-Shihan and Dr. Viggiano Shifu/Shihan have Founded Sword Stick Society International, an international organization dedicated to continuing education workshops for the historical preservation and contemporary evolution of the Martial, Healing & Spiritual Arts. The next generation has begun as second son; Luke A. Viggiano-Sensei begins his career with his own school, Shinken Bushido Ryu, an offshoot of the Kensho Japanese Swordsmanship Division of Isshin Shorinji Ryu/Shen Wu Dao Family System arts.

Vico Viggiano, Dr. Viggiano's first son, has been a significant blessing to his father as he provides his expertise in photography, filmography, and digital editing for documenting all the events, workshops, and instructional DVDs. Documentaries of Master Jou, Tsung Hwa and Soke Murphy are in the works.

With the untimely passing of Soke Robert L. Murphy in 2007, the Murphy family had designated Dr. Viggiano and son, Vico, to be the sole Archivers of Isshin Shorinji Ryu Okinawa-Te in the assurance that the System is protected and preserved factually and respectfully.

Today, in 2008, Dr. Christopher has helped to create another new horizon with his good friend and "Gong Fu brother", Dr. John Hsi Lee, as Christopher becomes an advisor and teacher at the Dr. Lee's Academy of Martial & Healing Arts in Riverside, NJ where a diversity of Asian Studies are taught by a team of highly skilled and motivated staff.

Christopher is continually honored to be an international head referee and judge for numerous Martial Arts tournaments since the early 1990's and attends selected competitions with his team of senior judges whom are known for their fair and balanced judging abilities.

Dr. Viggiano has vowed to Preserve, Promote, and Perpetuate these priceless teachings in honor of all of his Masters and Teachers for this generation and for the generations to come as we all are on a personal Quest for significance, inner peace, tranquility... and a significant Spiritual Journey.



**Shen Wu Dao**  
"Spirit Warrior's Way"

# **Filipino Blade of Engagement Way of the Knife**

Mataw Guro Lou Lledo and  
Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano

## **Sword Stick Society International**



### **Historical Evolution**

Since the beginning of time, mankind has developed a passionate affair for sharpened steel and what it represents to one's tribe, culture and country. From a competent hunter to protecting one's family and fellow man from invaders, the knife has proven to be a most formidable sidearm in the warrior's toolbox, bringing about decisive demise for any whom as ventured into its pathway.

Practically all civilizations, especially those influenced by trade and war, adopted and adapted weapons/tools which became indigenous to their own region times claiming superiority, uniqueness, and originality.

As the needs and functions for varied cutlery emerged, technological advances in metallurgy have brought about remarkable advances in structural design vastly improving upon the integrity and endurance of bladed weaponry.

The Filipino weapons of choice range in length from the nondescript short knife (Daga), middle length knife/machete (Kriss and Bolo), to the long broad swords (Kampilan, Talibang, and Parang).

The Filipino fighting knife, called Daga or Dagger, is also known by the term Talas or Patalim, which translates to "edged weapon". In addition, Panak Sak is a common term which defines a thrusting weapon.

### **Filipino Edged Weapons**



**Daga**



**Kris**



**Bolo**



**Kampilan and Talibang**



**Parang**

In the 1960's and 1970's, knife fighting was often associated with criminal elements, particularly in the slum areas of the big cities of Manila in Luzon, Cebu in the Visayas, and Zamboanga in Mindanao. Knives were a weapon of choice favored by street gangs and thugs for concealment and quick disposal. However, crime organizations that prey upon the innocent and each other are not new to any society deploying numerous weapons and methods of terror and brutality. Western movies, such as West Side Story, depicted American Gangs in knife battles vying for turf and honor. The knife has always been a trusty standby for many.



**Mindanao Warriors**

If we look around our own modern environment, we are surrounded by and use sharpened pieces of steel on a daily basis. The razor, the can opener, corkscrew, scissors, lawn mower, blender/juicer ... these items are not foreign to us, yet when a common household knife is violently thrust into another human's flesh, the brutal savagery of one's actions change many lives forever.

## Philosophical Aspects



As a martial artist, if one does not train for reality ... then why train at all? Even with training, your survival is not guaranteed ...

Keeping this in mind, we all have been or will be cut by a metal's cold edge ... for some of us by accident, such as in the shearing and crushing metal in a motor vehicle crash. For others, by choice, for instance, as the surgeon's scalpel creates a new youthful appearance or of the life saving cut from the neurosurgeon's delicate hand.

The mind is the great commander, the limbs are subservient to the torso, the hands are guided by the arms, and the weapon moves as an extension of the mind. When the emotional heart-mind is overflowing with anger, vengeance, and fear ... you will find that your martial arts may not serve you as well as you anticipated.

Therefore, one should train under many scenarios: verbal confrontations, multiple attackers, against varied weaponry, uneven surfaces and heights, extreme and/or unfamiliar surroundings, confined spaces, under dimly lit or blinding lights, one eye closed or both. It becomes apparent the more one trains in dynamic survival situations the chances are in one's favor for potentially living another day ... still there is no guarantee. There are times that even with multiple stab wounds one will survive; whereby, one thrust or slash can be terminal.

Consider this ... it is comparatively easy, especially during demos, to disarm an opponent (senior student) when the "attacker" truly is not trying to harm the teacher, or make him/her look badly. Everyone knows the new student is uncontrolled or over/under compensates. These students are the hardest to contain and neutralize. Now, add drugs/alcohol/ and rage to the mix ... do you really think that you can effectively stop

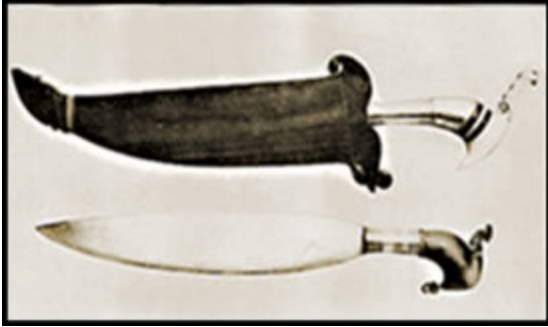


that knife barehanded, escaping unscathed? It is possible, however, the odds are low for survival with more likely severe injuries resulting to you. Our teachers always instilled in us, *"Do not bring a knife to a gun fight."* and, *"Anything can be turned into a weapon ... be creative, you may only pass this way once."*



## The Science Behind the Skill

Now, let's get to the "meat of the matter". We are only limited by our mind, our bodies, and the weapons employed. Use each component with whole mind, body and spirit commitment... Synergistic Integration.



### **Parts of the Knife and their Actions:**

Many varied designs dictate their use.

**Structure = Function, Function = Structure**

#### **A) Pommel: aka “butt end”**

- Flat for pounding, crushing like a hammer
- Pushing, Pressing, Pinning, Hooking Actions
- Spike/Pointed for penetrating precisely and deeply

#### **B) Handle & Guard:**

- Handle: secures grip for positioning angles of engagement
- Guard: protects hands, redirects, pushes/pulls

#### **C) Blade - Single & Dual Edges:**

- Carves, cleans, cuts, de-bones, defines, divides, drags, grooves, fillets, hacks, rocks, saws, scrapes, scoops, shapes, slices

#### **D) Flat Side:**

- Flatten, guide & ride, squash and squeeze, tap

#### **E) Tip:**

- Channel and groove, clean, draws, enters, penetrates, picks, pokes, pries, stabs, twists

### **Parts of the Human Anatomy & Physiology:**

- A. Skeletal System - Bone and Ligaments
- B. Muscular System - Muscle and Tendons
- C. Circulatory System - Heart and Blood Vessels
- D. Neurology System - Nerves
- E. Internal Organs System





Understanding the above basic anatomical locations and their functions will give any practitioner of the FMA arts a higher skill level ... and a greater predictability and possibility of outcome.

### **Knifeworks as an Art Form**

How sharp is sharp ... How fast is fast? It all comes down to timing and distance relationship and intimately knowing your surroundings, yourself and human nature.

“Advanced skills are just refined basics.”

“Translate The Way of the Knife to all Bladed Weapons.”

“Speed and Power Follow Correct Form.”

“Abusive words and psychological torture may cut far deeper than any physical knife, leaving behind non-visible scarring that is everlasting... be aware and protect yourself on all levels.”

### **Developing the Warrior Spirit**

When you choose to unsheathe your blade, be swift, be accurate, be justified. Your knife may be your truest friend or your worst enemy. The inherent will-power that we all poses, surfaces in survival mode even if briefly, learn how to effectively harness and control this energy.

In and of itself, the knife has no mind of its own ... however the intention of its user is where the mayhem or magic begins by creating or destroying upon contact.

### **In Conclusion**



“Don’t let the complexity of language confuse you, learn the art of communication ... without words”

“The language of movement, the flow and changeability, the hidden power from within is the wisdom of the art... Seek this pathway”

**Our Motto is:**

"It is not the Style, but the Person... that makes all the difference."

## **East Coast FMA Gatherings**

### **1st East Coast Filipino Martial Arts Gathering**

United Nations Martial Arts  
130-B Harding Ave.  
Bellmawr, NJ 08031  
March 24, 2007

Guro Lou Lledo hosted the event with the mission to unite the Filipino martial arts groups in the area.

A lengthy introduction of the different participants was endured by the audience considering the number of speakers involved. Inspiring words were voiced out by each of the groups representatives followed by demonstrations from basics to advance forms of Filipino martial arts fighting techniques, various displays of fighting arts of martial arts using different weapons. While martial arts, utilizes weapons based on the blade art it also displayed the empty hand techniques of the art.

**Participants included:**



Mataw Guro Lou Lledo Talks to the group

Amara Arkanis, Doce Pares (Big John), Balintawak (New York) under Zach Taco, Swacom (John Jacobo) Modern Arnis (Les), Cebu West (IMAF), also with a representative from the Tim Hartman group and lastly Ultimate Eskrima International, Inc.

The gathering culminated after 6 hours of sweating it out in the United Nations Martial Arts Federation School in Bellmawr, NJ.

It was then followed by a dinner at a nearby Asian restaurant where everyone shared the sumptuous meal.

The next gathering schedule was envisioned to invite more groups and new groups to attend and make the East Coast more active in this kind of events.

**1st East Coast FMA Gathering Video: [Click Here](#)**



### **2nd East Coast Filipino Martial Arts Gathering**

By: Mataw Guro Luis Louelle Rafael Lledo and Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano

On June 23, 2007, a distinguished group of Filipino Martial Art Masters and their students gathered at Sensei Maurice Halls' United Nations Martial Arts Federation located in Bellmawr, New Jersey. Here, they shared their lifelong passions and experiences in the Philosophy, Art and Science of the Sword and Stick and Empty Hand Fighting Arts. The main purpose of this group is to bring together all representatives of the Filipino Martial Arts, whether you are Filipino, Filipino-American, or non-Filipino, "To come with an open-heart and open-mind in the Spirit of Brotherhood and Camaraderie."

The gathering was hosted by Sword Stick Society International Co-Founder, Mataw Guro Luis Louelle Rafael Lledo, and was graced by the presence and watchful eye of the Philippine Province of Cavite Mayor, Melencio L. De Sagun Jr. A set of swords were presented to Mayor De Sagun on behalf of Mataw Guro Lledo & Dr. John Hsi Lee of International Traders Group. [www.martialhealingarts.com](http://www.martialhealingarts.com)



The morning began with an anthem and salutation to the Filipino and American flags. We meditated on the Spirit of the Warriors that have gone before us while we prayed to Archangel St. Michael, the patron saint of all swordsmen, for protection and guidance.

We then had the privilege of Master Greg Alland from Virginia, and formally New York City, who captivated our group with his expertise in body/weight shifting and then solo and double baston and empty hand skills. [www.kalisilat.com](http://www.kalisilat.com)

The next presentation was by the dynamic Duo Brothers, Walter and Wesley Crisostomo, from Washinton, DC, of Ultimate Eskrima International, Inc. They presented their system of fighting arts with their accuracy and precision stick work emphasizing that speed and power comes from correct form and an adaptable and fluid mindset.

We then broke for a delicious lunch provided by Dr. John Hsi Lee of International Traders Group, whom imports the finest custom made swords, knives and related martial arts weaponry. [www.itg8.com](http://www.itg8.com)

After lunch was a “Fire Your Imagination” presentation by Mataw Guro Lou Lledo-Shihan, Co-Founder and Director of Sword Stick Society International and the Zikdokan Amara Arkanis System. Master Lou detailed the basics and fundamentals of stance work, multi directional “Drills to Skills” applications of solo stick work and empty hand movements.

The finale was presented by Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano - Shihan/Shifu, Co-Founder and Director of Sword Stick Society International, Shen Wu Dao Martial & Healing Arts, and the Master Jou, Tsung Hwa Tai Chi Memorial Park. Here the Masters and Students joined in, “The Fighting Circle of Multiple Engagements”, where all participants move instinctively with fluidity as they dodge and retaliate, blend and control the continual onslaught of strikes, slices, thrusts, and parries of sticks and blades. This drill exemplified the essence of controlled combat through timing, distance and spatial relationships while realizing the importance of engaging multiple attackers simultaneously. Through this method of practice the spirit of warrior ship is a truly exciting and humbling experience for all.



[www.amara-arkanis.com](http://www.amara-arkanis.com)



[www.swordsticksociety.com](http://www.swordsticksociety.com)  
[www.joutsunghwa-taichipark.org](http://www.joutsunghwa-taichipark.org)  
[www.streamingmartialarts.com](http://www.streamingmartialarts.com)

**3rd East Coast Filipino Martial Arts Gathering**  
Dr. Lee's Martial Art Academy  
Riverside, NJ  
April 6, 2008



3rd East Coast FMA Gathering at Dr. Lee's Academy Grand Opening

The 3rd East Coast FMA Gathering was held on April 6, 2008 during Dr. Lee's Martial Art Academy in Riverside, NJ. It was a beautiful day started by a Chinese Lion Dance to bless and protect the schools Grand Opening. This is also the establishment of the Amara Arkanis Headquarters in New Jersey within Dr. Lee's Academy. Afterwards various martial arts performed their demos showing the different arts that will be taught in the school.

Mataw Guro Lou Lledo and Sifu Chris Viggiano were among the two featured teachers who will be heading the schools programs. Filipino martial arts demonstrations were presented by the following: Mataw Guro Lou Lledo of Amara Arkanis, Punong Guro Walter and Wesley Crisostomo of Ultimate Eskrima, Punong Guro Rich Acosta of Kuntaw Kali Kruzada and the students from each group. Demonstrations ranged from Forms, Sabakan (Engagement), Tapik-tapik, to joint reversal and locks.

The Filipino martial arts groups held a meeting discussing the future alliance with autonomy of each group and sharing of Filipino martial arts education in preparation for the next generation. The purpose of this gathering is to expand comraderie among different Filipino martial arts styles from armed to unarmed. This gathering is open to all Filipino martial artists.





Punong Guro Wesley engaged with his student using live blade



Mataw Guro Lou Lledo performing Balangkas ng Sari Manok



Punong Guro Rich Acosta with his student demonstrating solo baston middle range engagement



Punong Guro Walter and Wesley Crisostomo demonstrating Tapi Tapi against solo baston



Rick Argenti, tapik-tapik



Punong Guro Wesley Crisostomo, Sifu Chris Viggiano, Sifu John Lee, (the late) Punong Guro Mark Lledo, and Punong Guro Richie Acosta

#### **4th East Coast FMA Gathering**

October 25, 2008

Fighthouse

122 West 27th St. (2nd Flr.)

Manhattan

As many Filipino martial arts practitioners in the New York City area know, it is difficult to locate instructors in the arts of Kali, Arnis, or Escrima in Manhattan. Many Filipino martial arts schools can be found only through referral or an exhaustive search on the Internet. But on the 25th of October 2008, seven Master Instructors traveled to teach at the 4th FMA Gathering in the heart of Manhattan and share their knowledge of the Filipino martial arts with practitioners in the NYC area.



Seminar participants with the Masters and Instructors who taught and presented at the 4th FMA Gathering.



The FMA Gatherings started in the Philippines as a venue through which instructors from different styles could come together in the spirit of camaraderie and brotherhood, to promote unity in the Filipino martial arts. Now through the combined efforts of several Filipino martial arts schools and instructors, the FMA Gathering is fast becoming an annual tradition here in America as well.

Over 35 practitioners were in attendance for the 4th FMA Gathering, which was hosted by Datu Rich Acosta of Kuntaw Kali Kruzada. Everyone in attendance enjoyed over 4 hours of demonstrations and instruction in six different styles of Filipino martial arts from some of the most reputable Filipino Masters on the East Coast. Mataw Guro Lou Lledo who organized the first three FMA Gatherings in NJ was in attendance to emcee at this event and also teach his system of Amara Arkanis, five other illustrious Masters of the Filipino martial arts represented different styles/systems including (in alphabetical order); Balintawak (Teovel), Doce Pares Escrima, Kuntaw Kali Kruzada, Pananandata Marinas, and Ultimate Escrima (Decuerdas)



Participants eagerly watching the demos from each Arnis Group

The following is a complete list of the master instructors who participated in the 4th FMA Gathering (in alphabetical order):

Maestro Rico Acosta - Kuntaw Kali Kruzada, NYC  
 Master Walter Crisostomo - Ultimate Escrima (Decuerdas), MD  
 Master Wesley Crisostomo - Ultimate Escrima (Decuerdas), MD  
 Master Spencer Gee - Pananandata Marinas, NY  
 Mataw Guro Lou Lledo - Zikdoka Amara Arkanis, NJ  
 Master Big John Marquez - Doce Pares Escrima, NJ  
 Master Zack Taco - Balintawak (Teovel), NYC



Master Zack Taco (2nd from left) with Maestro Rico Acosta (4th from left) and Datu Rich Acosta (6th from left) with Balintawak and Kuntaw Kali Kruzada students.

The first hour of the event was set aside for personal one on one introduction, giving everyone a chance to get better acquainted with each other before practice. Mataw Guro Lou Lledo gave an inspirational opening statement and introduced everyone to the Master instructors in attendance.

Master Zack Taco was the first to start the instruction. Assisted by his students, he demonstrated the high-speed

drills and techniques of Teovel's Balintawak. He started off with the basic striking pattern and the corresponding close range blocks and counters for the 12 angles covered. Master Zack then demonstrated various stick locks, disarms and counters to the disarms shown. It was a very impressive demonstration of the close quarter techniques that Balintawak is so famous for, executed with expert speed and precision.

Master Big John Marquez of Doce Pares demonstrated footwork with basic striking, blocking, countering, disarming, locks and counter locks, hand-eye coordination drills called tres-tres and the applications of those drills in sparring with full body gear as well as controlled sparring drill called palakaw or palasot which is executed without protective gear utilizing light strikes to the body. Master Big John was assisted by 4 other Doce Pares instructors who gave everyone a sample of what is taught in the Doce Pares Escrima system.



**L-R:** Doce Pares Instructors Guro Arturo "Buboy" Tolentino, Guro James Benemerito, and Master Big John Marquez (far right) with Mataw Guro Lou Lledo (2nd from right)

Mataw Guro Lou Lledo the Founder of Zikdokan Amara Arkanis followed by introducing everyone to his unique

system, which stems from both his fighting experience and his knowledge of teaching the Filipino martial arts as a University styled physical education course. He gave a discourse on how he has organized the different styles of Filipino martial arts into a clear and logical progression utilizing geometric patterns of striking which can be practiced in simple yet effective drills that can be practiced solo or with a partner. Everyone had a chance to practice with each other and in a lineup with Mataw Guro Lou in a high-speed drill.



Ultimate Eskrima (De Cuerdas) Punong Guro's Walter and Wesley Crisostomo doing a demo

Masters Walter and Wesley Crisostomo of Ultimate Escrima demonstrated the close quarter drills of Decuerdas which employ enganos (fakes) that travel along one line then deviate to another angle sometimes in a single stroke, which capitalizes on holes created in the opponents' defense as they move to defend in a linear manner. Engano's (fakes) were also demonstrated that circle around an opponents' defense strike in unexpected angles landing in unprotected areas.

They both demonstrated a close quarter flow drill in which both participants utilize the checking hand to deflect and parry each others attack while executing fakes and follow

up strikes in a chess-like match. This drill was also shown at near full-speed with protective gear.

Maestro Rico Acosta the Founder of Kuntaw Kali Kruzada covered knife self defense techniques and impressed on everyone the responsibility and discretion that an Filipino martial arts practitioner must employ when practicing with a bladed weapon. Maestro Rico first taught empty hand defenses against a knife, which included interceptions, passing, and weapon control, utilizing joint locks, throws and disarms. Next he covered defenses utilizing a knife that employed the same principles, with follow up slashes and thrusts that set up each successive movement. Everyone had a chance to practice with a partner and experience the effectiveness of these techniques first hand.

Master Spencer Gee introduced everyone to some of the unique aspects of Pananandata Marinas that utilize indigenous weaponry such as the latiko (whip), dakin (ring), and projectile weapons. He first demonstrated some very effective methods of utilizing modern training equipment to safely practice single stick counter strikes to the hand, and everyone had a chance to practice a series of these same counter strike combinations. He then demonstrated some espada y daga and latiko (whip) y daga techniques, and gave a discourse on the various weapon categories taught in Pananandata Marinas.

Everyone in attendance expressed their gratitude to the Masters who taught, and many new bonds were established between different styles and systems. There was an overwhelming display of fellowship during the gathering among all of the practitioners that ranged from Instructors to experienced practitioners and the newly initiated as well. It was a very successful event, which will be held annually in NYC. In 2009 the FMA Gatherings will also tentatively be hosted in both Maryland and New Jersey as well.

Mabuhay ang Filipino Martial Arts!



**L-R:** Master Walter Crisostomo, Master Wesley Crisostomo, Master Spencer Gee, Mataw Guro Lou Lledo, Maestro Rico Acosta, Master Zack Taco, and Datu Rich Acosta

## Students of Amara Arkanis



My name is Rick Argenti I am Mataw Guro Lou Lledo's first American student.

I feel so privileged to be training with Guro, he has the ability to teach you as an individual and still teach the whole class. I know this first hand because I have a learning disability. I was very hard to teach the first couple of years, yet Guro never gave up on me. Most teachers would not have been so patient! Salamat Po! (Thank You Sir)

Guro breaks things down to the simplest detail so that anyone can understand the lesson. It's all about the basics, solid foundation simplify everything so you can internalize what you learned. Also do it a thousand times, don't memorize, just train and you will learn.

In Amara Arkanis you are taught to react, not to think. Guro has evolved all the things he teaches, to make things easier for his students.

Amara Arkanis doesn't have 100 strikes only 12, but we only use 3. No pain, No gain is no longer part of training, now science is the method used to teach techniques and understanding.

Hopefully you will visit us in New Jersey, come on by the gym and say hi! You might just stick around a few years and learn something new!

Salamat Po!  
Rick Argenti

My name is Gary Cleveland. I have been training in the martial arts for 16 years. My primary system is Tae Kwon Do (in which I hold a 3rd Dan) and have been teaching it for 8 years. I met Mataw Guro Lou Lledo in 2004 but did not begin training with him until August 2007. I can honestly say that I regret not starting earlier because I would have experienced the enjoyment that I have learning the effective use of weapons earlier.

In the almost year and a half I have trained with Mataw Guro, I have become a better martial artist and feel much more comfortable in my skills as an instructor. He is more to me than just a gifted instructor, he is a trusted friend. Because of what I've learned, my Tae Kwon Do program is much less structured than it was previously. This has helped me to let go of the "stiffness" that many instructors have when they train in other arts. I will say that it was hard for me to let go of my art at first, but once I began to train consistently with weapons, I found it very hard to remain "fixed".

My training experience has been (and continues to be) an amazing journey. I began to learn so much about myself when I started my martial arts training as a whole.





But with Mataw Guro Lou, I have found how much more I can do. My limits are much less of a concern to me now because It will be some time before I reach my limits. I feel honored to be a student of Mataw Guro Lou because it is only once in a lifetime to train with someone of his caliber. The fact that he has so much knowledge and is so humble speaks volumes of the type of instructor he is. It is my honor and privilege to train with him and the family of students that I consider my extended family.

Sincerely  
Gary L. Cleveland

*"If they did not learn you did not teach"* - Mataw Guro Lou Lledo



It was either my second or third class and I was taken off guard when I heard Manong say that, so simple and so profoundly accurate. I don't think I've even heard Noam Chomsky say anything more applicable or as brilliant. Mataw Guro gets it, gets students, gets teaching, gets the whole "I am as an individual learning" thing. Surprised as I was I almost couldn't believe it. I had the prejudice of martial arts just being how to be efficiently violent, like MMA on TV.

Getting actual experience and reading "Tao of Jeet Kun Do" has really opened my eyes and put me on a fighting path. I know I'll never be Bruce Lee, but my goal is to always be stronger than what I was last week and to see just how far I can get with Filipino martial arts.

When I first met Mataw Guro Lledo there was a heart about him, so to speak. Heart in his steps, heart in his class, heart in the way he showed you how to fight. It wasn't a sell. I felt I had found myself a good teacher and that I had a lot to learn for he was levels and years above me. Later I went to his web site and read about his Stats... I had no idea he accomplished so much. I felt even smaller next to him when I attended my next class.

Warren A. Davenport

### **My Tribute to Mataw Guro Lou Lledo**

By Bill G. Debuque

I first met Mataw Guro Lou Lledo through the courtesy of Punong Guro Greg Alland of Virginia Beach, when the latter invited me to the 2nd Filipino Martial Arts Gathering in Bellmawr, New Jersey ("The Gathering"). The first thing I noticed about Mataw Guro Lou was his demeanor. I had the good fortune of interacting with "old school" Filipino martial artists as far back when I was only about 5 and, there is something in the way Mataw Guro Lou moved which reminded me of



them. I started to observe him more closely during the course of the Gathering.

The next thing that caught my attention was his cat-like demeanor. He moved a little bit more slowly and deliberately than the rest of the Gathering crowd. But my internal warning bells are “telling” me not be deceived with what my eyes are seeing. I was sensing some sort of “unsprung speed and power” in his movements, like a cat or viper about to pounce on its prey – and I cannot explain why. Right there and then, I decided to get to know him better by becoming his student.

As I interacted with him for more than a year now, the breadth of his experience started to dawn on me – studying directly with the likes of Goju Ryu founder, Gogen “The Cat” Yamaguchi, and Moo Duk Kwan Tang Soo Do/Soo Bakh Do Founder, Hwang Kee; competing in International Karate tournaments; refereeing international Karate competitions; stints in military intelligence; handling VIP security; performing high-level law enforcement work, etc. The sources of the “unsprung speed and power” I have initially sensed slowly unfolded before me.

Mataw Guro Lou, however, always tries to gloss over these achievements when you are having discussions with him. The feeling you get is that these things are “no big deals” to him. Instead, it seems that his passion always lies with Filipino Martial Arts Education as a venue for individual development. As a result, his favorite “mantras” have always been: *“I want you to become teachers and not fighters.” “It is not the style but the person.”*

I initially had a hard time adapting to this mindset due to my own survivalist approach to the martial arts. My personal motto have always been: *“In a street fight, the second placer ends up in a box.”* As time went on, however, I started to realize where Mata Guro Lou is coming from.

As General Douglas MacArthur famously said; in his 1951 farewell address to the US Congress: *“... old soldiers never die; they just fade away.”* But before they fade away, old warriors always try to pass on the lessons they have learned in life to the next generation of warriors, in order to teach them (again, in the words of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, in his 1962 farewell address to the US Military Academy Cadets at West Point): *“... to be proud and unbending in honest failure, but humble and gentle in success; not to substitute words for action; not to seek the path of comfort, but to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge; to learn to stand up in the storm, but to have compassion on those who fall; to master yourself before you seek to master others; to have a heart that is clean, a goal that is high; to learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep; to reach into the future, yet never neglect the past; to be serious, yet never take yourself too seriously; to be modest so that you will remember the simplicity of true greatness; the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.”*

Studying Martial Arts for some time now, I have had the opportunity to train in many different forms of self defense. Beginning my martial art career in the Korean art of Tang Soo Do, I was given the opportunity to train with a wide array of instructors from a couple of different systems such as Wing Chun Kung Fu, and Brazilian Jujitsu. Learning and experiencing the different systems of fighting had encouraged me to continue and pursue martial arts through curiosity. I was in search of an art that not only taught you



how to defend yourself in the streets, but provide you with the wisdom and understanding that could be applied in everyday life; that is when I met Mataw Guro Luis Rafael Lledo of the Filipino martial art, Zikdokan Amara-Arkanis.

When I first met Mataw Guro Lou, I was afraid that I would not be able to understand the complexity of Filipino Martial Arts since I have been used to many open handed systems. He teaches the class to train both hands in order to develop the coordination and strength required in engagement without the non-purposeful movements or “Flowery Movements.” The angles that you strike with in weapons, are the same angles that you can strike with in open hand. This concept of there being a connection between weapon and empty hand has made my training much more simple and effective; though almost common sense, it was still a concept that I had not heard of in my prior studies, mainly because weapons were not the main focus of the arts. Mataw Guro’s teaching methods are intended to make you react with instinct as supposed to what he calls a “Choice Reaction.” One evening we were training and Mataw Guro presented the class with the most profound statement saying, “I can teach you hundreds of techniques and strikes but it only takes one strike to take down your opponent. You can practice a hundred techniques one time but if you practice one technique one hundred times, that one technique is more deadly.” Having heard what was said that night had taught me to become a better fighter and student. Due to my mentality of fighting from the past, I have been so used to learning so many techniques that it took so long to even get good at one; every move I made was a choice reaction. Now with the mentality of simplicity in the art, I am able to build a stronger foundation.

Following my curiosity in martial arts has led me to a wonderful and encouraging teacher. Mataw Guro has taught me so much when it comes to life and martial arts. You can study as many different systems as you’d like but the knowledge you gain only goes as far as that of your teacher. You may feel satisfied or dissatisfied with a style or system but like Mataw Guro always says, “It’s not the style, but the person.”

Alan Flordeliza



My name is Bernie Griffin. I have the privilege of training under Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo and his amazing art known as, Zikdokan Amara Arkanis System.

I began my martial art training in 1989. I have been trained in Tang Soo Do, Tae Kwon Do and Isshin Sorin Ji Ryu Okinawa Te. I met Shihan in September of 2004 at another school that I was looking into at the time. Because of my interest in weapon training, I attended a class one night for the first time with Shihan. I knew from that moment that I would continue to train with him.

Because of work, school and family responsibilities, I had to stop training for quite some time. One night I ran into Shihan and he informed me about another school where he was training. I was very interested and knew I needed to get back into it. Because of the great family values he believes in, I was welcomed back and accepted into class like I never left. Even though I was away from training for a while, I felt like I picked up right where I left off.

Because of his dedication to his art, Shihan always found a way for his students to train. Even when we didn't have a school, he trained us in his backyard. His wife would cook and we would later spend time together afterward eating and talking. It always felt like a family atmosphere.

I have never met a man so passionate about his training. Every conversation was like an education of his art. It is truly amazing. He always explains in detail about each technique so you have a complete understanding about his art. That is part of his passion about teaching.

I am so lucky and proud to still be a part of his Filipino martial arts education. I have learned so much under Shihan.

Bernie Griffin



Words cannot completely explain how much I enjoy training in Amara Arkanis. I am very lucky to have found and train with Mataw Guro Lou Lledo in the last 2 years. His wealth of experience and knowledge in the martial arts is very apparent once you meet him and specially, when you take one of his classes. After my years in training in Tae Kwon Do, he explained many things I have been doing and opened my eyes to the differences between Cultural, Sport and Reality training.

Here is a man who comes from a Military and Law Enforcement background, and became a professor in a University to teach Martial Arts under the Physical Education Department. He had to truly 'Break down' and 'Simplify' the different martial arts and styles for a college curriculum. Imagine he had to teach hundreds of students each semester and each year he was in the University. His Zikdokan school of Karate had spawned many Champions, thanks to his teachings and great coaching. Because he is a Veteran of the Military, Law Enforcement and VIP Security, Mataw Guro Lou's system of Amara Arkanis is a Fighting Art, based on real world experiences. It's practicality and simplicity is what makes it a very strong combat system which is a big difference in comparison to other styles. This is also the reason why he was able to teach different Law Enforcement agencies like the NBI of the Philippines (equivalent to the FBI).

He always says, "I just Love to Teach" and would rather be called a Master Teacher of Martial Arts rather than being called a Master of one style. He is very proud of the Rank he achieved on his own effort rather than be appointed titles, which makes him very humble. Unfortunately there are too many martial arts practitioners out there

who is too quick to get a belt and promotion, that the world ends up with so many young Grand Masters not only in Filipino Martial Arts but in other arts. That's why in Amara Arkanis, Mataw Guro Lou emphasizes "Slow to learn, Long to forget" so we may truly learn each lesson and understand the Wisdom behind a technique. You have to learn step by step and not jump from A, B, C to G then Z, or you will miss vital lessons.

I have also learned that there is a difference between Instructors and Teachers. Mataw Guro Lou teaches his students to be teachers not just fighters. He teaches Filipino Martial Arts Education and wants us to be True Black Belts in Filipino Martial Arts and not just in one system. It is our goal to learn the 4 major systems (Kruzada, Siniwali, Redondo, Abanico) before we can call ourselves a true Black Belt. It is also good to hear him say that we should 'Evolve' his teachings as we progress, that we should not limit ourselves or stop learning. Many Filipino martial arts practitioners out there are stuck in their own partifular styles and are stagnant, which Mataw Guro Lou is trying to change. He wants to bring Arnis de Mano to the Next Level and evolve its teachings, just like he did with Amara Arkanis.

I'm truly blessed to be training under such a Master Teacher of the Martial Arts. Mataw Guro Lou has made me a better fighter and inspired me to be a teacher. My journey in Amara Arkanis has just begun and I look forward to learning more in years to come.



Sincerely  
Christian L. Herrera



I would like to take this time to express the effect that Mataw Guro Luis Rafael Lledo has had not only on my martial arts training but my life as well. Affectionally referred to as Mataw Guro, he often says *"It's not the Style, but the Person that makes all the difference."*

If all that is taking place in the training hall is interaction without wisdom, then an essential part of the art is being missed, left out or lost. To be a complete martial artist, the wisdom must be there. The same is true of life in that it flows much more smoothly when wisdom is applied. These are but a few of the things that come to mind when I reflect on the time that I have been fortunate enough to spend as one of Mataw Guro's student.

With Greatest Appreciation  
David H. McMillan

## What Amara Arkanis Means to Me

Guro Tristan Jay Mendoza

I have always been interested in the martial arts since I was young, but I never had the opportunity to study with an instructor. So when learning about Mataw Guro Lou and his martial arts classes ten years ago, I grabbed it and never let go ever since.

Frankly speaking, if I never met Mataw Guro Lou and joined Amara Arkanis (then known as Zikdokan), I surely would have been one of the delinquent youth of our town. Thanks to the art, the organization and my teacher, I learned how to become an asset to the community, instead of a liability. For Mataw Guro Lou and Amara Arkanis did not only develop my fighting skills, but more importantly, it contributed to my psychological, social and even spiritual development. I also learned how to become flexible and how to handle different kinds of situations.

Looking back when I was in high school, the whole week was not enough for me to practice. I was practicing with the varsity team of the university under Mataw Guro Lou that time. Even though I couldn't compete in the College division alongside the varsity team members, it never became a reason for me to miss a training session.

Now, despite my hectic working schedule, I see to it that I go to our town on Sundays so I can teach students not just the Filipino fighting arts, but also skills that will help them survive this thing called "life." I hope that our students will also learn what I have learned and let them find ways to improve what they have learned from us, so that they can share it to next generation, thus creating a cycle of development.

I owe a lot to Amara Arkanis. By teaching what Mataw Guro Lou has taught me, I hope to be able to pay it forward and be able to inspire the next generation as well.



I first started training with Mataw Guro Lou Lledo in March of 2005. I had never had any training in any form of martial arts. The original reason for going to his class was for my daughter. I wanted her to be introduced to martial arts as a form of exercise as well as a means of self-defense. In today's world it is very important for a young girl to be able to protect herself.

After watching the class, I became interested in the class and joined. Mataw Guro Lou is very patient. His

motto is "slow to learn, long to forget." Well, I am a very intense person when I study something. I wanted to know all of the moves and to perfect them as best as I could. My only problem is that I can only practice with Mataw Guro on Saturdays. Class meets twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Since I live an hour away from the class I can only go on Saturdays.

I do practice on my own but it is not the same as having input from Mataw Guro as well as sparring with my class. In September 2005, the New Jersey State



Championship was held, I had never competed before but Mataw Guru thought I was ready. I took first place in the championship as New Jersey State Champion. The National Championship was scheduled for May 2006.

With as many practices as I could make, Mataw Guru began preparing me for the National Championship. I was very excited. Never in a million years did I think I would be ready for such an event, but I had a strong foundation. That foundation came from Mataw Guru Lou. He teaches so that we move like black belts even though we are not. In the National Championship I competed against two 5th degree black belts and won. They had been studying their art for at least ten years. I had studied for only fourteen months. I won the National Championship.

Studying with Mataw Guru Lou has changed my perspective on life as a whole. I have learned when to walk away to live another day. I have learned how to pace myself. I have learned discipline. It has been an honor and a privilege to study with Mataw Guru Lou.

Thank you  
Renee A. Messina

It is with great joy that I share with you my experiences regarding Guro Lou Lledo.

I first came to know Guro approximately 5 or 6 years ago, when I was a karate student, training very hard in a school at which Guro was a guest instructor. In addition to being a master of the Filipino martial art style Amara Arkanis, Guro Lledo is a Shihan rank master of Goju Ryu Karate.

At that time, I was struck by the mere presence of the man. Guro is not large in stature, but a giant with regard to the aura around him. Yet, despite the presence he projects, I was equally impressed by the open hearted kindness which is ever-present and always apparent with Guro. Moreover, his teaching style and breadth of knowledge proved inspirational. His classes quickly became the most popular in the school, overshadowing the school's owner!

Unfortunately for me, Guro, or Shihan as I knew him then, left the karate school not long after I joined, to teach Amara Arkanis. Thankfully, we at least remained in infrequent contact, as I was privileged to care for him as his chiropractor.

Now, several years later, I have discontinued my karate training. After receiving a black belt, I was left feeling like I learned a variety of techniques with little to no unity or cohesiveness joining them. I also had sustained a multitude of injuries from hard sparring. And so, I began looking for another art that might provide me with a seamless system of weapon and empty hand techniques that I could learn in a safe and enjoyable fashion. As fate would have it, Guro entered my office for treatment at precisely that





point in time and invited me as his guest to an Amara Arkanis seminar. One class and I was sold.

Guro teaches in such a manner that you don't even realize you are training. Classes are alive and fun. Movement flows naturally, seemingly without effort, in his presence.

While I am very new to the Filipino martial arts, I am no stranger to martial art masters, having spent several years in aikido prior to my karate training. At that time, I was fortunate enough to train with the highest ranking aikido masters in the U.S. who apprenticed directly under the Founder of aikido. So, I recognize mastery and genius when I see it. Guro Lou Lledo has both. I have no doubt martial artists will enjoy his articles in your fine publication.

**Ronald J. Parente, DC, CCIC**

Certified Chiropractic Insurance Consultant, Independent Examiner,  
Peer Reviewer and Impairment/Disability Evaluator

1236 Brace Road, Suite B  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034  
856-354-2005 Phone  
856-354-2095 Fax

Kumusta

My name is Linda D. Roach. I train with Punong Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo, in his Zikdoka Amara Arkanis System. I have the privilege of being a Provisional Blackbelt - Sagisag na Itim.

I began my martial arts training in 1984. During my first 20 years, I've trained in Tang Soo Do, Tae Kwon Do and Goju Ryu. Although I was taught hand and kick techniques, Kata's and very basic history; I felt as if there was something missing.

As I trained, I had a growing passion for learning weapons. But, I felt that if I wasn't getting what I felt I needed from unarmed training; how would I get the [proper] armed training.

I then met the man who was about to change everything I knew about the martial arts. I met 'Shihan' at a fellow student's karate-themed birthday party. I knew in that instant that *"I MUST,"* train with him.

I had the honor of beginning my Filipino martial arts training in November, 2003. I had learned and understood more in my first year with him than in ALL of my previous years combined.

I also learned that Shihan has trained in the martial arts for as long as I've been alive (nee 1964). He has trained in 7 of the major martial arts and 12 of the 108 Filipino martial arts schools in the Philippines. He has combined all of his knowledge into his Zikdoka Amara Arkanis.

Shihan has accomplished everything in the martial arts that I have only dreamed of doing. I am truly blessed to be his student.



Maraming Salamat Po  
Mantas Linda D Roach  
Mt. Holly, NJ, USA

## **Simpler is Faster and More Lethal**

By Phil Weathers

One does not have to talk to Guro Lou for very long to become aware of his passion for teaching martial arts. After more than forty years, his knowledge of these arts is equally obvious even though he is sometimes rather quiet.

Part of his passion is for simplification. While he absolutely wants lots of practice from his students, he wants that practice to be of simple, well-understood and better-executed moves. Simpler is faster and more lethal. Advanced techniques are just refinements of the basics.

Many of the moves Guro Lou teaches are based on studies of many arts and what they have in common. This gives a focus on what everybody knows to be effective while avoiding exotic and rarely useful techniques. Some moves are adapted for both empty hand and weapons.

More than anything, Guro Lou wants his students to understand “the wisdom of the arts.” This is the strategic thinking that recognizes problems before they develop so that “when the attack comes, you are not there.” It is situational awareness during combat. It is the spillover of insights between martial arts and daily life in both directions.

Despite my own experience teaching math and WINGTSUN, Guro Lou’s ability to teach startles me. Repeatedly I have seen him take an entire large group of novices from scared of the sticks to circling weaving strikers in an hour or two. There are differences in performance, but everybody is doing a moderately complex new move with enthusiasm and surprise at themselves.

I began working out with Guro Lou in February of 2006. Through sheer happenstance; I had met one of his students, Linda Roach, in a restaurant. After a few years away from martial arts, I was ready to start up again, at least mentally.

I am fifty-five years old. About a year into my workouts with Guro Lou, I developed blood clots in the arteries leading to my lungs (pulmonary embolisms). I began working out again with Guro Lou about a month after I got out of the hospital. It took me probably around three to five months to get back to my former performance level. Guro Lou paid careful attention to my state during workouts and slowed me down many times. There were never any real problems. Sometimes being slow is essential.

Guro Lou does look to the nature of each student to formulate an approach for that person depending on their strengths and weaknesses. He solicits questions and looks after the happiness of his students in order to keep them working out. I do not know how I could have found a better martial arts teacher.





**GURO MARK LLEDO**  
**AMARA ARKANIS**  
1974 : 2008

## **Punong Guro Mark Lledo of Amara Arkanis**

“The man who would have been FMA Master”

September 17, 1974 - November 7, 2008



Mark Lledo led a charmed life. His Guardian Angel was always looking over him. He cheated death three times. The first time was when he was not yet even born.

1974 was a very busy year for Louelle Lledo. Besides his job and family responsibilities, he was a member of the Philippine Karate Association's Technical Committee that was conducting a workshop for candidates to be tournament officials in connection with the First International Invitational Karate Championships to be held in the Philippines. It will be the first time that Karate Masters from Japan, Okinawa and Korea and Karate leaders from other parts of the world will all be gathered in the Philippines.

One of Louelle Lledo's duties was to give seminars and clinics to the different regional chapters of the Philippine Karate Association and to help train the regional and national Karate teams. His busy schedule caused him to sometimes neglect his family chores.

To make it up with his wife Flora, Louelle took her out for movies and dinner one night in September. Flora at that time was just days away from giving birth, a very crucial and critical period in pregnancy. On their way home Louelle decided to take the Lerma Underpass in downtown Manila. On account of Flora's condition, he did not want to take the chance of playing tag with the jeepneys that ply that route. Jeepney drivers are famous for not paying attention to the traffic laws protecting pedestrians. Numerous accidents prompted the city to construct the underpass.

Louelle and Flora had taken that route several times without any problem. They were almost at the end of the underpass when Louelle and Flora were startled by several gang-bangers who came out of the shadows armed with belt buckles, lead pipes and knives. Sensing the danger, Louelle positioned Flora behind him against the wall to protect her from attack from behind. With Flora's condition flight was not an option and fight was a questionable choice. Louelle's only recourse was to bribe their way out. He

offered them his watch and the little money he had left in his pocket, hoping that the gang will leave them alone. He introduced himself, explaining that he lives in the area and that his wife is pregnant.

But the gang wanted more. They just lost a confrontation with another gang and wanted to take out their life's frustrations on Louelle and Flora. The gang had felonious assault in their minds. It was a scene that daunted, even Louelle. Louelle knew that he can take care of himself, but with Flora's state of pregnancy he was afraid that she may get hurt and his baby who was not yet even born.

Suddenly one of the gang-bangers swung a belt on Louelle which he deftly dodged. However, Flora was hit on the face with the belt buckle. With prayer and determination the usually peaceful Louelle turned into the personification of an angry devil out to annihilate mankind. Louelle fought like he has never fought before. During training and demonstrations he had disarmed attackers of their knives and sticks. But this is not a demonstration but the real thing where the outcome may be life or death. He had to change strategy. There will be no time to disarm, he must make every strike and kick count and do as much damage as possible. To distract his attention some of the attackers were going after Flora. Despite his efforts to shield Flora, she was hit a few times.

Louelle was outnumbered but the gang-bangers were outfought.. In answer to their prayers, a street sweeping crew and the *Barangay Tanod-bayan* (community security force) saw the commotion and came to Louelle and Flora's rescue. But not after Louelle did severe damage to the gang. One broke a rib, one broke his knee, another broke his arm, while the leader had his voice box severely injured after Louelle grabbed his head and delivered a reverse punch to the neck. The gang found out the hard way that Louelle was a one man wrecking crew. Realizing their disadvantageous position, the gang took off in different directions. Louelle and Flora went home with some scratches and bruises but no serious injuries. Concerned, but without financial means, they can not go to the doctor to check if the unborn child was hurt.

Ten days later, on September 17, 1974, Mark was born surviving the first test on his then unborn life.

Mark grew up a normal kid, but the trauma his parents went through became his motivation to learn martial arts. As a youngster he watched his father teach martial arts. He imitated the movements that he saw and started training on his own. A natural-born athlete, Mark excelled in unarmed and armed fighting. Like his father, he made black belt when he turned 18 years old.



As a child, Mark Lledo imitated what he saw and started training on his own. He is shown doing a roundhouse kick against a concrete post.



Mark with his first trophy as a green belt.



When Louelle felt that Mark was ready, he was allowed to join the class. He trained Mark harder than any of his students, preparing him to eventually be his successor.



Mark Lledo practicing his high kick (left) and doing the Sanchin Kata (right).

Carrying martial arts weapon, such as a stick, is prohibited by law so Louelle made Mark train hard in unarmed combat. Louelle made speed, power and accuracy Mark's hallmark of training. Mark excelled in Karate like his father. He won his share of medals and trophies in tournaments. But his concentration in training was in free-style sparring. Mark's style of fighting was considered rough and aggressive in the tournament circuit. Oftentimes he was warned by referees to have more control, to the point of being threatened with disqualification. He started to shy and eventually stay away from

tournaments considering it too restrictive. He preferred the all-out sabakan or free style sparring. Mark sparred with Louelle's mentors, senior students and training partners. He trained hard getting ready to live up to his father's aspirations and expectations.



Left: Mark Lledo doing an exercise to improve his balance and weight transfer.  
Right: Mark Lledo (during his promotion to Black Belt) being congratulated by movie action star, Roberto Gonzales, 8th Degree Black Belt in Okinawan Shorin-ryu Karate as Louelle Lledo looks on.

Mark excelled in most anything he partook in. With the blood of a musician he inherited from his father who plays the drums, and his mother who plays the guitar, Mark started writing and playing his own music while still in the elementary grade. Mark formed a band with his friends and classmates which they called "Gospel and Sermon". They played in the choir of the St. Gregory Catholic Academy in Indang, Cavite and various schools and town events.

Besides music, Mark excelled in school. He graduated with honors in the elementary grades allowing him to be accepted at the prestigious Cavite State University Experimental Science High School, which was exclusive for honor students.

After graduating with honors in High School, he moved to Manila to pursue higher education. Without a leader his band "Gospel and Sermon" fell apart.

Upon the "suggestion" of his mother and inspired by his uncle Lester and his grandmother Ann, Mark took up Nursing at the Family Clinic College of Nursing where on account of his academic excellence he was accepted in the elite "Dean's List". He graduated with a degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing and passed the Board and became a Registered Nurse in 1995.

While studying, Mark's love for music again came to the forefront. He put up a band called "Natal Spell" with his friends and classmates. Mark composed their music. He also created the arrangements and whenever time permitted, played professionally in clubs and in parties. Their musical acumen and savvy were recognized when they won the championship in an annual "Battle of the Band".

Mark juggled his time in music, studying and martial arts training. Naturally gifted, Mark was able to merge and find a common denominator in his three fields of endeavor. As a nursing student, he learned the functions of the parts of the body and how it influences and work with the rest of the body. As a martial artist he utilized his knowledge of the human anatomy and physiology to place the proper blow at the

corresponding target. The rhythm in his music aided him in the timing and flow of techniques, that work equally well in helping patients and disposing of his training partners.

Mark was so concentrated in all the positive and good things in life. He was determined to be a successful musician, nurse and martial artist and not necessarily in that order. But he neglected some basic things like good food. Engrossed in his studies of nursing and the martial arts and in writing and playing his music, he did not bother too much about the food he puts in his body. Mark eats wherever he finds it convenient which most of the time was on the sidewalk stands where sanitation is not a consideration. Mark paid a dear price.

He contracted a rare type of liver viral infection. At first he dismissed the abdominal pain as an ordinary everyday body ache and tried to sleep it off. After two days the pain became worse making him too weak to even get out of bed. He was rushed to the hospital where doctors tried desperately to work against the infection with high dosages of antibiotics. For a week Mark was confined in the Intensive Care Unit not being able to hold in anything, even the liquid food he was being intravenously fed. After a week Mark was skin and bones, losing all the muscles he developed in training. Mark's condition seemed to worsen and the doctors were feeling that only a miracle can save Mark's young life. Even the most potent medicine did not seem to help Mark fight the infection.

The doctors gave up and told his parents that Mark needs a miracle. But his parents will not give up. Their belief in God was stronger than all the medicine man can develop. They held a constant vigil of prayers for the miracle that Mark needs. His parents' faith for a miracle from God, pulled Mark through and in a few weeks was back to being the energetic, fun-loving, hard-working nursing student, martial arts practitioner and enterprising musician that he wants to be.

Again, his Guardian Angel came through. For the second time Mark cheated death.

Months later Mark was back to his old self. The experience made him a better man. He became more aware of how fragile life is.

His music reflected the happiness, aspirations and fun loving nature of a young man. His martial arts training became more intense, geared for discipline and self-development. Mark's nursing practice became a personal crusade to help people in their time of need for consolation and healing.

But as a young man he wanted more in life, which being a nurse can not provide. He decided to give up being a full time nurse and be an entrepreneur. With the help of his siblings, they joined the "band wagon" and established their own internet coffee shop they called "The Kyolsters". Mark's band, which included both his sisters, provided live music.

It was a very successful venture. But all good things must come to an end. Some members of the band, after passing their American Nursing Certification, decided to migrate to the United States to practice their profession. Without the band, Mark felt an empty feeling in the business venture. After giving up the Coffee Shop, Mark joined the stressful but financially rewarding world of commerce and high-priced property sale and real estate. He was featured in a magazine for young successful professionals in an article

entitled “Man of Substance”. The profession called for Mark to be in the hustle and bustle night life in the city.

One night, Mark and his sister Kristine were on their way home when from the shadows emerged seven predators led by a jilted suitor who had been stalking Kristine. But Mark and Kristine were not going to be an easy prey. A kick dropped the one in front of Mark. Another kick dropped another. As he was going for another he felt he was hit from behind. Not aware that he was stabbed, Mark kept fighting until he got weak from loss of blood. He finally fell on his knees. Leaving him for dead, the group took off running unable to abduct Kristine, which was their possible motive.

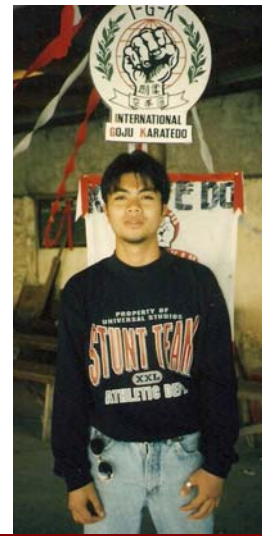
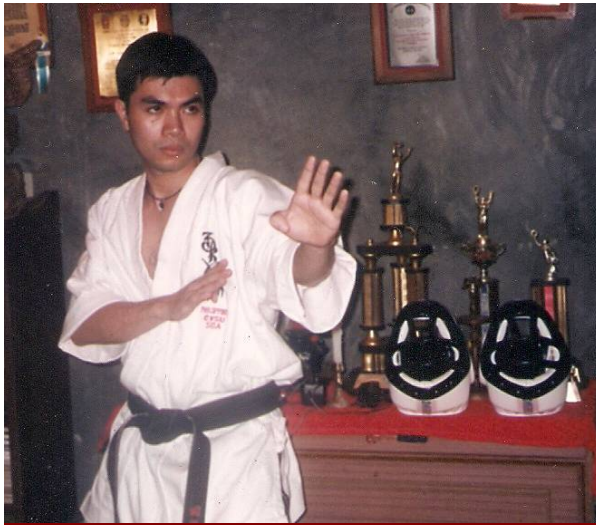
Kristine rushed Mark to the hospital where he underwent surgery, first to stop the bleeding and to repair the torn nerves and muscles. Mark lost too much blood and required blood transfusion. The doctors were afraid Mark may not survive. But Mark has cheated death twice and his parents knew that with the act of God he will cheat death again one more time.

Mark’s Guardian Angel was busy at work. This was the third time Mark Lledo cheated death.

After Mark left the hospital he recuperated in Indang, Cavite which he lovingly refers to as “the upland”.

While recuperating, Mark did a lot of soul searching and re-evaluation not of his life but his training in the martial arts.

He is a very formidable fighter whether in armed or unarmed combat. He had his share of medals and trophies in tournaments, but in the end he lost interest in rules-restrictive competitions.



Mark Lledo with some of the trophies he won in Karate tournaments.





Mark Lledo with Louelle Lledo, doing the wing hand movement and with some students.



As a youngster he trained with Master Porfirio Lanada.

He engaged in free-style sparring in the gym where there were no rules. In sabakan he concentrated on power hitting. He outfought all his training partners. But there was one very big drawback in his training. He had been fighting only one opponent at a time. With a single opponent, he was fighting like a horse with blinders concentrating only with the

attack coming from the front. He did not need peripheral vision because he can see the opponent at all times.

Mark saw the weakness in this type of training. He developed his own type of sabakan. This training program was kept a secret that only he, his father Louelle, and closest martial arts friends were allowed to join and witness. He sparred with his three closest training partners, only this time all at the same time. He trained in “real world” scenario, combining armed and unarmed tactics.

At first his training partners were a little apprehensive for fear that Mark or



Guro Mark Lledo, training with his father Matawguo Louelle Lledo.



that they will get hurt in the uncontrolled manner of engagement. Mark insisted that it will be better to get hurt and bruised in training than to get hurt and die in the streets. He always argued that he got stab due to the fact that he was not “aware of the bigger picture”. He lost track of the other attackers because he was dwelling on his opponents, one at a time.

Realizing the benefits of the training, his partners thereafter all seriously participated. It became a round-robin type of sparring. To give their training “street realism”, Mark refused to use protective gear. He insisted that protective gear gives the trainees a false sense of security because they can not feel the blow and they disregard defensive tactics. Eye gouging, kicks to the groin and strikes to the neck were “controlled”. Louelle also demanded they use padded sticks, rubber knives, head gear, and groin protector.

It was an unorthodox type of training that eventually became part of the teaching curriculum of Amara Arkanis in the Classification of Honor (Uri ng Karangalan) stage. Louelle Lledo gave it the term “Salida” (rushing downhill or exiting using momentum and force).

In Amara Arkanis, Salida means getting out of situation successfully without getting hurt. It was a course that entailed armed and unarmed fighting against one, then two, then three, then four and lastly five opponents for a total fight time of 30 minutes. There are no rules except the use of head gear, groin protector, padded sticks and rubber knives. Those who will pass will be promoted to the Uri ng Karangalan (Classification of Honor) and those who will fail will be retained in the Uri ng Kagitingan (Classification of Steadfastness). So far, only Mark and his training partners have undergone the “Salida” training, but none of them have been promoted to Uri ng Karangalan for lack of time-in-grade in their present rank at the time.

Besides his father, Mark sought instructions from the best teachers, such as Rodel Dagooc of International Modern Arnis of the Philippines, Ciok Glaraga of Kalaki, Yaming and Arnis, Yuli Romo of the Philippine Panantukan Pendakali Stick Boxing Society and Mark Santos of ARMAS. He also trained with Ed Cayetano and George Artencio (his father’s Tai Chi Chuan teachers) and Emmanuel Querubin and Rodrigo Espiritu of Sikaran Pilipinas. His grand father’s (Delfin Bernarte) motto “strike fast, strike hard and strike deep” became Mark’s battle cry.

Mark developed his own version of “awareness training.” Using only his imagination, he performed his strategies and tactics while blindfolded, combining maneuvers from both armed and unarmed techniques.



Mark Lledo with Ciok Glaraga of Kalaki, Yaming and Arnis.

To make it more interesting during training sessions he restricted his movements by having a partner pull on his belt. By so doing, he developed his balance and learned to better use body mechanics and weight transfer. When he was younger, Mark witnessed his father trained this way.

Training with multiple opponents became Mark's routine. He still engaged on a one-on-one sparring but the emphasis of his training was "defense against the opponents that he can not see". Mark really developed into an all around fighter. His personal training method was described by his father as exhaustive and extreme.



Mark Lledo trained with Rodel "Smoking Sticks" Dagooc (left) and Yuli Romo (in undershirt), shown above training with his father Louelle Lledo.

For the first time Mark understood the principle of one-strike-one-kill that his father insisted should be the driving force in his training. To achieve this ability, Mark concentrated in "intuitive power strikes" to end the fight in one, preferably the first strike, before the opponent can attack.

Of equal importance, Mark developed to be a good teacher. Aware that teaching is also learning, after each training session he lets his students attack him at random, sometimes all at the same time. To the students this was fun time, to Mark it was preparation in evasion and prevention from being hit in street fighting against multiple attackers. Because the attacks are unstructured, Mark learned how to react to different situations.

In 2000, Mark was promoted from Pansamantalang Guro (Provisionary Teacher) to Guro (Teacher), Uri ng Kagitingan (Classification of Steadfastness) Ika-4 na Antas, Sagisag na Itim may bandang kulay puti, ginto, at langit (4th Degree Black, white gold, and blue braided Sash) in Amara Arkanis.

When Louelle, Flora and Kathlou Lledo migrated to the United States in 2002, Mark with the assistance of Louelle's other senior students, was left to head the Zikdoka School of Amara Arkanis in the Philippines.



In 2002, leadership of the Zikdokan School of Amara Arkanis (including the Kiwanis project of teaching the martial arts to the children of Indang, Cavite) was left to Guro Mark Lledo (5th from left front row) and the other seniors (to Mark Lledo's right). Matawguuro Louelle Lledo is to the left of Guro Mark Lledo with Master Rodel "Smoking Sticks" Dagooc and the officials of the Kiwanis International of Indang, Cavite.

In 2004, Mark's younger sister Kathlou took an extended vacation in the Philippines to finish her course at the La Salle College of Mass Communication. While in the Philippines, Kathlou teamed up with her brother and his new friends and resurrected Mark's band, but this time they named it "Timog". When they are not playing live at different clubs they were writing jingles for advertising agencies or training in the fighting arts. After Kathlou graduated she returned to the United States. Again mark gave up the band.



Mark Lledo training with younger sister Kathlou Lledo.

In 2005 and 2008, Mark visited his father's Amara Arkanis School in New Jersey. Louelle's students were fascinated with Mark, whose expertise in the martial arts was a spitting image of Louelle. Mark's teaching and playing style was an exact copy of his father. He assisted his father in giving clinics and seminars. When Louelle was not available to teach, Mark takes over, without "skipping a beat".





While in New Jersey, Punong Guro Mark Lledo assisted his father Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo (back turned to camera) in seminars and workshop.

Unfortunately the dream never saw fulfillment.

All good things must come to an end. On November 7, 2008, by order from above, Mark Lledo's Guardian Angel, which had been busy all of 34 years was recalled, for reasons we yet have to understand. Mark Lledo went to bed without his Guardian Angel and passed away peacefully in his sleep.

Mark's untimely passing away is a big lost to Amara Arkanis, his family and friends in particular, and the Filipino Martial Arts in general.

In a magazine article about Mark, entitled "Man of Substance", he was asked "how do you want to be remembered?" Mark answered "I want to be remembered as someone who has contributed something to society and someone successful in his own field."

Mark has contributed to society by teaching the martial arts to children who needs discipline and direction, in projects like the Kiwanis International Annual Martial Arts Festival of Indang, Cavite. His legacy will live on through the countless practitioners who will be reached by Amara Arkanis. He achieved success not only in the martial arts but also in his music with his umpteen original compositions. If the number of the people who grieved his passing away is a gauge of his success and contribution to society, Mark was a huge success.

Mark to me, was not only a friend and a student, but the son I did not have, "Rest in Peace Mark." When you are not too busy making music in heaven with the other angels, check out Michael the Archangel. He is the best sword player of all, and you may learn something new.

In April 2008, before Mark left for the Philippines, Louelle promoted him to Punong-guro (Head Teacher) with the rank of Ika-5 Antas, Sagisag na Itim may bandang kulay puti, ginto, langit at dugo (5th Degree Black, white, gold, blue and red braided Sash). Together they worked on this Amara Arkanis Training Manual. While in the United States, Louelle continued Mark's preparation to one day be the successor to the Amara Arkanis (Sistemang Praksiyon) hierarchy.



Punong Guro Mark Lledo and Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo demonstrate two ways of wielding the knife.

*Energy can Change form - But it can never die  
The energy that was Mark Lledo has changed form  
But he will never die in Amara Arkanis*



## An artwork in tribute of Punong Guro Mark Lledo

By Guro Felipe Penales of Amara Arkanis



**Amara Arkanis Mantas (seniors).**

**Top right in meditative pose:** Matawguero Louelle Lledo.

**Extreme Left:** Punong Guro Mark Lledo

**From L-R:** Guro Tristan Mendoza, Guro Felipe Penales, Guro Julio Penales and Guro Isaac Vida. Not in picture is Guro Nickie Esmero.

**A Tribute to *Punong Guro Mark Lledo***  
(17 September 1974 - 7 November 2008)  
By Amara Arkanis - Punong Guro Nickie C. Esmero



The Filipino martial arts community mourned the loss of its beloved brother, Punong Guro Mark Lledo, Chief Instructor of Amara Arkanis International in the

Philippines and only son of the organization's founder, Mataw Guro Lou Lledo, who is now based in New Jersey, USA. A tribute was held on December 6-7, 2008 at the Lledo abode in Indang, Cavite, Philippines to commemorate the legacy of Mark.

The first day (December 6) saw selected martial artists from different organizations, relatives and members of the Kiwanis Club of Indang - Walang Tinag gather together to pay homage to the memory of Mark. A program was held in his honor.



The banner used during the tribute.

Videos that gave a glimpse of Mark's colorful life were first presented to the public. This was highlighted by the presentation of Amara Arkanis and Sword Stick Society International's instructional videos, where Mataw Guro Lou, alongside Punong Guro Mark, presented the latest basic and advanced techniques and forms of the system. These were just some of the outputs of Mataw Guro Lou and Punong Guro Mark's research, planning and

collaboration during the latter's visit to New Jersey during the early part of 2008.

Mataw Guro Lou first welcomed all the guests and thanked them for taking the time to pay their respects to Punong Guro Mark's memory. He also shared some of his more notable personal experiences with his son, especially during the time when the two of them were working on the finer points of Amara Arkanis as a martial arts education system.

Mr. Teddy Hernando, Immediate Past President of Kiwanis Club of Indang - Walang Tinag and proponent of the arnis outreach program of the Club (facilitated by Amara Arkanis), then gave his inspirational message. He related to the public Punong Guro Mark's achievements as a Kiwanian and likewise gave the public an idea of Mark's personal side, as his nephew. He lamented the loss of one of the club's most inspiring members and the big shoes that need to be filled in within the Amara Arkanis organization. He concluded by urging the Amara Arkanis members to continue what Punong Guro Mark has started, particularly the arnis outreach program, and likewise assured that he and the rest of Kiwanis Club of Indang-Walang Tinag will remain one of Amara Arkanis' steadfast supporters.

Afterwards, Master Rodel "Smoking Sticks" Dagooc, renowned martial arts hall of famer and one of Punong Guro Mark's arnis instructors, shared anecdotes, as well as his grief on the loss of one of his favorite students. He then reiterated his commitment to help pursue Mataw Guro Lou and Punong Guro Mark's initiatives for Amara Arkanis. He has graciously accepted the role as one of the group's technical advisers and even indicated that he was honored by the invitation. He assured Mataw Guro Lou and the rest of the Amara Arkanis members of his continued support to their endeavors.

Mr. Gani Austria, one of Mataw Guro Lou's pioneer students in Cavite, expressed his grief over the loss of Punong Guro Mark, whom he considered as a son. He likewise



challenged the Amara Arkanis members to continue what Mark has started and that he will always be behind the organization to assist in whatever way he can in its activities.



Mr. Teddy Hernando, Immediate Past President of Kiwanis Club of Indang-Walang Tinag, giving his inspirational message



Master Rodel "Smoking Sticks" Dagooc, martial arts Hall of Famer and one of Punong Guro Mark's Arnis instructors, giving his message to the group



Mr. Gani Austria, one of Mataw Guro Lou's pioneering students in Indang, Cavite, shares his sentiments about Punong Guro Mark and the legacy that he left

Mr. Hernando closed the program by thanking and giving recognition to everyone who took the time to celebrate Punong Guro Mark's life and achievements. Prior to concluding the affair, he presented the certificates of recognition given by Kiwanis Club of Indang-Walang Tinag to the senior instructors of Amara Arkanis Philippines, for continuously supporting the Club's martial arts outreach program in Indang, as well as other parts of Cavite (Imus and Mendez). Given recognition were Punong Guro Jojo Penales, Punong Guro Ipe Penales, Guro TJay Mendoza, Guro Isaac Vida and Punong Guro Nickie Esmero.

## **Day 2 (December 7, 2008)**

The second day of the tribute for Punong Guro Mark started off with the training of the Amara Arkanis students from Indang, Cavite. Mataw Guro Lou headed the session and was assisted by the senior instructors. He began teaching the curriculum and employing the methods that he and Punong Guro Mark devised during their research and discussions in the US. He likewise explained to the senior instructors the rudiments of the new curriculum and how to implement it.

Atty. Dimaisip, President of the International Modern Arnis Federation, Philippines, accompanied by Professor Armando Soteco, renowned academician in the field of arnis and Head of Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila's (University of the City of Manila) School of Arnis Professionals and Roland Dantes, a famous action star in the 70s and an acknowledged arnis master, arrived at the Amara Arkanis training hall to offer their condolence and renew their friendship with Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo.

After lunch at the Lledo residence, Mataw Guro Lou explained to the group the innovations of the Amara Arkanis system, the achievements of the organization and that of Punong Guro Mark's contributions. Mataw Guro Lou also showed the group the audio-visual presentation showcasing his late son's life and achievements, as well as the latest instructional videos that the two of them developed. Professor Soteco wanted to know more about the Amara Arkanis system, pointing out the innovative techniques and teaching methods that he observed from the session that morning and in the videos. Mataw Guro Lou willingly explained the beginnings, development and evolution of his martial arts system. The meeting concluded with renewed ties and the identification of new areas for partnerships and linkages.





Present during the tribute to offer their condolence and renew their friendship were from left: Roland Dantes, an action movie actor and Arnis master; Atty. Dimaisip, President of the International Modern Arnis Federation, Philippines; Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo; Professor Soteco of IMAFP and head of Pamantasan ng Maynila School of Arnis Professionals; and Teddy Hernando of Kiwanis International - Walang Tinag.



Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo explaining his innovations in teaching Amara Arkanis Martial Arts Education Program, to his honored guests from IMAFP.





Some memorable moments during the tribute in honor of the late Punong Guro Mark Lledo.

## Mga Mantas ng Amara Arkanis Philippines

(Amara Arkanis Seniors)

By Punong Guro Nickie C. Esmero

During the tribute in honor of the late Amara Arkanis Punong Guro Mark Lledo, the Kiwanis International of Indang, Cavite (Walang Tinag) took the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of Amara Arkanis in the province's Youth Development Program. Several teachers of the art were awarded Certificate of Recognition.



Maraw Guro Lou and wife Flora, accept Punong Guro Mark's certificate of recognition from Mr. Teddy Hernando

Punong Guro Enrica "Nickie" Esmero received Certificate of Recognition from Kiwanis' Teddy Hernando and Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo.



**From left:** Punong Guro Felipe "Ipe" Penales, Guro Tristan Jay "TJ" Mendoza and Guro Isaac Vida, receive Certificate of Recognition from Kiwanis' Teddy Hernando and Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo, Founder of Amara Arkanis.





Amara Arkanis Mantas (Seniors) with guests from International Modern Arnis Federation, Philippines.

### **Amara Arkanis Mantas (Seniors)**



**From Left:** Punong-guro Enrica “Nickie” Esmero, Punong-guro Julio “Jojo” Penales, Punong-guro Felipe “Ipe” Penales, Guro Tristan Jay “TJ” Mendoza, Guro Isaac “Isac” Vida and Guro Melvert “Irwin” Austria

Punong Guro Julio “Jojo” Penales was a member of Cavite State University’s (CvSU) martial arts varsity team during Mataw Guro’s stint as its Head Coach. A Bachelor of Physical Education graduate from CvSU, he has reaped numerous awards and medals both for the university and Mataw Guro Lou’s then Zikdokan team. He was one of the team’s strongest players for both Karatedo and Arnis, especially in the State Colleges and Universities Athletic Association Region 4 (SCUAA-IV), where he helped the team and the University garner the Overall Championships for two consecutive years. He is now a Physical Education Instructor at the Lyceum of the Philippines-Cavite campus and likewise heads the Amara Arkanis branch in Indang, Cavite.

Punong Guro Felipe “Ipe” Penales, a resident of Imus, Cavite, holds a degree in Computer Science. He has reaped numerous awards as a player during his stint under Mataw Guro Lou’s team in Indang, Cavite. He is now an Instructor and IT Specialist for



different academic institutions in Cavite. He also teaches Karatedo and Arnis in these schools and is head of the Amara Arkanis branch in Imus, Cavite.

Guro Melvert Irwin P. Austria, a Business Administration graduate from De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, was one of Mataw Guro Lou's pioneering students in Indang, Cavite. A renowned martial arts player for his university and Mataw Guro's team, he is now an assistant to the Vice-Governor of the province of Cavite.

Guro Ruben "Jun" Cosio, Jr. belongs to the earlier batches of Mataw Guro Lou's martial arts classes in Indang, Cavite and has given recognition to the team as a tournament player. A Computer Engineering graduate from CvSU, he is now the Liaison Officer of the Philippine National Police-Indang branch (PNP-Indang) and is also part of the teaching staff of the Amara Arkanis school in Indang, Cavite.

Guro Tristan Jay "TJ" E. Mendoza was a English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for Korean students in Cavite and likewise had a teaching stint in China in 2007. He currently works as a Technical Support Agent while finishing the thesis requirements for his BS Applied Mathematics (major in Statistics) degree. He is part of the teaching staff for the Amara Arkanis School in Indang, Cavite.

Guro Isaac Vida is the youngest of the Amara Arkanis instructors at 20 years of age. He is taking up a Customs Administration degree at the National College of Science and Technology (NCST) in Dasmariñas, Cavite. He has been training in the martial arts for the past 10 years. He is the regular assistant of Punong Guro Jojo and *Punong* Guro Ipe in their respective Amara Arkanis schools.

Punong Guro Enrica "Nickie" Esmero has a BS Agriculture degree from the University of the Philippines - Los Baños (UPLB) and is working on her Master's degree in Development Communication from the same institution. She is a member of the faculty at the Cavite State University (CvSU). She was a member of the Japan Karatedo Association's (JKA) UPLB branch prior to her training in Karatedo and Arnis under Mataw Guro Lou's Zikdokan team. A varsity letter awardee from her university, she was a player and part of the training staff for the CvSU and Zikdokan teams, which became overall champions in the SCUAA-IV regional meet (2002) and Goju-ryu Karate-do national championship (2001). She had a brief stint as Head Coach for CvSU's martial arts team in 2002 and was able to clinch the Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association Region 4 (WNCAA-IV) overall championship in Karatedo in 2002. At present, she is a member of the Referee Council of the Philippine Karatedo Federation (PKF) and is the only female Philippine representative holding an active license from the Asian Karatedo Federation (AKF). She heads the Amara Arkanis School in Mendez, Cavite and assists the core group of instructors and advisers in managing the Amara Arkanis organization in the Philippines.



Maraw Guro Lou and students  
bond before dismissal



Amara Arkanis instructors enjoy  
a light moment during the break



Amara Arkanis instructors with  
Mr. Teddy Hernando (second from left)



Furo Isaac Vida (in blue striped shirt)  
with some Amara Arkanis students

### **In Honorable Memory of Guro Mark L. Lledo A Tribute to a Peaceful Warrior**

Guro Mark Lledo... a devoted son, grandson, nephew, brother, uncle, beloved fiancé, accomplished martial arts teacher, musician, race car enthusiast, follower of Christ, and leader to many. These titles are just a mere glimpse into the world of one who has suddenly left this earthly realm to rejoin with Our Universal Creator.

Mark's humble and respectful nature were always a clear reflection of his close bond with his mother, Flora, and father Lou, whose teachings instilled Christian Values and Virtues as guidelines for living and serving others. Through his silent professionalism, Mark's eagerness to help and protect his family were always tantamount to personal gratification.

Guro Mark was not a shadow following in his father's exact footsteps... but forged his own path of leadership through examples of discipline, concern and compassion while being inspired and guided by his father, family and prominent mentors. Together they stood side by side striving to promote and perpetuate their family system of Martial, Healing, and Spiritual Arts, known as Amara Arkanis - Systemang Praksiyon, in the Philippines and here in the USA.

I came to know Mark through my close association with his father Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo whom I first met in 2003 while running back to back workshops at the grand opening of a school in southern NJ. There was an immediate connection between us as we discussed quite similar experiences and philosophies. As our friendship grew, so did our desire for a reevaluation, revitalization, and a reconfiguring of the dissemination of teaching methods with an emphasis on accurate and effective skill building through the biomechanics and science of anatomy, physiology, physics, the art of self-expression, and philosophy of the Spiritual Warrior. Originating from medical and military backgrounds, Punong Mataw Guro Lou Lledo and I formed Sword Stick Society International in which Guro Mark Lledo was designated our Philippine Representative and Ambassador in April of 2007.

In 2007, Mark helped assist at our monthly Sword Stick Society workshops and gatherings. Mark, his sister Katlou, and their father proudly represented their indigenous arts at a memorial service for the passing of my most influential martial arts teacher, Grandmaster Robert. L. Murphy. These actions will never be forgotten.

As a passionate drummer, Mark set the rate and rhythm for his fellow band members providing the foundation for personal expression through musical nuances. This keen, formidable sense of timing, power and grace was witnessed by many from his stick work on his drumset to his stick/knife/sword work of Amara Arkanis.



Maraw Guro Lou and wife Flora

In 2008, Mark came back to America once again to visit his family. He demonstrated with his father at the grand opening of Dr. Lee's Academy of Martial & Healing Arts located in Riverside, NJ where his father and I run classes and workshops.

During this time, Mark was making plans to gain more experience in his nursing profession, inspired by his grandmother, father and uncle who all were immersed in the medical field. He was engaged and soon to be married. In 2009, he planned on moving here to America to be closer to his roots while supporting his father's numerous arduous years of propagating Amara Arkanis... for Mark was to be the next generation of his Family's heirloom.

Although we all have lost a precious part of us... his contagious smile and truest gentlemanly character will remain an everlasting memory to all the lives that he has deeply touched.

Mark, my friend... you are an eternal flame of Hope, Faith, and Love. It has been an honor to share precious time with you. I am a better person to have met you and your family.

Through the creative talents of my first of four sons, Vico Mark Viggiano, we have been blessed to have preserved the very essence of Mark in still pictures and digital video from his time spent in America. These will be cherished by his family, friends and

future generations alike. For all that he was, and all that he still is... a fallen warrior, now a risen angel. May he watch over and protect us... until we meet again.



In the Spirit of Peace...

**Dr. Christopher M. Viggiano**

**Shen Wu Dao Martial & Healing Arts**

## **Condolences**

**Mark Louelle B. Lledo (1974-2008)**

A martial artist, son and civic leader...a legend

By: Rodrigo "Ding" P. Bago

President Elect, Kiwanis Club of Indang - Walang Tinag

A cool-mannered and soft-spoken guy like Kiwanian Mark Lledo seemed to be harmless. He was a joyful musician who played guitars and drums, and always sought for the company of friends and relatives. But beware...little did we know that he was a fifth-degree black belt in karate (Senior Renshi) who has proven his worth in tournaments during his prime.

Kiwanian Mark was born on September 17, 1974, to a family who practically breathes martial arts. His father and mentor, Kiwanian Luis Rafael "Lou" C. Lledo Jr. is the Founder of the Amara Arkanis Filipino Martial Arts Education system based in New Jersey, USA, and is likewise the Mataw Guro (Head Master Teacher - please clarify title with Mataw Guro Lou) of the Amara Arkanis schools in the Philippines and in the USA. He is likewise the Director for Sword Stick Society International, for its affairs in the islands.

At the tender age of 8, Lou introduced Mark to the world of martial arts. By the time the latter was 12. He was already wearing a provisional black belt and went on to become a full-pledged black belt by his 17th birthday. He became a *kata* (forms) champion when he was just a novice player. Ever since, Mark exposed himself in martial arts activities mainly as his father's demonstration assistant. Mark's two sisters and even mother are likewise practitioners of the martial arts.

He joined the Kiwanis Club of Indang a couple of years ago to further widen his horizon. He collaborated with Past President Teodoro "Teddy" R. Hernando, also a martial artist, and organized a group of 60 young students aged four to fifteen years old to become students under the Amara Arkanis Filipino Martial Arts program. They named the group KAMAO (fist), the acronym for Kiwanis Arnis Martial Arts Organization. This



program has been very successful for the past three years. A select group of experts from the Amara Arkanis organization trains the students every weekend. The students notably developed high levels of courtesy, discipline, self-confidence and expertise of the art.

Kiwanian Mark was ecstatic when his fighters (mandirigma) emerged overall champion among the various teams from Cavite, during the 1st Kiwanis Club Arnis Championship in Indang, Cavite. It was held on December 2, 2007, as part of the Indang Day celebrations.

The start of 2008 saw Kiwanian Mark teach martial arts in the US, assisting his father, Mataw Guro Lou, in conducting seminars for instructors from around the world. Together, they also conducted demonstrations on Filipino martial arts as a system of self-defense in some of the so-called rough neighborhoods in the US.

Like Bruce Lee, his idol, Kiwanian Mark's martial arts career came into an abrupt halt when, in the morning of November 7, 2008, his lifeless body was found lying on his bed because of a heart attack. The world martial arts was in grief... his family and friends overcome by sorrow... members of the KAMAO, whom he painstakingly developed, woeful, and everyone in the Kiwanis Club of Indang - Walang Tinag in anguish on the sudden loss of a legend.

Kiwanian Mark, you have proven your worth to God and man... may you rest in peace knowing that you have rightfully served God's purpose.

### **A Colorful Life with Punong Guro Mark**

By Punong Guro Ipe Penales, Jr.

Punong Guro Mark surely added colors to our lives. He is the type who bothers to wipe the tears away and hold your hand, while everyone just asks you what happened. Even if he was the big brother that reminded you time and again to avoid making mistakes, he still stood by you after making the same mistakes that he warned you about. He is a friend without pretensions, one who always made the effort to be with you when you needed him.

Moreover, he never failed to point out to me the most basic but important things in life. He often said, "What comes around goes around, so always walk on the right path".

I will always treasure my friendship with Punong Guro Mark, the tears we cried, the laughter we shared, how his smile could lighten up everyone's day and how his mere presence could remind you that life is ok. He also taught me to never give up on my dreams... Kudos to you my friend, your memories and the lessons you've taught shall stay with me forever... Rock on!

### **Punong Guro Mark, My Kuya**

By Guro Isaac Vida

My martial arts training started 9 years ago when I learned about Mataw Guro Lou's classes at the Cavite State University. It was also through my affiliation with

Amara Arkanis (then Zikdoka) that introduced me to Punong Guro Mark. This eventually led me to have a new kuya (big or older brother), for Punong Guro Mark was really my kuya, more than anything else.

Punong Guro Mark was my trainer in Karate and Arnis for the past 5 years. He focused on training me in street fighting, since he thought that it was more practical to learn this than tournament fighting, especially considering the presence of gangs and other perils that I could face while attending college. He was not only a good trainer, and but was more of a brother to me. He gave me sound advice whenever I had problems and he helped build up my confidence.

Thanks to him, and the rest of the Voltes 5 team (composed of Punong Guro Mark, Punong Guro Jojo, Guro Tjay and Mantas Pressly), I now fondly consider myself a “pit bull”. Punong Guro Mark pointed out that I fight like a pit bull during sparring sessions. He remarked that this was good, as a true fighter (mandirigma) should never back down or give up in the course of fighting. Also, like a pit bull, I obey orders from the Voltes 5 (especially from Punong Guro Mark and Punong Guro Jojo), my so-called “Masters” (being my seniors), without hesitation. Outside of our training sessions, we are all friends and are considered equals, just as Punong Guro Mark wanted.

Punong Guro Mark really made all the effort and gave all the support needed to bring out the best in me. He taught me to do my best in all aspects; to uphold the highest standards the physical, mental and social sides of my life.

Kuya Mark was such a dynamic person, I cannot compare him to anyone else.

I know you are now reunited with our Lord Kuya Mark. For me, Mark Lledo won't be just another name, you are already a legend. You are a true friend and my special brother. I will never forget you... Rock on!

The following images I edited to show how grateful I am to Mataw Guro Lou Lledo. I am based here in the Philippines as a guro of amara arkanis imus philippines. Here attached the image for Mataw Guro Lou Lledo and Punong Guro Mark Lledo and I do this in giving my deepest and sincerest condolences with great and meaningful purpose to Punong Guro Mark Lledo

Thanks and God Bless...  
It's not the style but the person...  
Guro Felipe M. Penales Jr.  
Amara Arkanis Imus Philippines









Kathlou Lledo with her father Matawguro Louelle Lledo (founder of Amara Arkanis) to her right and her late brother Guro Mark Lledo to her left.



By Luis Rafael C. Lledo, Jr.

[www.amara-arkanis.com](http://www.amara-arkanis.com)

The FMA Digest features a column about the Filipino Fighting Art of **Amara Arkanis** and its Founder Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo, Jr. Unlike other regular articles, the focus of this feature column is on the aspect of the program of Filipino Fighting Arts Education, which is presented in a series.

Part I of the program deals with the basic phase or foundation. There will be five lessons in the Basic Phase: Breathing, Stance, Classification of strikes, and Angles of strikes. Part II deals with the Progressive Phase or the combination and application of the techniques.

This course of study, tested and proven in the State Colleges and Universities Athletic Association Region IV (Southern Tagalog), is applicable to all styles and schools of the Filipino fighting arts. Even in the abbreviated form, this course of study offers the beginner a step-by-step and methodical way of learning. Likewise, it offers the advance practitioners a better understanding of the underlying principles of their own art.

This program of Filipino fighting arts education was designed by Mataw Guro Louelle Lledo, Jr, who holds a Masters Degree in Physical Education, a licensed Medical Technologist, a Captain in the Philippine Air Force Reserves, a Master in both Filipino and Japanese martial arts and the successor to the Bernarte Brokil Sistemang Praksiyon.

The Educational Depot commenced in the FMA Digest Volume 5 No3.

Questions or Topics of interest for the Filipino martial arts contact:

Mataw Guro Luis Rafael C. Lledo, Jr. - **Email**



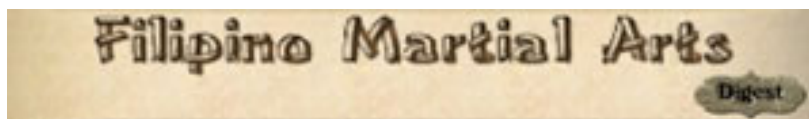
Matawguero Louelle Lledo recently received the Action Martial Arts Magazine's Hall of Fame Award as "*Ambassador of Goodwill for Bridging the Gap Between the Filipino and Chinese Arts*". Behind him are his two other awards from Action Martial Arts Magazine Hall of Fame: (2003) "Grandmaster of the Year Award of the Filipino Fighting Arts"; (2004) "Excellence Award in the Preservation of the Martial Arts".







## **Rapid Journal**



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