

## ***Information for an article in The TKD Times***

### ***Will you tell our readers about your TKD résumé?***

I started studying Taekwon-Do at a young age and have worked my way up through all the various levels. I have been student, instructor, umpire, examiner, seminar leader; and coach. At the same time, I have been involved in the administration and management of TKD organisations at all levels as well as the organisation of competitions.

2004 will mark my fortieth year in TKD, so the title of the following list could be “My Life in Taekwon-Do”.

1964 – started TKD in Saigon (Vietnam) at 12 years of age in 1964

1967 – black belt 1st degree

1969 – at age 17, started first TKD school in Vietnamese school system

1970 – moved to Canada to pursue studies in engineering at Laval University

1971 – started to give TKD courses at sports centre of Laval University and with municipal recreation department, founding Sainte-Foy TKD Club

1981 – founded Fédération Québécoise de TKD International (ITF)

1982 – author of Cessez d’avoir peur (Don’t be afraid), a self-defence handbook for women

1982 & 1985 – chairman of organising committee for both the first and second Intercontinental Cups held in Quebec City

1984 – coached Canadian team to overall team championship at World Championship in Glasgow (Scotland) and was named Coach of the Year at Quebec Gala des athlètes, chosen by representatives of the media and various sports federations

1984 – became member of ITF Board of Directors

1985 – 1989 – president of Canadian TKD Federation International (ITF)

1986 – 1989 – collaborated with Laval University for research on the Theory of Power of ITF TKD and intervention techniques for teaching TKD

1987 – honoured by Quebec Museum of Civilisation as “Productive Citizen”

1988 – 1989 - lecturer for TKD courses for undergraduates in Department of Physical Education of Laval University

1990 – earned 7th degree ITF certificate and title “Master”

1990 – chairman of organising committee for 8th World ITF TKD Championship in Montreal (Canada)

1997 – honoured by professional association of engineers, Quebec region, for determination and strength of character; Trần family chosen “Family of the Year” during Quebec Week of the Family

2000 – earned 8th degree ITF certificate

2001 – chosen by General Choi to be president of Panam Continental TKD Federation (ITF) and Chairman of ITF Tournament Committee; received Loyal Master trophy at ITF Congress Meeting in Rimini (Italy)

2003 – elected president of ITF at 14th Congress Meeting in Warsaw (Poland)

In my professional career as a building engineer, I have many years of experience in administration and in project management. I worked for a ministry of our provincial government on major construction projects. As an entrepreneur, I have founded a thriving engineering consulting firm working on international projects. I have extensive experience working with governments and with international development organisations. My business experience will be put to good use during my term at the head of the ITF.

I have witnessed first-hand many incidents of violation of fundamental human rights in VietNam. My experiences reinforced my belief in democracy and the importance of respecting human rights. It is very important to me that the ITF continue to operate in a democratic way.

***General Choi's last words included that he wanted Chang Ung to be his successor. I understand your position to be that Mr. Ung should stand for election in Poland. Is that correct?***

I was not present, so I cannot be sure what General Choi said.

If General Choi did name someone to succeed him as President of the ITF, the transition should have been conducted according to the democratic process set out in the ITF constitution. The nominee should have presented himself as a candidate for the presidency, as General Choi did. Then the delegates at the Congress Meeting could have voted for the new president, able to choose freely the candidate they believed was best capable of leading the ITF for the next four years.

By trying to impose a president on the ITF, the North Koreans have shown a complete lack of respect for the constitution of the ITF, for its democratic rules, for its members, and particularly for General Choi, who submitted himself to that process at each Congress Meeting. This attempt to bypass our democratic process is absolutely unacceptable.

Although we may never learn exactly what General Choi said on his deathbed, we can be sure that his true last wish and words of guidance for us for the future were expressed in the introduction to his last book Moral Culture. This book was written when General Choi was in good health and able to freely express his ideas. He had come to realise that most of the emphasis had been placed on the teaching of the technical aspects of TKD and felt it would be up to the next generation to give equal importance to the teaching of the Do. With the support of the senior members of the ITF, I will do my best to implement a well-balanced programme to teach both the technical and the mental aspects of ITF-TKD at all levels.

In the circumstances, those of us who are responsible for the future of ITF TKD are called upon to use our discretion and make decisions based on the basic goals of TKD as defined by General Choi: to build a better world with peace, justice, and liberty.

***Would you have voted for him if he had?***

This is a purely theoretical question, but I am prepared to answer it anyway.

No, for many reasons:

- o Although I was privileged to have a close relationship with General Choi for many years, I had never heard of Mr. Chang Ung until shortly before General Choi's death.
- o As far as I know, Mr. Chang Ung has never practiced TKD. How could he have a thorough understanding of the ITF culture or the needs and desires of its members?
- o His vision for the future is to try to unite the ITF with the WTF and have TKD as a sport in the Olympics; this is far from being a priority for me, as it would serve to develop only the elite.
- o I believe TKD has four facets: it is a sport and a martial art, but also a way of life and a tool for social development. We must keep all four facets in mind in the management and development of ITF TKD.
- o I have nothing against the Korean people and athletes, but I do want ITF TKD to be led and managed by those who know and respect its principles and traditions.

***How has this split affected your membership?***

Unfortunately, the clumsy attempt to impose a president on the federation and the deceptive rumours that were circulated after the self-proclamation of Mr. Chang Ung as president have caused a lot of confusion and insecurities for our members.

However, the majority of ITF national governing boards remain with our organisation.

I believe that the quality of services offered by the ITF, our vision for the future, our team spirit, and our respect for democratic principles offer the best future for our members. This will be made even more obvious by the realisation of our plans over the next couple of years.

Since my election as president, numerous countries and individuals have heard about our vision for the ITF, our guiding principles, and our projects for the future; many have expressed interest in joining the ITF. We will welcome those who wish to return to the ITF fold; we will also be working very hard to attract new members who are looking for a TKD federation that can meet – and we believe exceed – their expectations. I invite those who are interested to learn more about the ITF to visit our Web site at [www.tkd-itf.org](http://www.tkd-itf.org).

***In the confusion that followed the Special Congress in Pyongyang, Mr. Tom MacCallum was accused of stealing 60,000 and a computer. Mr. MacCallum was described by General Choi as one of his most trusted friends. Will you describe for our readers what happened.***

It is regrettable that the North Korean organisation has circulated rumours and made accusations as a smokescreen for their actions. Here is what happened: The Directing Committee of ITF authorized Master Tom MacCallum, as Secretary General, to withdraw 60,000USD from the ITF account and to take his computer, in order to preserve the assets and the information database of the ITF. Following an agreement between the lawyers, Master MacCallum returned the funds to the account, minus the amount approved to pay for operating expenses. The North Koreans did not respect their side of the agreement. Using a fraudulent registration certificate, they withdrew all of the funds in the ITF account (160,000USD) and have not returned it.

***What is the status of the ITF in the courts?***

The Austrian court has declared that these three people: Chang Ung, Rhee Ki Ha, and Hwang Kwang Sung, do not have a statutory position based on the ITF constitution.

I am very pleased to inform you that we have recovered the legal registration of the ITF issued by the Austrian authorities in Vienna. The four legally-recognized members of the Executive Committee of the ITF are: Master Pablo Trajtenberg, Senior Vice-President; Master Tom MacCallum, Secretary General; Master Willem Jacob Bos, Treasurer; and myself as President.

Also, we have started legal action to take back the headquarters building and to recover the 160,000USD withdrawn illegally from the ITF bank account.

***Both Mr. Chang Ung and Mr. Choi Jung Hwa have announced that they are having talks with the WTF. Do you also plan to have meetings with the WTF?***

This is not a priority for me. My chief concern is to modernize and structure the operations of the ITF so that it can better serve the needs of its members.

Obviously, I will be very busy in the next few months supervising the revision and implementation of the ITF manual of operations. I will also be visiting each of the continents to meet with our local ITF leaders for discussions on strategic development and to allow our members to tell us what they need and want from ITF. This is how we will ensure that our action plans meet the expectations of our members.

***I understand that you have an agreement with Disney to sponsor the 2004 World Games. Will you tell us more about that?***

We have an agreement in principle with Disney World, and this project was given unanimous approval at the last ITF Congress Meeting in June.

The First Open ITF World Cup will take place from the 19th to the 21st of November 2004 at the Disney World Sports Complex in Orlando (U.S.A.). Participation will be open to all practitioners of TKD (colour and black belts), regardless of their affiliation.

We want to assure all participants in this competition that it will be very well organized. Everyone will receive a warm welcome, competitions will take place on time, and judging will be fair and unbiased.

More details will become available in the near future on our ITF Web site at [www.tkd-itf.org](http://www.tkd-itf.org) and, of course, in the Taekwondo Times.

***Describe your long-term vision for the ITF.***

As I stated in my speech to the ITF Congress Meeting when I was elected president last month, “The ITF belongs to its members; it must work for its members and with its members to provide the services they need and want.”

The management of the ITF and its affiliated organisations will continue to be based on democratic principles. Management will be well planned, efficient, fair, and transparent. We will operate with clear policies on promotion, admission and re-admission, and development.

We will strive to improve the quality of TKD teaching and the management skills of our Grand Masters, Masters, and Instructors by offering appropriate training and support.

All qualifications and promotions within the ITF and its affiliated organisations will be attributed on merit and according to established criteria.

The latest technology, including an up-dated Web site, will be used to facilitate communications with members.

All elements of ITF TKD competitions will be improved. These include tournament rules, the competition calendar, the qualification process, training for umpires, and a computerized scoring system. Competitions will be held in well-known locations around the globe.

We will develop ITF TKD in as many countries as possible, always keeping in mind the need for balance among the four facets of TKD: as a sport and a martial art, but also as a way of life and a tool for social development. For example, we will introduce programmes to offer access to ITF TKD to those who do not have the means to pay.

Finally, to me it is essential that ITF TKD help our members to cultivate a healthy balance between family, school or work, and TKD, so that they will be able to enjoy the training and have a happier life. This is our ultimate goal.