



I am honored to be able to express into words the Joy I feel about what the Uechi Ryu World Cup for Peace has brought into my life. This World class tournament has truly been, for all three World Cups that I have attended, the highlight of my Karate Career.

I'll never forget when I was told about the Uechi Ryu World Cup. I went out to lunch with my Karate Brother Gerry Hendewich. He said to me, I think you would benefit from going to Argentina and competing in this tournament that is strictly Uechi Ryu. I immediately knew that I had to go. I had never traveled this far for a tournament before, but my heart was truly on fire. I knew I needed to be there.

The experience was extremely uplifting for me from the moment we arrived. I had always wanted to visit Buenos Aires, but never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that Karate would take me there. I remember falling in love with the Argentinians' consistently powerful and graceful Karate skills, but the Canadian team was truly impressive as well. In fact, it seemed to me that everyone was on a much higher skill level than I had witnessed in the past tournaments I had participated in. I was in my element and loving every moment of it!

I was unique to my Dojo at the time (Authentic Martial Arts, Largo Florida), in that I was the only woman that I knew that had traveled to tournaments in order to compete and experience how my Karate was improving. My first tournament was in Miami Florida hosted by Master Robert Young in 1996, and I went with my Son. Master Joel Craven of Authentic Martial Arts also competed in this tournament. I was a yellow belt at the time, and I won the trophy for Kata and Kumite.

I continued to compete in as many tournaments that I could find with every kyu level belt I was promoted to. I did very well in each tournament, but the motivation was in releasing fear. With each tournament I entered it became increasingly obvious that I was releasing anxiety, tension, fear and improving tremendously. When I was a brown belt, I flew to California to compete in Alan Dollar's Golden Gate '98.

This tournament was the first tournament that I had to spar two female 2nd degree black belts. I won the first match, but lost the second. It was an honor!

Three months prior to preparing for my Shodan test, I found out I was pregnant with my Daughter. I was back in the dojo three months after I gave birth, but I finally tested for my Shodan in November of 2001. I was a very busy new mother, so I knew that I couldn't just pick up and go to a tournament whenever I wanted to now, although I'll never forget the look on my daughter's father's face when I told him I was going to Austin Texas for Mike Nazar's Koshukai, shortly after giving birth. I'm so very happy that I had the confidence to do that for myself at the time.

I wanted to give you this background information on me so that the readers would understand why the Uechi Ryu World Cup is so important to me and for many reasons, but this one in particular. I had not entered a tournament to test my Black Belt skills until the First Uechi Ryu World Cup held in Argentina in the summer of 2005. I needed to go to see for myself how I had improved since my Shodan and Nidan test.

Interestingly enough, I met Master Gondra personally not at Golden Gate 98, but in the summer of 2002 when my Master, Ric Martin of Authentic Martial Arts, had a Koshukai and I tested for Nidan with Master Gushi present. I am currently a Sandan, and now I have been asked to test for my 4th Degree in the summer of 2011. I am thrilled that I will be able to test my skills in 2012, in Buenos Aires for the 4th Uechi Ryu World Cup as a 4th degree! I know that the competition keeps getting tougher and tougher but this is why I do what I do. If it got easier it would hold no benefit for me.

Lately, I have been more successful in Kumite, because of the success I've had in winning Gold in Kata. By the way I won Gold in Kata at the First Uechi World Cup, but in Kumite I lost, yet I was still thrilled because sparring with Maria Gondra, and Stacey Shuler-Abdella was the highlight of the week for me. Such amazing women! I also felt so blessed because even though I didn't plan this, my birthday fell on the Sunday of the banquet in Argentina that summer of August 8th 2005. What a great time I had! I danced for three hours straight! Talk about a great time, it was heaven, and all I could do when I got back to my Dojo was talk about Argentina.

It was such a joy to go to Canada to compete in the 2nd Uechi Ryu World Cup, because I remember talking with Master DeSa of Canada in Argentina, and telling him that I wished he would host the next event. I was so happy to here months later that he indeed was going to host this fabulous event. In Canada, I remember wishing that my Master Ric Martin would host the 3rd Uechi Ryu World Cup, and at the Canada Banquet my wish was again fulfilled. Our Dojo successfully hosted the 3rd Uechi Ryu World Cup in Clearwater Florida.

I'm now thrilled that the 4th Uechi Ryu World Cup will be back in Argentina, because for me that's where it all started, and it truly was magnificent. I am fortunate that I do speak Spanish, but the love I felt from everyone there was so universal that even if I didn't I would be thrilled to have participated in such a World class event. If the reader has any hesitation in making a decision to attend in 2012, please know that I will personally guarantee you will have the time of your life! How can I guarantee this? I can, because I know that if you don't have an absolutely fabulous time, It will be because you are not into having fun or being around great people. Everything about the Uechi Ryu World Cup for Peace is fantastic, and I know when you are there with me you will agree.

Thank you Master Gondra for having the vision to unify our beloved Style of Karate, and to continue to tirelessly keep the peace. I am forever grateful for your efforts.

With much Love and Gratitude ~ Grace Haeusler