

## Featured Senior Instructor, February 2019



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Division 1

Growing up in a small town in Poland, I spent my days watching kung fu and karate movies, thrilled and excited by the action sequences and mesmerized by the actors' fluid movements. At that time, aikido was a distant and exotic discipline that my friends and I were only familiar with through the action packed Steven Seagal features.

When I moved to Canada, I began to train in boxing but after about six months I decided that I didn't like getting hit in the head so much. Around the same time, I enrolled in a college program where I met a friend who convinced me try ninjutsu. After nearly two years of training I felt that there was still something missing and that my calling was elsewhere. This was when I found the Golden Triangle Aikido in Kitchener, Ontario, headed by Stefan Barton Sensei who is still my teacher to this day. I enrolled in his dojo and began my training, and I have been on this adventure for seventeen years.

In 2005 I visited Japan where for a few weeks I had the opportunity to train as uchideshi at the dojo of Hitohira Saito Sensei in Iwama. In 2007, I met Pat Hendricks Sensei who traveled to Canada to deliver a seminar at the Golden Triangle Aikido and at the same time I was tested for my Shodan. Since then, every two years, I visit Pat Hendricks Sensei in California.

In 2016, with the support of my wife and my teacher, I opened Royal City Aikido club, which is now an official dojo in Guelph, Ontario. It is a small dojo but I have great students and I am very proud of each of them.

### **My Most Memorable Aikido Experience**

My most memorable Aikido experience, however, was when I tested for my Sandan in front of my family and friends in Guelph, Ontario. It was a very stressful test overseen by Pat Hendricks Sensei. Nearly every member of my family was present to watch it and I was very proud to showcase my skills in front of them. After the test, my family made me feel like a movie star as they lined up to congratulate me and to take pictures. At that moment, I still did not know if I had passed, but to them it did not matter. To them – to my wife, my children, and my parents – I had already achieved something incredible.