



# Kyoshi Birney Jarvis 7th Dan

(1929-2012)

was one of Don Buck's 1st students and was a big part of the history of Karate here in the United States.  
he will be missed

We all love hearing about the early days and just think he was there!  
He lived them and has a lot of stories to tell.

## 7th Degree Black Belt

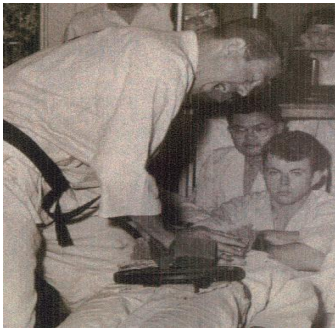
**American Kyokushin Karate Organization  
Council Advisor, Alabama Branch Chief and  
Most senior student and Friend of Hanshi Don Buck**

## Amateur & Profession Boxer

**56 Wins--1 Lost--1**



One of the people responsible for popularizing in the early 1960s the Kyokushinkai in general, and the School of Oyama in particular, and later, the School of the Tiger, was Birney Jarvis, then a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle. Jarvis in early 1960 read an article about a "new" sport being introduced in California and decided to do his own story about the art of karate. Jarvis was no stranger to the art of fighting, having been first an amateur and subsequently a professional boxer with a total ring record of 56-1-1. Plus, he in earlier years was a "bouncer" in a Tenderloin District bar frequented by raucous sailors. As he laughingly says, "I got a lot of practice (in fighting) there."



Birney Jarvis met Hanshi Donald I. Buck at the Ava and Larry Modeling School in San Francisco's Sunset District, where fledgling karate classes were also being held. He was greatly impressed by Hanshi Buck, who had organized the classes, and found they had something in common: Hanshi Buck was a San Francisco policeman at the time and Jarvis worked as a police reporter at the San Francisco Hall of Justice. Birney Jarvis decided that the way of karate was for him, and he joined the karate class after writing the story. This was the beginning of a long and active career in the martial arts.



Kyoshi Birney Jarvis and Hanshi Donald I. Buck became good friends as the weeks and months slipped by and under his Sensei's tutoring, Birney Jarvis rapidly advanced in the fighting art that he had adopted. In the meantime, Birney Jarvis began a series of stories in The Chronicle about karate and its long history.

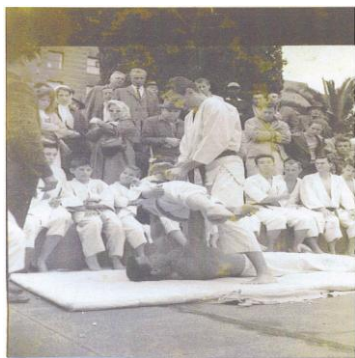
He also wrote many stories about karate and the Kyokushinkai for numerous adventure or sports magazines, with numerous articles by him appearing (under a pseudonym) in other newspapers.



It should be noted that in the early 1960s karate was virtually unknown in northern California and, actually, throughout the nation. Reporters writing about the art generally termed karate as a "new" sport that was becoming popular in this country. Judo and Ju Jitsu were well-known, because military men - including Hanshi Buck - learned the rudiments while serving their country. The crowning touch came about when an Associate Press reporter wrote a story about Jarvis and his School of Oyama at 2315 Clement Street in San Francisco. Hanshi Buck and Jarvis opened the dojo in December of 1960. The story, with photographs of Jarvis and one of his and Hanshi Buck's students in action, was circulated nation-wide, with reprints in varied English-speaking foreign publications.



Increasing rapidly in popularity because of the increased publicity and the genuine benefits of the sport, karate - and the Kyokushinkai-associated School of Oyama - became a byword. But this caused some resentment, and even jealousy, among certain factions belonging to other organizations. Demonstrations by School of Oyama students were sometimes heckled and often-times threatened with violence. Serious clashes were avoided through the intervention of Hanshi Buck. He was, after all, a policeman.



This situation came to a head in December of 1960 when two young Nidans (2nd Dan) burst into the School of Oyama on its opening night. There were 50 people, including a society reporter, lawyers, businessmen and students of karate, at the celebration. They said, "We come to avenge our master" in Japan, who purportedly was insulted by Kyokushinkai founder Sosai Mas Oyama. One of them wanted to fight Hanshi Buck, who at the time was a Yondan (4th Dan). Hanshi Buck told the man that he wouldn't fight him because of his lower ranking, but said, "Take any one of my students." Jarvis was the student chosen by the intruder to fight, and on his Sensei's order, stripped off his shirt and shoes. The fight in Sosai Oyama's honor lasted 15 minutes and Jarvis was the winner, although bloodied and bruised by his opponent. The opponent suffered more serious injuries. Jarvis held a 3rd Degree Green belt degree at the time, but attributed his success in beating a Nidan to his experience in actual hand-to-hand fighting, plus his constant physical conditioning



It wasn't long after that, that Sosai Oyama and Hanshi Buck awarded Jarvis a Shodan (1st Dan) black belt for his part in standing up for the Kyokushinkai and Sosai Oyama. The certificate was dated the day of the battle: December 16, 1960. Jarvis did not feel he was deserving of the honor, so he moved into the back of his dojo and for the next year trained many and long hours to "catch up" to the degree. Jarvis first met and trained with Sosai Oyama on the Master's visit to San Francisco in 1961, and was able to train with him on his subsequent visits to this country. Jarvis said he considered these training periods one of his greatest honors. He was greatly grieved after hearing of Sosai Oyama's death and talked at length with the karate master's daughter soon after. On learning of Hanshi Buck's death, Jarvis recalled the years of friendship with his Sensei (as he still refers to him), and mourns his passing. "Sensei Buck changed the course of my life when I first came to him and through the years I learned more than I thought possible from my friend," Jarvis said.



**Kumite-ing (Fighting)  
with Chongnam Rha,  
a 5th Dan in Tai Kwon Do from Korea  
at Union Square  
San Francisco**

As the years passed and his commitment to karate grew, Jarvis received from Sosai Oyama and Hanshi Buck his Nidan (2nd Dan, 1961), Sandan (3rd Dan, 1968) and Yondan (4th Dan, 1976). He also received in 1980 a Yondan degree from the Leopard Karate School, Inc., one of many Dojos in southern California associated with Hanshi Buck's School of the Tiger and headed by Shihan Stephen Senne. Jarvis is now listed in Buck's School of the Tiger as a Shishdan (7th Dan, 1998), and is a Council member advisor and Branch Chief (Alabama) for the organization. In later years, Jarvis retired from "active duty" in the karate ranks, because of months and years devoted to eventually sailing half-way around the world in his 34-foot sloop. He, at age 74, presently writes a newspaper column in South Alabama, where he and his wife of 34 years now live. He and his wife are preparing for a year-long trip throughout the United States in his recreational vehicle. Jarvis said he still trains with a heavy punching bag and other equipment, but complains that he doesn't have the stamina and speed of his youth. "I can still punch, however, but I haven't broken any bricks in several years - the last time being in Cuba in 1998 where I did so for a curious Cuban Tai Kwan Do practitioner." Jarvis said. He and his wife were in Cuba aboard their sailing boat.

Thank you Sir:

Monday Sep 17, 2012 11:29 AM PT

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## From The SF Chronicle Newspaper Birney Jarvis, former Chronicle reporter, dies

Carl Nolte

Published 4:00 a.m., Friday, June 8, 2012

[Birney Jarvis](#), a retired [San Francisco Chronicle](#) reporter whose life read like a script for an adventure movie, died at his home in Bay Minnette, Ala., on June 3. He was 82 and suffered from leukemia.

At various times, Mr. Jarvis was a Hells Angel, a blue water sailor, a boxer, a karate instructor, an author and a journalist. "He was a larger-than-life adventurer," said [Jerry Carroll](#), a former Chronicle reporter and longtime friend.

"He was at home behind the wheel of a sailboat in a roaring gale, or at the reins of a covered wagon in the Texas hill country," Carroll said. "He collected antiques, played the banjo and could sing sea chanteys by the hour. He was a fitness buff who pounded a heavy punching bag every day well into his 70s. He was a man's man, but a lot of the ladies liked him, too."

Mr. Jarvis was born Dec. 9, 1929, in San Anselmo. His father was a sea captain who abandoned the family, and Mr. Jarvis had a hardscrabble childhood. He often recalled he had to walk to school barefoot.

School never interested him; he dropped out in the ninth grade and never went back.

He was an amateur boxer who won 56 bouts and lost one, and was a charter member and vice president of the San Francisco chapter of the [Hells Angels](#). His cross-country travels on a Harley formed the basis for the television series "Then Came Bronson," which ran in 1969 and 1970. He got his start in newspapering as a motorcycle messenger for the [San Francisco Call-Bulletin](#), carrying old-time photo plates from crime scenes.

He later worked as a cub reporter in Hollister and Redding and became a police reporter for [The](#)

California with only 13 cents in his pocket. He was so valuable as a reporter that The Chronicle hired him back immediately.

In 1987, he quit The Chronicle for good and retired to the Alabama Gulf Coast region to be near his wife's family. In retirement, he wrote for local newspapers, became a flotilla commander in the [Coast Guard](#) Auxiliary and traveled. Mr. Jarvis was married twice. He is survived by his wife, Joyce, whom he met on a blind date. They married soon afterward, and the match lasted 42 years.

Besides his wife, he is survived by two daughters, [Marilynn Sebring](#) of Stapleton, Ala., and [Colleen Anderson](#) of Fredericksburg, Va., and by two sons: Kevin Jarvis of Midway, Ga., and Eric Jarvis, who lives in California. There are 13 grandchildren.

At his request, there will be no services.

Read more: <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Birney-Jarvis-former-Chronicle-reporter-dies-3619248.php#ixzz26km0HM38>

Chronicle in 1959. He covered everything from bank robberies and murders to the saga of Humphrey the Whale, a humpback who got lost in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

Mr. Jarvis quit The Chronicle four times to go sailing or traveling. Once, when his sailboat foundered off the Cuban coast, Mr. Jarvis returned to