

**SENSEI PAULINE BINDRA nee LAVILLE (FULLER) BD, MA.
8th DAN, SHOTOKAN KARATE**



Pauline Laville was born on the 8th of January 1945 in Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire. Like many of the early karateka, Pauline first studied the art of Judo starting at the age of 12, joining the Middlesbrough Judo club in 1957 where she trained for 4 years grading to the rank of blue belt.

Pauline then decided to check out the local karate club after receiving an invitation from Walter Seaton. After watching the classes, she decided that this would be more suitable for someone of her stature. So, in 1962 at the age of 17, Pauline finally switched to the art of Karate and joined the Middlesbrough Karate Club (Boundary Road) which was at that time associated to Vernon Bell's BKF (British Karate Federation). Pauline's first karate instructors were Fred Kidd and Walter Seaton who were both Brown Belts. The style of karate was Yoseikan, a variant form of Shotokan founded by Minoru Mochizuki who had trained directly under Gichin Funakoshi, (founder of Shotokan Karate).

At the end of 1963, aged 18, Pauline decided to leave her native Middlesbrough and move to London with her older sister Louise. In March 1964, Pauline attended Vernon Bell's Horseshoe Pub Dojo in Clerkenwell, London to continue with her Karate. Bell was the founder of the karate movement in Britain and became the first British Karate Black Belt in 1957. Pauline soon travelled to Bell's other Dojo's like the British Legion Hall in Upminster.



Pauline aged 19 (1964)

On the 4th of July 1964, Pauline attended her first ever grading in karate and became the first woman to grade in the BKF by Vernon Bell gaining the rank of 8th Kyu.

In 1965 Bell agreed to sponsor a visit by the JKA (Japanese Karate Association) with the aim to spread the style of Shotokan and help the future development of karate in the UK. The first



Shirai, Kanazawa, Kase, Enoeda 1965

display took place at Kensington Town Hall on April 21st 1965, the second at the Hornsey Town Hall on 24th April 1965 and the third at the Poplar Town Hall on 26th April 1965. Pauline who attended all three displays became the first BKF female student to

demonstrate karate to the British public. In attendance were Japanese instructors Taiji Kase, Hirokazu Kanazawa, Keinosuke Enoeda and Hiroshi Shirai. This led to Bell asking the JKA for Hirokazu Kanazawa to remain in England.

In May 1965 Pauline accepted a position as a Red Coat at the Butlins holiday camp in Minehead where she also taught karate to the kids amongst her duties, but did not finish the season because she missed her training and so returned to London and Vernon Bell.

Pauline attended Kanazawa's first London JKA grading on Wednesday 28th July 1965 at the Lyndhurst Hall in Kentish Town and was promoted to Temporary 6th Kyu by Kanazawa. Pauline's second JKA grading was held on 8th November 1965 at the same location in Kentish Town. This time Pauline was awarded a full 5th Kyu by both Kanazawa and Enoeda. Pauline gained full 4th Kyu at Kanazawa's third London grading at the Lyndhurst Hall on the 24th February 1966. Kanazawa's final grading for the BKF, again held at the Lyndhurst Hall, on 21st April 1966 saw Pauline grading to 3rd Kyu.

When Kanazawa's contract was not renewed by Bell, Pauline along with many of Bell's other top students who now preferred Kanazawa's instruction left the BKF and decided to set up their own organisation. After a gathering in the Admiral Napier Pub, Eddie Witcher came up with the KUGB (Karate Union of Great Britain), inviting Kanazawa to become their chief instructor. The KUGB eventually moved its administration to Liverpool where Keinosuke Enoda was operating from.

Pauline was part of a team led by Kanazawa with the assistance of Enoda who gave a demonstration arranged by John Chisholm for a group of film stars who were filming at Elstree Studios. Peter Sellers (James Bond), Lee Marvin and John Cassavetes (Dirty Dozen).



Kanazawa Demo



Pauline's Best Foot forward

In 1966 Pauline working as a secretary appeared in the Daily Express newspaper in an article headed "Pauline's best foot forward" which featured Tory MP Barnard Baine who was at that time investigating karate as a sport.

In December 1967 Pauline became the first woman in Britain to be awarded 1st Dan Black Belt in karate graded by Kanazawa. To celebrate the occasion, Kanazawa invited Pauline and the other new Black Belts out for a meal in London.

In 1968 Pauline trained with Masatoshi Nakayama, who was the head of the JKA and most senior student of Gichin Funakoshi, at the JKA's summer course held at Crystal Palace Sports Centre. From the course Pauline was photographed by a local Newspaper performing attack on Nakayama which later appeared in "Karate" magazine.



Masatoshi Nakayama



Blackfriars Dojo

In 1969 Kanazawa left for Germany and saw Enoeda move to London and took over as head of the KUGB. Also in this year Pauline married Raymond (Ray) Fuller in Camberwell, London. Ray was another of the original students of Vernon Bell and a co-founder of the KUGB.

Pauline's next media coverage saw her appear in a 1970 Japanese television documentary about Enoeda's journey and exploits in England.

1970 also saw Ray and Pauline began to open dojo's in South London and Kent areas and becoming leading instructors for the KUGB. They were regularly travelling around the South of England as their tuition was in high demand. In 1973 Pauline appeared in a TV documentary on the BBC television programme 'Nationwide' followed by the BBC's educational programme 'Open Door' in 1974.



BBC's Nationwide 1973

In 1975, Enoeda sent Pauline along with the KUGB's other squad members to New York for one of America's top tournaments. On arrival, Pauline could only enter for the Kata as there was no female Kumite at that time, but because her standard in Kata was recognised as being too good, the event organisers entered Pauline in the men's category where she finally came 2nd. This led to an offer to remain and coach in the USA but Pauline had too many commitments back in the UK.

In 1975, Ray and Pauline now 3rd Dan Black Belts, left the KUGB and with their already existing clubs set up Thames Karate International, although both still continued with their training under Eneoda. Because of their expertise in different disciplines they taught separately within the Thames group, Ray teaching Kumite and Pauline Kata. By 1977 Thames had now grown to over 60 clubs with a membership of 4,000 students and joined the Governing body FEKO (Federation of English Karate Organisation).



Bexleyheath Dojo 1977

In 1979 the Thames group splintered due to the earlier separation of Pauline and Ray. In this year she also appeared in Fighters (Martial Arts Magazine). In 1980 Pauline and her family moved to San Francisco. While there, Pauline trained under Richard Kim 10th Dan, Head of Zen Bei Butoku-Kai (IAKF). According to Kim's most senior students, he always spoke and thought very highly of Pauline. Richard Kim died on 8th November 2001.

Returning to England in 1983, Pauline set up International Shotokan Karate affiliating to the EKC. Because of her high profile this led to various positions on the EKC council. Pauline appeared in various karate magazines in 1985, 2003, 2009 and in 1988 VMA (Video Martial Arts) profiled



Video Martial Arts 1988

Pauline on their new video concept magazine 4th edition feature under the title “Women in Martial Arts” which was released for sale in 1989. She was a founder member of the EKGB (English Karate Governing Body) formed in 1991 with the amalgamation of the English Karate Council (EKC) and The English Karate Board (EKB) again holding various positions on the board.

From opening the Karate Shop, Welling in 1985, which started as a hobby, Pauline went on and founded Blitz Corporation Ltd in 1993 turning it into one of the largest martial arts supplies companies in the UK and spreading into Europe. For Pauline, one of her proudest moments was gaining an Honours Degree and Masters in Theology while studying at Newbold College, Binfield in Bracknell. Pauline started her own Charity called the Children of Christ, an outreach programme helping those who were giving up on life and empowering them with the knowledge and confidence to keep going.



Pauline's 60th Birthday party

On January 22nd 2005 Pauline celebrated her 60th birthday with a surprise party held at the Dorchester Hotel in Mayfair, London. Attending in her honour were close friends, family and her senior instructors.

2007 was a big year for Pauline who was celebrating her 50th year in Martial Arts. In May, Pauline appeared on BBC television's Kung Fu Night in the feature, The Kung Fu Years.



The Kung Fu Years 2007

The whole night was dedicated to bringing back the memories of the early 70's featuring documentaries, interviews and films including the classic Enter the Dragon featuring Bruce Lee. In August of that year Pauline was among 120 guests of karate elite and celebrities attending the BudoSai 2007 event at Bisham

Abbey to celebrate English Karate's 50th anniversary. Pauline also featured heavily in the book "You Don't Have to Dress to Kill" by Clive Layton containing information about early female karateka published in August 2007.

Pauline's last appearance in her association was at the ISK Southern Championships on Sunday 16th November 2008, held at the Dartford Judo Club. At the event, Pauline awarded John Glasgow his 5th Dan Grade. Sadly on the 21st July 2010 Pauline passed away in hospital after a short illness at the age of 65 leaving a rich legacy as a pioneer in British Karate history.



16th November 2008



Family Chapel

Pauline was buried on the 10th September 2010 and rests in the small Family Chapel on the grounds of her family home.

Finally, in Combat magazine January 2011, Pauline was featured in the article “in loving Memory”.

Sensei Pauline Laville-Bindra 8th Dan was one of the highest graded women in the world of karate. For those who had trained under her, she was their inspiration, a loving mother who doted on her children, a kind and generous person who cared about others and determined through her faith to help and make a difference to improve people’s lives.



Pauline with Taiji Kase 1967



Pauline with Hirokazu Kanazawa