



## TAE KWON DO HISTORY MADE IN RUSSIA

*For the first time in history an ITF Demonstration Team participates in a WTF World Championships while leaders of both organizations are inducted into the Hall of Fame. by Dr. George Vitale, PhD*



WTF President Chungwon Choue receiving his certificate of induction while Hwang Ho Yong Senior V.P of the ITF accepts the Hall of Fame induction certificate on behalf of ITF President Prof. Chang Ung. This marks the first time that the presidents of two major taekwondo factions were honored at the same event.

The Official Tae Kwon Do Hall of Fame honored both Professor Chang Ung, PhD, an International Olympic Committee (IOC) Member and a president of the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF); and Dr. Choue Chungwon, PhD, former president of Kyung-Hee University and current president of the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) during the 2015 WTF World Championships.. The tournament took place in Chelyabinsk Russia in May.

During the opening ceremonies the ITF Demonstration Team performed and the WTF Demonstration Team then followed them. The true significance of this event cannot be understated and the full impact is probably not yet known. Both major Tae Kwon Do groups have been at odds since the WTF was formed in 1973, 7 years after the ITF was formed in Seoul, the Republic of Korea on March 22, 1966. The ITF had moved their international headquarters to Toronto Canada just the year before in 1972.



The audience was treated to a spectacular display of technique by the ITF Team. It was the first time ever that an ITF demo team performed at a WTF World Taekwondo Championships.



Kim Dae-Jung



Kim Jong Il

A softening of the previous animosity began to take place as a result of the first ever summit in which the two leaders (Nobel Peace Prize winner Kim Dae-Jung & Kim Jong-Il) of a divided Korea met on June 15<sup>th</sup> 2000. Exchanging of Tae Kwon Do demonstration teams and merger discussions were placed as items for the respective Unification Ministries of the two Koreas to work on. Since the government in the south supports the WTF and the government in the north supports the ITF, the talks were conducted by these two international organizations.



Gen. Choi Hong Hi



Prof. Chang Ung



Dr. Un Yong Kim



Dr. Chungwon Choue

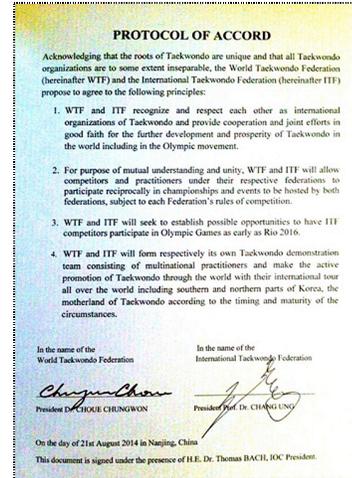
Dr. Chang succeeded the founding ITF president, the late General Choi Hong-Hi when he passed away in 2002. Dr. Choue succeeded the WTF's founding president Dr. Kim Un-Yong in 2004 when he resigned after he was arrested and subsequently convicted for involvement in corruption scandals. Both new leaders have supported Tae Kwon Do even before their respective presidential terms began. In the case of Prof. Chang, he was as a young rising star on the national scene of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea when General Choi led the 7<sup>th</sup> ITF Demonstration Team north of the artificial dividing line of Korea in 1980. Prof. Chang was part of the Pyongyang government team that worked with that historic event.



7th International Taekwon-Do Demonstration Team in North Korea in 1980

In 1996 he became an Official Member of the IOC. Dr. Choue helped to establish the Taekwondo program at Kyung-Hee University in 1983. It was the first such program at the university level and it was his proposal that obtained the government authorization.

The Official Tae Kwon Do Hall of Fame has been closely following the work of these two leaders. It decided to present the honors at this particular event as the Hall of Fame saw the epic nature of what was to unfold in Russia during the 22<sup>nd</sup> WTF World Championships. The Hall of Fame, along with Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), Dr. Thomas Bach, the President of the IOC, local and national figures of the host City all referred to the historic first ever demonstration by the ITF Multi-National Demonstration Team at the WTF event.



Several historical firsts took place at the event. They were the result of the continuing implementation of several of the agreed upon principles pledged when Dr. Chang and Dr. Choue signed the Protocol of Accord sign between the ITF and WTF during the 2014 Youth Olympic Games under the eye of the IOC President Dr. Thomas Bach. This groundbreaking agreement will continue to undue decades of animosity between rival Tae Kwon Do groups.

As examples and not limited to these offered here, the cooperation was symbolized by:

- 1) The presentation by 3 ITF scholars at the WTF's 5<sup>th</sup> International Academic Symposium, including one on the History of Tae Kwon Do (Common Roots) & (Good Faith for Further Development)
- 2) The numerous statements made by both the ITF and WTF about the important and historic nature of the event, as well as how the WTF openly embraced the ITF into the World Taekwondo Family (All Tae Kwon Do groups somewhat inseparable)
- 3) Joint press conference (All Tae Kwon Do groups somewhat inseparable)
- 4) ITF Black Belts competed in this World Championship (Reciprocal Participation)
- 5) Further discussions about the 2016 Olympics and beyond for the ITF (Establish Opportunities for ITF Olympic Entry)
- 6) Side by side multi-national demonstration teams and symbolic joint performance at the end (Actively Promoting Tae Kwon Do Internationally with Members from Both Halves of Korea)
- 7) WTF appoints III Dan (3<sup>rd</sup> Degree) ITF Black Belt as their Secretary General (Good Faith for Further Development)

The problems that were building up over an almost 60 year period, now has started to be dismantled by these leaders after only 10 years of cooperation. To highlight their dedicated work and selfless service the Hall of Fame has bestowed the well deserved honor upon both Presidents Prof. Chang (ITF) and Dr. Choue (WTF). The Hall of Fame salutes their accomplishments which will benefit all in the Tae Kwon Do world and wishes them continued success in moving forward as they more fully implement the steps required to insure a greater cohesion and better integration. May all of us be supportive of their combined efforts!

Some of the many comments addressing the historic breakthroughs made by the leaders:



**UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon:**

*“One of the pillars of taekwondo philosophy is unity, which is illustrated beautifully by this event. We see here, together, representatives of the World Taekwondo Federation and the International Taekwondo Federation, and we watch athletes from the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea demonstrate their skill on the same arena, breaking barriers and making another step*

*towards a dialogue and reconciliation.*”

*I applaud the efforts of taekwondo governing bodies to advance our common goal – teaching the society, through sport, to live better, healthier and in peace.”*



**A special guest to the 2015 WTF World Taekwondo Championships in Chelyabinsk, Russia: Kit McConnell (left), the International Olympic Committee’s Sports Director.**

*“The Chelyabinsk championships have witnessed a historic moment: As the centerpiece of the opening ceremony, a first-ever joint demonstration was conducted by the International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) and WTF demonstration teams. The groundwork*

*for that had been laid by the signing of a joint protocol of accord last August at the Youth Olympics in Nanjing, China, by the ITF and WTF presidents – a signing overseen by IOC President Thomas Bach.”* Calling the protocol “a great initiative,” McConnell, said, “It is important for the athletes to be able to access each other’s events, it gives opportunities to athletes.”

*During the championships a new WTF Secretary General was announced.*



**WTF President Choue said:**

*“We are delighted to announce the appointment of Hoss Rafaty as the WTF Secretary General. I have no doubt that he will contribute greatly to the future development of the WTF. His relationship with the ITF will help enhance the future cooperation between our two federations and strengthen the world taekwondo family.”*

*The WTF Press Statement added: “He was awarded a taekwondo 3rd Dan by the International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) before moving to the WTF.”*

*“In a world first, the International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) and WTF demonstration teams will carry out a joint performance at the tourney’s opening ceremony. WTF President Chungwon Choue, presiding over a meeting of the WTF Council on May 10, quipped, “... from now on, we can say ‘WTF’ stands for ‘World Taekwondo Family.’ This means we even embrace ITF taekwondo.”*

*Speaking after the opening ceremony, WTF President Choue said:*

*“Tonight was a historic moment for taekwondo. We have not seen WTF and ITF athletes compete together before and this was a significant step forward in our vision for a truly united global taekwondo family. We do not want to leave any athletes behind and we are committed to working with the ITF so that one day every athlete will have the opportunity to compete at the Olympic Games”.*



***IOC President Thomas Bach** (above) delivered a pre-recorded broadcast speech in which he said he “valued the cooperation” between the two federations, which he maintained, was “in the best interest of the sport and athletes.” The joint demonstration laid, he continued, “a firm foundation for the future.”*

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION FROM WTF WEBSITE ON DR. CHOU**  
**CHUNGWON:**

Like many Korean men, he did taekwondo while doing his military service but it was while studying in the U.S. in 1972 that he happened to visit a friend’s taekwondo gymnasium in New Jersey. He found it interesting that “many Americans were really enjoying their practice of taekwondo.” Yet importantly, he realized that not only were Americans and others doing taekwondo but that “they were doing a uniquely Korean sport, and that is why I keep saying that taekwondo is Korea’s gift to the world.”

His recognition of taekwondo’s universal appeal went further in 1983 when the Korean government approved his proposal to form the department of taekwondo attached to Kyung-Hee University’s sports and physical education program.

In January 1997 Choue became the 10th president of Kyung Hee University, which had been founded by his father Dr. Choue Young-seek. With a bachelor’s degree in

economics, he later completed his Master's in international politics at Farleigh Dickinson University in the U.S. In 1984, he completed his Ph.D. in international politics at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium.

It is this academic background, including his studies in international politics, which he believes assists in his role as WTF president and in promoting taekwondo globally, particularly when the WTF is involved at the highest levels in sports promotion "because, as you know the WTF is an international organization." His background helps in his and the WTF's relationships with their own affiliates and other sports bodies. His resume and credentials are as impressive as he is dignified, even humble. He has little difficulty in speaking about how sport can be a way to peace.

He also believes taekwondo has a role to play in bringing the two Koreas, North and South together, particularly when the Pyongyang-based International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) and the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) have had discussions which may allow North Korean taekwondo competitors to compete in a future Olympic games.

*BACKGROUND INFORMATION FROM IOC WEBSITE ON DR. CHANG UNG:*

Education

Graduate of Pyongyang University of Physical Education and Sports (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Professorship at the China Renmin University, People's Republic of China (2005); Honorary Doctor's Degree of Physical Education at the State University for Physical Education and Sports of St. Petersburg, Russian Federation (2007); Doctorate for Sociology and Political Science conferred by the State Commission for Conferring Academic Degrees and Titles of DPR Korea (2008); Professorship at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, People's Republic of China (2010-)

Activities in Taekwondo and Martial Arts: Vice-President (1979-1988) then 1st Vice-President (1989-1993) of the DPR Korea Martial Arts Federation; Founding Member (1980), Member (1984-1988) then Standing Adviser of the DPR Korea Taekwondo Committee (1998-); Executive President of the Preparatory Committee for Uniting Taekwondo (1994-); Special Advisor to OCA President (1996-); Vice-President (2001-2002) then President of IMGFC (2002-2006); President of the International Taekwondo Federation (2002-); Chairman of the Martial Art Committee of GAISF (2003-2005); Advisor to the International Boxing Association (AIBA) (2010-)