

## | SMALL BIZ PROFILE |

Broad Ripple Martial Arts Academy

## School teaches martial arts as a way of life

*Third-degree black belt has relaxed approach*



Keith Boggs, owner of Broad Ripple Martial Arts Academy, has 10 years of teaching experience.

By Ana Contreras • Special to IBJ

**K**eith Boggs, owner of the Broad Ripple Martial Arts Academy, isn't the stern, angry instructor one would expect from karate movies.

He's relaxed and friendly, always smiling and cracking jokes.

"Mr. Boggs has a way of making you laugh, bringing out the positive in a negative situation and making you feel good about yourself," said Phil Morgan, Boggs' instructor and owner of Morgan's Karate USA in Plainfield.

Boggs has been training in the martial arts for more than 13 years and has 10 years of teaching experience. He is a third-degree black belt and has won state and national competitions.

When he began training in karate, Boggs, 46, didn't intend to pursue a martial arts career. He started his training in boxing in 1968. Although he boxed for many years, problems with his eyesight limited his career and led him to karate.

Boggs started training more informally, just wanting to learn about the martial arts. But he found his more competitive side was drawing him toward tournament fighting.

Boggs' karate training took a signifi-

cant turn when he was introduced to Phil Morgan at a karate tournament. He was impressed by the camaraderie among Morgan's students.

"This was a man who literally changed peoples lives," Boggs said, "and I wanted to be a part of that."

Boggs trained with Morgan and eventually worked as the program director for Morgan's dojo (karate school) in Plainfield. After eight years, Boggs decided to focus more on his own business, a Pepperidge Farm snack and cookie distributorship.

But he eventually was able to combine his love for martial arts and his entrepreneurial goals. Boggs and Marvin Massey, a friend and karate instructor, joked about opening a karate dojo. After serious consideration, they opened their first location at 6600 Westfield Blvd. in Broad Ripple.

The first few months were difficult. Attendance at the school was lean while the dojo was establishing a student base. But the school opened during the high point of Tae-Bo fitness popularity, and

Boggs found the aerobic kickboxing classes sustained the school.

The dojo experienced success in its first few years, but it has recently undergone a series of changes.

Last year, Massey decided to leave the school to start his own dojo.

In addition, when the building housing BRMAA was sold to owners who wanted to tear it down, the school had to move to 5145 E. 65th St. Although Boggs looked for a Broad Ripple location, he couldn't find one suitable for the needs of the school and ended up two miles away from Broad Ripple.

Since the move, the school has been doing well. BRMAA offers primary instruction in the Shorei Goju Ryu style of karate, but it also offers kickboxing, yoga, reflexology and Jeet Kun Do.

The school has about 100 students, most of whom were retained during the move. It's the loyalty and dedication of his students that's kept the school going, Boggs said.

Having grown up in a martial arts family, Rhonda Schwindt, a blue belt at BRMAA, was selective when choosing a karate school for her son. She wanted an instructor who made the martial arts a way of life.

"Boggs does a nice job of mixing discipline while at the same time keeping it fun and comfortable," she said.

**Address:** 5145 E. 65th St.

**Phone:** 251-2488

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**Founded:** 1997

**Founders:** Marvin Massey and Keith Boggs

**Owner:** Keith Boggs

**Service:** martial arts instruction

**Employees:** 2

**Revenue (2001):** \$100,000

**One-year goal:** Add a second room for kickboxing and yoga.

**Industry outlook:** The karate industry is moving more toward teaching karate for fitness and less as an art. Students and instructors alike are less concerned with reaching a certain rank and more concerned with their physical and mental well-being.

Boggs takes his instruction a step further, she added, explaining to his students the meaning behind the martial arts.

He focuses his instruction on creating better citizens rather than fighters.

"What we teach them, we hope they'll never have to use," he said. "We hope to develop people with self-confidence, discipline, self-reliance, and self-defense is a bonus."\*