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Wharton aims to raise funds for Mihdi

By René Hill

Bermuda's world-renowned Hall of Fame Martial Artist Master Al Wharton has thrown his support behind Mihdi Brock's fight for life.

Master Wharton's Martial Arts Festival, which today and tomorrow aims to raise funds for the little Bermudian boy at the event and help sponsor Mihdi's treatment abroad.

Mr. Wharton, who has been a martial artist for over 40 years, recognises a fighter when he sees one.

The Academy's motto "Energy and persistence will conquer all things" certainly applies to Mihdi.

The 11-year-old has been in a fight for his life since he was in his mother's womb. Twelve years later he continues his fight under daily care by internationally respected physician and Martial Arts Master Dr. Baolin Wu.

Mihdi has a treatment protocol that is all encompassing. The whole person is being addressed with herbs three times a day every day, and acupuncture, physical adjustments, and Qi Gong treatments five times a week.

In addition to this, Mihdi's father Marvin Brock, also a martial artist and student of Master Wharton for over 20 years has studied Oriental medicine in an effort to support his son's fight for life. He assists by holding Mihdi in traction every ten minutes, preparing his herbal prescriptions, and helping him with his physical daily therapies, which include swinging on the parallel bars and crawling twice a day.

As Mihdi's primary caregiver, Marvin looks after all of his son's daily needs such as meals, help with homework, getting him to school, the daily appointments with Dr. Wu, Sylvan Learning for tutorial assistance and various other extracurricular activities as prescribed by Dr. Wu for Mihdi's therapy; it is, indeed, more than a full-time job.



Mihdi Brock: Persistence conquers all things

He also takes hot meals to Mihdi for lunch at school to make sure Mihdi is getting the sustenance that he needs.

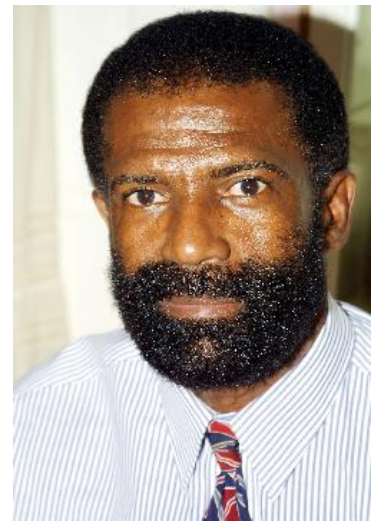
In Oriental medicine, a cold or what we in the West see as a virus, in the absence of bacterial infection, can be combated with hot food in addition to herbs and keeping warm. Mihdi has a compromised immune system, and is susceptible to colds, which if not cared for immediately and very carefully, can quickly turn into pneumonia, a life-threatening situation for him as he has a reduced ability to cough out of the lower section of his lungs, thus he can't expel mucous.

For most of us in the West, Mihdi's treatment is considered an alternative form of medicine, but for many in the world, in particular China and other Asian countries such as Japan and Korea, it is the primary medical modality that has been used for thousands of years and recently complemented with Western allopathic medicine. Now, after Mihdi recently underwent an extensive series of tests, examinations, and consultations at the Mayo Clinic, his family has reached the conclusion that Oriental medicine is the only hope for life that Mihdi has. The team of specialists at the Mayo Clinic advised that Mihdi requires urgent intensive traction therapy. One method to do that, however, would require two major surgeries, and it is felt that Mihdi would not be able to survive them. His health, indeed his life now must rely entirely on the treatment protocols of Oriental medicine and Dr. Wu's expertise.

A traction table device is seen as a suitable method to provide the traction therapy rather than risk Mihdi's failing to tolerate the surgeries. This is a current focus of fundraising efforts to obtain this table for Mihdi as well as continue to provide for his primary treatment programme and support, and sessions at Sylvan Learning to help him reach academic grade level. Mihdi's annual funding requirements are now \$110,000.

Over all of these years, it has been the people and businesses of Bermuda that have been the backbone in this effort; without this foundation of support, Mihdi would not be alive today.

Mr. Brock says that his years of martial arts training and exposure to Asian culture were the keys to the current heavy reliance on Chinese and Taoist Medicine in treating Mihdi.



Al Wharton

While studying with Master Al, he saw first hand the amazing examples of the power of Qi (Chi). He saw practitioners of Uechi Ryu Karate, which he studied under Master Wharton, break baseball bats and two by fours with their bare arms and legs.

He continued: 'Because I was born and educated in Western society, Bermuda and America, my whole concept and thinking of and about medicine was Western. After consulting with the best doctors at British Columbia Children's Hospital, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Cleveland Clinic, John Hopkins and Boston Children's, it was decided that, at two and a half years of age, Mihdi likely wouldn't endure repeated surgeries for excess fluid on his brain and the Kyphoscoliosis that was progressing at two degrees a month.'

The prognosis of the top surgeon at Boston Children's was eye opening and precipitated Marvin telling him, "It's my turn now. I'll find a way. I studied Chinese medicine for a while in Canada, and during my years of training in the martial arts I have seen some amazing feats.

"It's time to take a look at what Oriental medicine can do to help this little boy."

Mihdi is clearly a fighter and he is inspiring Master Wharton to lend his school's support to this international effort. Not only are there many benefits to be had from Oriental medicine, but many benefits are also obtained from studying the martial arts, and many of these are shared by Master Wharton at the Bermuda Arts and Fitness Academy and on it's website www.bermudaafa.com.

"Students are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and humility, and to develop a style of life characterised by respect, courtesy, cleanliness, responsibility, integrity, self-discipline, loyalty, unconditional self-esteem, determination, perseverance, and self-mastery," said Mr. Wharton. Marvin notes that his further training in Qi Gong with Dr. Wu helps him in many ways; one of which is to have the calmness and the fortitude to be there for his son constantly, every day.

Now with this fundraising support from Master Wharton and the Bermuda Arts and Fitness Academy, and hopefully from the rest of Bermuda as it joins them through the upcoming Martial Arts Festival, Mihdi will have the support to continue the fight of his life. The fundraising will also bolster Marvin in his persistent efforts to raise funds.

Marvin says that the mandate of The Mihdi Joon Fund, www.themihdijoonfund.org, which is the fundraising vehicle for Mihdi's treatment and support, is to share the benefits of these years of research and study with Bermuda and the world.

The Fund has now begun its educational programme. He hopes Mihdi will continue in this effort.

The event takes place at the Bermuda College today and tomorrow. Seminars run today, while the Martial Arts Tournament and Wellness Fair is tomorrow. For more information visit: <http://www.bermudaafa.com/Events.htm>