

UP CLOSE

AND PERSONAL
in **TUCKER**

*Includes Smoke Rise • Embry Hills • Northlake
Volume 11 Issue 1*

MEET “Ms. Aye”
SHE’S A BLACKBELT,
AN INSTRUCTOR,
A SCIENTIST,
AN EXECUTIVE,
A SCUBA DIVER,
A LATIN DANCER,
A PHOTOGRAPHER—
WHAT NEXT?
(...A Ph.D.)



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By Aye Kodsup, *in her own words*:

“I was born in southern Thailand in 1983. My name is Pornpimol Kodsup, but family and friends call me by my name for short, ‘Aye’ (pronounced ‘eye’) which means ‘love’ in Chinese. My Taekwondo and dance students at the Tucker Recreation Center respectfully address me as ‘Ms. Aye’.

I came to the United States in 2007 after receiving my Master’s Degree. I wanted to travel for a couple of months before beginning my Ph.D., and I also wanted to perfect my spoken and written English. By enrolling in an exchange program to America I was able to do both. However, after three months of living in the United States, I began to change my plans, and now, six years later, I’m still here!

My family is composed of my parents, an older sister and me. My mother and father always worked very hard for their children’s future. Since we were young, my sister and I were taught to be respectful, optimistic, and to always help our parents and others as much as we can. My parents both are retired teachers. My mother was a very ‘strict’ math teacher. She was the inspiration for my love of mathematics. My father is one of the most multi-talented persons I have ever known. He inspired my love of art, sports, and music.

Education has always been very important to my family. Ever since I was 4 years old my parents started sending me to different schools in other cities and provinces to get the best education that was offered at that time. The journey to and from school was time-consuming and laborious—sometimes by school bus, but other times by biking or walking many miles. At other times I lived away from home to attend better schools than were available locally. During one period I resided with my uncle and his wife in the staff residence at the government fisheries center which employed him.



I recently earned my second degree black belt.





Performing as a young girl in Thailand.

Having a well-rounded academic experience also incorporated extra-curricular activities. I was my school's drum major, was active in cheerleading, took part in pageants, took classes in drawing, winning a first place prize in my town, and had an active life in athletics.

In Thailand I was surrounded by ocean. I could say that all of my childhood life, I lived near the ocean. My home town is in Phang-Nga. We are very fortunate that we have two of the most beautiful islands and coral reefs in the region, Similan Island and Surin Island. My father taught me how to swim. My first swimming lesson was in the ocean above the beautiful coral reef, in crystal clear water, and with a blue sky. He put a mask and snorkel on me, held my feet and told me to paddle my hands and he will paddle his feet. From my first swimming lesson, I realized how much I love ocean and of course I knew exactly what I wanted to be when I grew up.

In 9th grade I was a team leader in a scientific competition that won a second place award. I was an honor student in high school and took high honors in

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With parents and older sister.





Both my parents were schoolteachers.

mathematics, following in my mother's footsteps.

In 2001, at seventeen, I was accepted to Kasetsart University which is known to be one of the most prestigious academic institutions in Thailand. I received a scholarship to study at Kasetsart University in the Fishery Faculty, with a major in Fisheries Biology, and minor in Marine Biology. During undergraduate school, I maintained Honor

Scholarships by having the highest grade point average in each year. Also, I was learning and trained directly under Professor Khanjanapaj Lewmanomont, the most renowned algae research scientist in Thailand, and Associate Professor Chatcharee Supanwanid, one of the most knowledgeable in aquatic seagrass and algae in Thailand. I did many activities and held 'Female Dormitory Secretary' position in my senior year.

In 2005, I received my Bachelor of Science degree and began to work toward a Master of Science in Fisheries Science with a major in Aquatic Ecology and Environmental Assessment. I have deep passion for Aquatic plants, Algae, and Seagrass. This was the reason to deepen understanding via advanced study and research. My thesis was in this field. The Thesis was entitled 'Aquatic Resources Production Potential and Enrichment Status Assessment by Integration of Phytoplankton and Aquatic Plant Database: Case Studies of Vajiralongkorn Reservoir and Srinakarin Reservoir' advised by Associate Professor Charumas Meksumpun, Ph.D., the famous environmental scientist. The research was the first of its kind. It was used in all of the primary production databases and set the new production potential and enrichment status criteria for

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I enjoy salsa dancing.



As a Drum Major.

reservoir or fresh water basins in a tropical region. In 2007, I graduated with a Master's Degree. I was 23 years old at that time. Both degrees were completed with honors. I also plan to start my PhD in Business in coming years.

I attribute who I am today to the hard work of my parents. We survived with modest means in earlier days. I used to live to a small village with no electricity and one dirt road. It is a community of farmers and fishermen. There was only one school in a 20 miles radius. My parents were young energetic teachers from city. They focused on changing people's lives, especially the new generation. They started to introduce their students to the outside world through music and sports. Specifically band and volleyball. My father was a coach and mother was the team manager. The team was one of the most famous and strongest team in the province. Their hard work changed their students' future. Many finished High School

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Instructing young Taekwondo students at the Tucker Recreation Center.



As a Managing Director.



With Tucker Taekwondo Center Owner, Master Wallace Taylor.

and most went to college. My parents said 'If you want to give people something, give them opportunity and a future'. I remembered it and have been doing it ever since. During college I loved to visit poor areas where I provided health and hygiene instruction, as well as help in elementary school construction. My goal is to have my own foundation to help children or at least give them opportunity in the form of academic scholarships for higher education.

Moving to America in 2007 was the textbook example of Culture Shock! The first year was especially hard. Changes in driving laws, food, weather, language, etc. were hard getting used to. After a while, it got better. I lived in New Jersey for 2 years, learning language and culture and moved to Atlanta in 2009 to start a new chapter. Here, I would take the train to library in the morning or at night for English classes. Meanwhile, I was introduced to the Martial Arts world of Taekwondo

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by Master Wallace Taylor, the owner of Taylor Holdings, Inc. (a composite corporation owning several Atlanta-based businesses, Tucker Taekwondo Center and Taylor Academy of Fine Arts). He holds a 4th degree Black Belt in Taekwondo, and is now pursuing his 5th degree Black Belt.

The first time I received Taekwondo instruction was at Tucker Recreation Center. My classmates were kindergartners and first graders. I was trained directly under Master Wallace Taylor as his apprentice. While training, I had to wear a purple belt with a white stripe. My first belt testing was my First Degree Black Belt. I was tested by four Black Belts (including Master Taylor). Passing the test didn't hit me until three days later—I began to feel excited about it—a dream fulfilled—I remembered in college biking by a Taekwondo gym every day and thinking, 'this is really awesome' and wishing to learn it some day, but I never pushed myself hard enough or mustered the confidence to try. So it took me a while to accept this accomplishment, especially since it was a dream that I never thought would happen. I always tell my Taekwondo students 'if I can do it, you can do it'. I am currently a second degree black belt and I work as the Managing Director of Taylor

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My groundbreaking research in fishery science is still used as resource material for people working in the field.

Holdings International, Inc which means the Operations of both The Tucker Taekwondo Center (2 locations) and The Taylor Academy of Fine Arts (2 locations). In addition to my managerial commitments, I am the head instructor of my locations in Taekwondo and an assistant Salsa instructor in Latin Dance. I started a Taekwondo competition team in August, 2012. This team of seven

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students, won twelve gold medals and six silver medals in their first and second major tournaments in the Fall of that year. The team currently has 13 students.

When time permits, I enjoy dance. I am a trained Belly Dancer and love Latin dancing (Salsa, Bachata, Merenge). It reminds me of times past when I performed traditional Thai dances. I also enjoy practicing martial arts and hope to pursue a degree in Shinkendo (traditional Japanese Swordsmanship) in 2013. I am currently pursuing my third degree black belt in Taekwondo and was awarded the title of Kyusanim (instructor) by Master Wallace Taylor.

In 2011, I took my passion for portrait and nature photography to a professional level. After taking classes and amassing substantial experience, I began 'Aye Photography Studio', a subsidiary of Taylor Holdings International, Inc. I have had a love for photography since I was young. I remember playing with my parents' camera—an old Kodak brand—bulky, heavy and of course, film required. I always take my camera with me everywhere to capture the moment. I love traveling and a good camera is an important tool for

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traveling. National Geographic Magazine is my inspiration. My photographic interests include Human Emotions and Star Trace. My work can be viewed at: www.taekwondo.smugmug.com.

What I have learned is that realistic goal-setting and the perseverance to fight for what you dream makes life worth living. Who you are today is a composite of who you were in times gone by. Who you are tomorrow is largely determined by who you choose to be today. It's never too late to start.

My new goal is to pursue my Ph.D. in 2014."



In a Thai performance as an Angel

For more information about the Tucker Taekwondo Center, contact Ms. Aye at 770-896-4588