

# UNITED STATES MARTIAL ARTIST ASSOCIATION



## USMAA CONSTITUTION

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**Grandmaster Matthew Antkowiak, CPP, PCI, PSP**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt, Invictus Martial Arts**  
**International Director, USMAA**

# PREAMBLE

*We, the members of the United States Martial Artist Association, in recognition of the rich heritage of the martial arts and enduring values of martial artists, unite under and acknowledge this constitution. Guided by the principles of honor, discipline, respect, and unity, we seek to promote the development of martial arts in all its forms. We are committed to fostering a community where practitioners of all styles can collaborate, learn, and grow. Our mission is to cultivate an engaging community of martial artists that fosters respect and discipline through encouragement to empower and equip individual growth in the martial arts within the context of our American heritage while inspiring martial artists to achieve their highest potential both on and off the mat by promoting excellence, innovation, relevance, and cultural appreciation of the martial arts. We engage, equip, encourage, and empower martial artists as we strive to be the leading force in martial arts by providing an inclusive community of all martial arts styles and systems in an environment of excellence, free from politics and division.*

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## USMAA CONSTITUTION



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### WHERE AS,

*The United States Martial Artist Association was established in 1977 by Dr. William A. Rankin, Ph.D., 10<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt, in Maryland. Beyond being the founder, Dr. Rankin was the International Director and owner of the United States Martial Artist Association.*

### WHERE AS,

*On August 12, 2024, Dr. Rankin appointed Grandmaster Matthew Antkowiak, 8<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt as the International Director of the United States Martial Artist Association and transferred all ownership rights and privileges associated with the United States Martial Artist Association to Grandmaster Antkowiak. The appointment of Grandmaster Antkowiak as the International Director of the United States Martial Artist Association by Dr. Rankin is a lifetime appointment.*

### WHERE AS,

*This Constitution is the social contract between the members of the United States Martial Artist Association and the International Director of the United States Martial Artist Association, ratified to establish regular order, organizational structure, purpose, and guidelines for the members of the United States Martial Artist Association. The United*

*States Martial Artist Association is an independent organization, governed by its own constitution, rules, and by-laws.*

## ARTICLE I: BRANDING AND PURPOSE

### **Section 1: Name**

Official name of the organization: United States Martial Artist Association (USMAA)  
Legal name of the USMAA: Invictus Training & Consulting, LLC, DBA: United States Martial Artist Association

### **Section 2: Logo**

The official logo of the USMAA is:



### **Section 3: Usage**

The USMAA name and logo along with the above color scheme are trademarked and copyrighted. Any use without written permission from the International Director of the USMAA is not allowed and is legally forbidden. The reproduction or use in any fashion without expressed written permission from the International Director is strictly prohibited. All monetary gains and the profits from any unauthorized use are considered theft of the intellectual property of the USMAA under international copyright and trademark laws. Thereby all profits gained by unauthorized use are subject to seizure at the expense of the individual or organization that profited from the unauthorized use.

### **Section 4: Purpose**

- To promote the growth and development of martial artists.
- To provide professional development and training for martial artists of all levels.
- To foster community among martial artists across the United States and abroad.
- To encourage the exchange of ideas and practices among different martial arts styles.
- To Provide black belt rank evaluation, recognition, and advancement.
- To provide an open sport martial arts tournament circuit and national championship.
- To provide martial arts school accreditation.
- To engage, equip, and encourage martial artists both on and off the martial arts mat.

## ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

### **Section 1: Eligibility**

Individuals seeking membership with the USMAA must have a clear criminal background and cannot be required to register as a sex offender in any jurisdiction globally. All candidates and members must disclose, in writing, all previous charged felony level offenses, any level of charged sex offenses, or any level of a charged crimes against children. All USMAA directors and ambassadors must be certified black belts and a lifetime USMAA member. All appointments are at the discretion of the USMAA International Director. *All memberships must be processed through the USMAA Headquarters.*

### **Section 2: Benefits, Rights & Responsibilities**

The USMAA membership benefits are publicly published and available on the official USMAA website. Every member of the USMAA has access to view a copy of this Constitution digitally. A digital copy of this Constitution is publicly published and available on the official USMAA website. All members of the USMAA have the right to contact the International Director regarding any issue connected to USMAA or its Constitution. All members of the Association are expected to adhere to all the covenants contained in this

Constitution and conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with Article IV: Code of Conduct & Ethics.

### **Section 3: Fees, Dues & Monies Collected**

All fees, dues, and monies collected related to USMAA, its services, or its products are to be collected only by the headquarters of USMAA and at the direction of the International Director. A written letter of authorization by the International Director is the only method recognized as acceptable to demonstrate authorization to collect funds. Fees, dues, payment schedule, and renewal process are at the discretion of the International Director. USMAA fees, dues, services, and products are publicly published on the official USMAA website ([www.USMAA.world](http://www.USMAA.world)).

### **Section 4: Termination and Suspension of Membership**

Any USMAA member that fails to disclose a previous charged felony offense, a sex offense, a crime against a child, or violent act in any jurisdiction globally is subject to an immediate suspension or termination of their USMAA membership. Any USMAA member that fails to disclose a newly charged felony offense, sexual offense of any penalty grade, crime against a child of any penalty grade, or are violent act in any jurisdiction globally is subject to immediate suspension or termination of their USMAA membership. Any USMAA member that violates any aspect of the USMAA Constitution is subject to immediate suspension or termination of their USMAA membership. All suspensions, terminations, or reinstatements of USMAA memberships are at the discretion of the USMAA International Director. USMAA memberships that are suspended or terminated are not subject to any refund of any monies paid to the USMAA by the member suspended or terminated.

## ARTICLE III: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

### **Section 1: Executive Management**

The USMAA is an executive director managed organization and has been since its inception. The executive director of the USMAA is titled the International Director. The International Director of the USMAA has full functional control over the USMAA.

### **Section 2: Board of Advisors**

On August 12, 2024, Grandmaster Antkowiak established the USMAA Board of Advisors (BOA) to provide advice and counsel to the International Director of the USMAA.

The USMAA BOA is tasked to assist the International Director at their request with major decisions, member sanctioning/adjudication, advice, counsel, competition rule development, martial arts school accreditation, and senior black belt (6<sup>th</sup> Dans & above) advancement of USMAA members. The USMAA BOA is solely tasked to evaluate and determine rank promotions for all USMAA senior black belt promotions. It requires an affirmative majority vote by an USMAA BOA quorum for the USMAA to award a senior black belt advancement in rank and bestow a title associated with the promotion. The USMAA BOA reaches a quorum to provide official proclamations, recommendations, and sanctioning/adjudication of a member when four of the seven members and the International Director are present for a meeting and a majority vote is reached. All members of the USMAA BOA serve at the pleasure of the International Director, and they can be replaced or removed without cause.

The composition of the USMAA BOA:

- International Director

- Chairman of the Board of Advisors
- Board Members (minimum of 2 members and up to 4 board members)
- Sergeant at Arms
- Lead Chaplain

### **Section 3: Headquarters (HQ)**

The HQ of the USMAA is located inside Invictus Martial Arts, which is located at:  
1919 West Pioneer Parkway  
Arlington, Texas 76013

The mailing address for the USMAA is:  
1700 Oak Tree Lane  
Arlington, Texas 76013

### **Section 4: Jurisdiction**

United States federal code and Texas state laws govern the USMAA. All member parties of the USMAA regarding all legal matters connected to USMAA agree that the primary legal jurisdiction of the USMAA is United States District Court - Northern District of Texas related to international or federal legal matters and the Tarrant County Courts System for state legal matters.

International or U.S. federal legal matter jurisdiction:  
United States District Court - Northern District of Texas  
501 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Fort Worth, Texas 76012

State or County legal matter jurisdiction:  
Tarrant County Courts  
100 West Weatherford Street  
Fort Worth, Texas 76196

The registered agent and corporate representative for the USMAA is Mr. Matthew David Antkowiak of Arlington, Texas and all services of papers shall be accepted at the HQ of the USMAA.

### **Section 5: Memberships & Member Structure**

#### ➤ ***Junior Annual Membership***

Junior Annual Membership is for individuals that are 16 years old or under. They have access to all member benefits except advance black belt testing (2<sup>nd</sup> Dan and above). These memberships and benefits are accessible for 12 months from the date joined.

#### ➤ ***Individual Annual Membership***

Individual Annual Membership is for individuals that are 17 years old or up. They have access to all member benefits except advance black belt testing (2<sup>nd</sup> Dan and above). These memberships and benefits are accessible for 12 months from the date joined.

#### ➤ ***Individual Lifetime Membership***

Individual Lifetime Membership is for individuals that are any age. They have access to all member benefits except when there is a minimum age requirement connected to advance black belt testing (2<sup>nd</sup> Dan and above). These memberships and benefits are accessible for the lifetime of the member. Lifetime memberships are not transferable.

➤ **Annual School Membership**

Annual School Membership is for martial arts schools, training centers, or training groups that are affiliated with the Association. They have access to all school benefits. These memberships and benefits are accessible for 12 months from the date joined.

➤ **Lifetime School Membership**

Lifetime School Membership is for martial arts schools, training centers, or training groups that are affiliated with the Association. They have access to all school benefits. These memberships and benefits are accessible for the lifetime of the school, center, or group. Lifetime memberships are not transferable.

*Membership benefits for each membership type are publicly published and available on the official USMAA website and are subject to change by the International Director without notice.*

## ARTICLE IV: EXECUTIVE BRANCH

### **Section 1: Composition**

The USMAA is an executive director managed organization. The head of the Executive Branch of the USMAA is the International Director. However, it is necessary to establish subordinate positions and supportive functions to the International Director to ensure the vision is realized and the mission is achieved. No matter the position or function, ultimately the responsibility for any final decision resides with the International Director.

### **Section 2: Chain of Command & Succession of Leadership**

The USMAA expects that all members and Association executives adhere to the highest standards of respect and discipline when interacting with each other. Disrespect or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated and would result in sanctioning of the individual conducting themselves inappropriately. In the event of the death of the International Director, the USMAA, BOA will appoint an interim International Director until the executor of the estate of the International Director takes actions defined in his last will and testament.

The USMAA chain-of-command

1. International Director, USMAA
2. Chairman of the USMAA BOA
3. USMAA Sergeant at Arms
4. USMAA BOA Board Members (by date of appointment to the BOA)
5. USMAA Lead Chaplain
6. USMAA Sports Commissioner
7. National & State Directors (by date of appointment of their rank)

### **Section 3: Sergeant at Arms Duties & Powers**

To protect and preserve the integrity of USMAA mission and vision, the International Director may appoint a Sergeant at Arms. The USMAA Sergeant at Arms is responsible for enacting the directives and supporting the initiatives of the International Director. The Sergeant at Arms is responsible to maintain order at all official USMAA events, conduct background checks on individuals as directed by the International Director, monitor USMAA member conduct, conduct administrative investigations on behalf of the Association, and report findings with recommendations to the International Director. If discipline actions are necessary, the Sergeant at Arms will provide verbal testimony to the USMAA BOA and if necessary, provide written reports. The Sergeant at Arms shall

exemplify the standards set forth in Article IV: Code of Conduct & Ethics of this Constitution.

#### **Section 4: Chaplaincy Duties and Powers**

Faith in God is the foundation that the USMAA mission and vision were built upon. Serving others and connecting with those that are often unseen, unheard, or otherwise left behind without a community is at the core of what we do as an Association. The International Director may appoint a cadre of chaplains under the direction of the Lead Chaplain to serve the greater martial arts community, providing character development, and ministry as needed. The USMAA Lead Chaplain is responsible for enacting the directives and supporting the initiatives of the International Director related ministry and community service. Chaplains shall exemplify the standards set forth in Article IV: Code of Conduct & Ethics of this Constitution.

#### **Section 5: Sports Commissioner Duties and Powers**

The USMAA reach, mission, and vision extend into the sport martial arts arena. The International Director may appoint a Sports Commissioner. The USMAA Sports Commissioner is responsible for enacting the directives and supporting the initiatives of the International Director related to regulation of open martial arts competition and the sanctioning of sport martial arts tournaments by the USMAA. The rules and regulations for sanctioning open martial arts competitions and tournaments are publicly published and available on the official USMAA website ([www.USMAA.world](http://www.USMAA.world)). The Sports Commissioner shall exemplify the standards set forth in Article IV: Code of Conduct & Ethics of this Constitution.

#### **Section 6: Director Duties & Powers**

National, State, and Area Directors serve at the pleasure of the International Director. The sole purpose of these roles is to enact the directives and support the initiatives of the International Director. Director responsibilities include overseeing member activities, assisting with sanctioned events, appointing subordinate directors, and promoting the advancement of USMAA memberships within their jurisdiction. Directors shall nominate worthy individuals for HOF awards and notify the USMAA HQ when members accomplish something noteworthy or obtain special milestones in their personal or professional lives. Directors are expected to attend the regular monthly leadership meetings and the annual USMAA HOF event. Waivers of these responsibilities shall be requested in writing when a conflict interferes with a director being able to fulfill any of their duties. Directors shall exemplify the standards set forth in Article IV: Code of Conduct & Ethics of this Constitution.

#### **Section 7: National Ambassadors Duties and Powers**

The USMAA reach, mission, and vision extend beyond the borders of the United States. The International Director may appoint national ambassadors to countries to enact the directives and support the initiatives of the International Director in those countries. National Ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the International Director. Ambassador responsibilities include overseeing member activities, assisting with sanctioned events, appointing subordinate directors, and promoting the advancement of USMAA memberships within their jurisdiction. Ambassadors shall nominate worthy individuals for HOF awards and notify the USMAA HQ when individuals accomplish something noteworthy or obtain special milestones in their personal or professional lives. Ambassadors are expected to attend the regular monthly leadership meetings and the annual USMAA HOF event. Waivers of these responsibilities shall be requested in writing when a conflict interferes with an ambassador not being able to fulfill any of their duties.

National ambassadors shall exemplify the standards set forth in Article IV: Code of Conduct & Ethics of this Constitution.

#### **Section 8: Removal**

Members of the USMAA Executive Branch serve at the pleasure of the International Director. They can be removed or replaced without cause or notice. The International Director has the authority to create jurisdictional boundaries and subordinate areas.

#### **Section 9: Authority and Limitations**

The scope of authority for the members of Executive Branch and their official offices are limited to the duties and powers contained in this article of this Constitution; however, the International Director has the authority to add or limit their duties and powers.

### ARTICLE V: ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

#### **Section 1: Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The USMAA will host an open AGM at the USMAA HOF event each July for the purpose of making general Association announcements, announcing the appointment of executive branch members, announcing approved USMAA senior black belt promotions, and announce the induction of members to the USMAA HOF and USMAA Wall of Honor. Without openly announcing dissent or providing written notification of dissent at the AGM, it is understood that the general members agree and consent with items announced at the AGM.

#### **Section 2: Monthly Leadership Meetings**

USMAA hosts a monthly USMAA Leadership Meeting on the first Friday of each month at 5pm central time zone. The agenda will be submitted with the announcement of the meeting link.

#### **Section 3: Meeting Procedures**

Robert's Rules of Order Rules are adopted for meeting procedures.

### ARTICLE VI: CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

#### **United States Martial Artist Association Code of Conduct and Ethics Statement:**

*The United States Martial Artist Association upholds the highest standards of conduct and ethics as a martial arts community. By adhering to this Code of Conduct and Ethics, members of the USMAA contribute to the integrity, honor, and growth of martial arts and the Association. This statement serves as a guiding framework for conduct, reflecting the core values of martial arts and the expectations of all USMAA members. As practitioners, instructors, and members of this honorable tradition, we pledge to abide by the following principles:*

#### **Respect and Honor**

**Respect for Others:** Treat fellow martial artists, instructors, students, and all individuals with respect, regardless of rank, background, or skill level. Foster an environment of respect, discipline, and cooperation.

*The USMAA International Director holds values consistent with the Christian faith. Based on the health and safety of female competitors as well as religious beliefs of the International Director, the Association reserves the right to exclude biological males from competing in sparring or combat divisions established for female competitors. The*



*Association's official stance is aligned with the federal Title IX civil rights protections for female athletes.*

**Respect for Tradition:** Uphold the values, customs, and teachings of martial arts with reverence. Preserve the legacy of those who have come before us, honoring the discipline's history and culture.

### **Integrity and Honesty**

**Truthfulness:** Commit to honesty in all aspects of training, competition, and instruction. Deception, misrepresentation, or unethical conduct is incompatible with this martial arts principle.

**Fairness:** Act with fairness and impartiality in all dealings, avoiding favoritism, bias, or unfair advantages.

### **Discipline and Self-Control**

**Personal Responsibility:** Martial artists are responsible for their actions and decisions, both inside and outside the training center while maintaining control over emotions and reactions, and demonstrating calmness under pressure.

**Non-Violence:** Use martial arts skills solely for self-defense, protection of others, or in service to the greater good. Never misuse martial arts knowledge to harm or intimidate others. Avoid and defuse confrontations when possible.

### **Commitment to Growth**

**Continuous Improvement:** Strive for excellence through dedication to training, continuous learning, and personal development. Set a positive example for others by pursuing mastery of both physical and mental aspects of martial arts.

**Mentorship and Leadership:** Share knowledge and skills with humility, guiding others on their martial arts journey. Encourage and uplift fellow practitioners, fostering a community of growth and mutual respect.

### **Community and Service**

**Contribution to Society:** Martial artists have a responsibility to give back to their communities. Actively participate in community service, outreach programs, and initiatives that promote the positive impact of martial arts on society.

**Responsibility to the USMAA community:** Support the USMAA community and the greater community through active participation, respect for the Association, and adherence to USMAA rules and etiquette.

### **Health and Safety**

**Physical and Mental Well-being:** Prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of oneself and others. Train in a manner that promotes physical fitness, mental clarity, and emotional stability.

**Safety in Practice:** Ensure that all training and sparring practices are conducted safely, minimizing the risk of injury. Protect others by following proper techniques, wearing appropriate gear, and observing safety protocols.

## **Accountability**

**Responsibility for Actions:** Understand that as a martial artist, you are held to a higher standard. Accept responsibility for your actions and their consequences, both within the martial arts community and in everyday life.

**Disciplinary Action:** Violations of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary actions, including suspension or expulsion from the United States Martial Artist Association.

## ARTICLE VII: RANK RECOGNITION

### Section 1: Black Belt Recognition Requirements

The USMAA serves the martial arts community with a valuable resource to validate the legitimacy of black belts. Even though we are not an association tied to a specific martial arts style or training system, the USMAA provides black belts with the opportunity for rank recognition and rank endorsement. The USMAA reserves the right to deny black belt rank recognition or endorsement based on the individual's inability to provide proper proof of rank and degree or a serious and apparent lack of martial arts ability. The USMAA will evaluate individuals for black belt ranking who are unable to produce the necessary proof of ranking. This evaluation will be based on the submission and review of a resume, and martial arts skills demonstration through a physical skill examination.

### Section 2: Black Belt Advancement Requirements

The following guidelines are set to provide legitimacy for the advancement of candidates for promotions beyond 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt. The USMAA yields all time and skill requirements to member black belts and martial arts schools to evaluate all under black belt requirements and that of a 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt. The USMAA recommends that instructors of specific styles and training systems adhere to a class leveling system for under belt that aligns with the USMAA. The color of the belt is not important to the USMAA; however, belt ranks should be classified from white belt to black belt in a regular numbering system descending for under belt ranks and ascending for black belt ranks. Here is the recommended numbering system, time in rank, titles, and age requirements recommended by the USMAA:

#### Under Black Belt Rank Classification

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10<sup>th</sup> Class / White Belt

9<sup>th</sup> Class

8<sup>th</sup> Class

7<sup>th</sup> Class

6<sup>th</sup> Class

5<sup>th</sup> Class

4<sup>th</sup> Class

3<sup>rd</sup> Class

2<sup>nd</sup> Class

1<sup>st</sup> Class / Black Belt Candidate

<b>Black Belt Degree</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Yrs in Previous Rank</b>	<b>Min. Age</b>
Junior Black Belt	Sensei	-	10
Probationary Black Belt	Sensei	-	10
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt	Sensei	-	16
2 <sup>nd</sup> Degree Black Belt	Sensei	1 year	17
3 <sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt	Sensei	2 years	20
4 <sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt	Apprentice Master	3 years	23
5 <sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt	Master	4 years	30
6 <sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt	Master	5 years	35
7 <sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt	Senior Master	6 years	40
8 <sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt	Grandmaster	7 years	49
9 <sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt	Grandmaster	8 years	56
10 <sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt	Supreme Grandmaster	9 years	65

The above black belt ranking requirement chart yields to specific martial arts styles, training systems, and grandmasters. The above black belt requirements should be seen

as a guideline established by the USMAA to protect the legitimacy of the black belt. Even though the USMAA will recognize individuals outside of these requirements, the USMAA will not endorse or officially promote outside of these requirements without the approval of the USMAA BOA.

## ARTICLE VIII: BLACK BELT MARTIAL ARTS COMPETITION & THE USMAA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP CIRCUIT

### **Section 1: Purpose**

The United States Martial Artist Association (USMAA) establishes a nationwide Martial Arts Competition Circuit to foster camaraderie, skill development, and healthy competition among its members. This circuit serves as a platform for martial artists to test their abilities in an environment of respect and sportsmanship. The USMAA National Championship Finals is the pinnacle event of this circuit, offering black belt practitioners the opportunity to compete for national titles in various categories.

### **Section 2: Competition Categories**

The Open Forms competition will be segregated into divisions for youth, adult, and senior black belts. The competition is open to under-belt class competitors competing in the black belt divisions. There are no divisions for under black belt competitors.

The USMAA Open Martial Arts Competition Circuit and National Championship Finals shall feature the following categories:

**Open Forms (Kata):** This category is open to all martial artists and martial arts styles to showcase their skill, precision, and creativity in forms. These divisions include traditional, contemporary, musical, and freestyle forms. Competitors will be judged based on technique, execution, flow, difficulty of the routine, and overall presentation.

**Open Weapons Forms (Kata):** Competitors in this category shall demonstrate their expertise in handling traditional martial arts weapons, such as the bo (staff), nunchaku, sai, kama, and others. Judging criteria shall include weapon control, technique, creativity, precision, and martial intent.

**Point Sparring:** Point sparring is a controlled, competitive format in which competitors engage in light contact combat, aiming to score points based on clean and controlled strikes to legal target areas. The action of each match is stopped for recognition of a point awarded. Matches are conducted with strict adherence to safety protocols, and the first competitor to reach a designated point threshold, or the competitor with the most points at the end of the match, is declared the winner. These divisions will segregate by male and female at 13 years old and by weight for the adult male division, on the basis of biological gender at birth.

**Continuous Sparring:** In continuous sparring, competitors engage in non-stop sparring within set time limits, with judges scoring the match based on technique, control, strategy, and overall performance. The emphasis is on sustained engagement, fluidity of movement, and the ability to control the pace and rhythm of the fight. This is still light contact combat. This is not full contact kickboxing and fighting is prohibited. These

divisions are for adults only. These divisions will segregate by male and female and by weight for the adult male division, on the basis of biological gender at birth.

### **Section 3: Regional Qualifiers and National Finals**

**Regional Qualifiers:** The USMAA Martial Arts Competition Circuit shall include two mandatory Regional Qualifiers, one held in the Eastern United States and one in the Western United States (dividing line is the Mississippi River). These events are designed to determine eligibility for the National Championship. Competitors must participate in at least one of the two Regional Qualifiers to be eligible for the National Finals. Points earned in these qualifiers will determine seeding at the National Championship. The top performers in each category from both the Eastern and Western Regional Qualifiers will automatically secure a spot at the USMAA National Championship Finals.

**National Championship Finals:** The USMAA National Championship Finals, held annually in July, is the culmination of the competition circuit. It brings together the top qualifiers from both regional events to compete for the Black Belt National Titles in Open Forms, Weapons Forms, Point Sparring, and Continuous Sparring. Competitors' performances in the Regional Qualifiers will influence their placement and matchups in the National Finals.

### **Section 4: Eligibility and Qualification**

**Eligibility:** All black belt and under black belt advanced students in good standing as an active individual member with the USMAA are eligible to compete in the USMAA Martial Arts Competition Circuit and National Championship Finals. Competitors must meet the age, rank, and experience level requirements for each respective category and division as established by the USMAA BOA.

**Qualification:** Participation in one of the two Regional Qualifiers is required to qualify for the USMAA National Championship Finals. Points accumulated during the Regional Qualifiers will determine qualification and seeding at the USMAA National Championship Finals.

### **Section 5: Competition Rules and Regulations**

**Governing Rules:** The USMAA BOA shall develop and enforce a standardized set of rules and regulations governing all competition categories, including but not limited to scoring criteria, match conduct, safety protocols, and dispute resolution. All competitors, coaches, and officials must familiarize themselves with and adhere to these rules. The USMAA open martial arts tournament circuit and rules are publicly published and available on the official USMAA website ([www.USMAA.world](http://www.USMAA.world)).

**Safety Protocols:** The safety and well-being of all competitors is paramount. Proper protective gear is required, medical personnel on-site, and adherence to safety guidelines are mandatory in all sparring events. Competitors and officials must act responsibly and with good sportsmanship to ensure a safe and respectful competitive environment. No live blades are allowed in forms competition.

**Judging and Officiating:** Judges and referees for each category will be selected based on their expertise, impartiality, and experience. They will be responsible for scoring,

enforcing rules, and ensuring the integrity of the competition. Judges' decisions shall be final, and any disputes shall be handled in accordance with the established USMAA competition dispute resolution process.

### **Section 6: National Championship Awards**

**Titles and Recognition:** Black Belt National Champions in each category (Open Forms, Weapons Forms, Point Sparring, and Continuous Sparring) will be awarded official titles and recognized as the top practitioners in their respective disciplines. Winners will receive an award and other forms of recognition as determined by the USMAA.

**Hall of Fame Induction:** Black Belt National Champions will be inducted into the USMAA Hall of Fame based on their performance, contributions to martial arts, and adherence to the USMAA Code of Conduct and Ethics for the specific competition category won.

### **Section 7: Competition Circuit Management**

**USMAA Sports Commissioner:** The USMAA Sports Commissioner is responsible for the planning, organization, and oversight of the USMAA Open Martial Arts Competition Circuit and National Championship Finals. The Sports Commissioner shall ensure that all events are conducted fairly, professionally, and in alignment with the values of the USMAA.

**Event Sanctioning:** Regional competitions that are part of the USMAA Martial Arts Competition Circuit must receive official sanctioning from the USMAA. Sanctioned events must adhere to the established competition standards, rules, and safety protocols.

**Annual Review:** The Sports Commissioner and International Director will conduct an annual review of the competition rules, safety protocols, and procedures to ensure they remain current, effective, and aligned with the evolving landscape of martial arts.

### **Section 8: Amendments**

This article may be amended by the International Director with recommendations from the USMAA BOA and Sports Commissioner. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing and will be posted 30 days prior to the next competition circuit starting in July 2025.

*The concept of two Regional Qualifiers as essential steps in the competition circuit, leading up to the National Finals. It ensures that martial artists from across the country have opportunities to qualify and be recognized for their skills on the national stage.*

## ARTICLE IX: HALL OF FAME & WALL OF HONOR

### **Section 1: Purpose**

The USMAA Hall of Fame and Wall of Honor were established to recognize and honor martial artists who have made significant contributions to the martial arts community, demonstrated exceptional skill and leadership, and served as exemplary role models. The Annual Hall of Fame Event is an occasion to celebrate these individuals and to promote the values and traditions of martial arts and the USMAA. The founder of the USMAA, Dr. Rankin, established the USMAA Hall of Fame in 1999.

## **Section 2: USMAA Hall of Fame**

**Criteria for Induction:** Inductees into the USMAA Hall of Fame must have demonstrated outstanding achievement in martial arts, including but not limited to mastery of martial arts techniques, contributions to the development and promotion of martial arts and demonstration of integrity, respect, and leadership within the martial arts community. Nominees must meet the specific requirements of the award category as defined on the USMAA website ([www.USMAA.world](http://www.USMAA.world)).

**Nomination Process:** Nominations for the USMAA Hall of Fame may be submitted by any USMAA member in good standing. Nominations must be supported by a justification statement. Depending on the award category, the International Director and/or the USMAA BOA will review nominations and select inductees. The USMAA BOA decisions must be approved by a majority vote of the BOA.

**Induction Ceremony:** Inductees will be honored during the Annual Hall of Fame Event. Each inductee will receive a commemorative award, and their names will be memorialized on the official USMAA Hall of Fame list by category located on the USMAA website ([www.USMAA.world](http://www.USMAA.world)).

## **Section 3: Wall of Honor**

**Purpose:** USMAA Wall of Honor was established in 2024 by Grandmaster Antkowiak at the USMAA HQ to recognize legendary USMAA grandmasters who provided exceptional service or made extraordinary contributions to the USMAA and the greater martial arts community, as well as pioneers that expanded the reach and the influence of USMAA. Each honoree will receive a commemorative award and are provided the opportunity to display personal martial arts artifacts and memorabilia at the USMAA HQ. Their names will be memorialized on the official USMAA Wall of Honor list located on the USMAA website ([www.USMAA.world](http://www.USMAA.world)).

**Eligibility and Selection:** The criteria for selection to the Wall of Honor are like those for the Hall of Fame. Selection to the Wall of Honor follows the same nomination and approval process as the Hall of Fame.

## **Section 4: Annual Hall of Fame Event**

**Event Organization:** The Annual Hall of Fame Event is the key annual event for the USMAA, organized to celebrate the achievements of Hall of Fame inductees and Wall of Honor honorees. The event includes an induction ceremony, awards presentation, and other activities designed to promote fellowship and the sharing of martial arts knowledge and traditions.

**Event Planning:** The International Director or their designee is responsible for organizing and executing the Annual Hall of Fame Event. The International Director oversees all aspects of the event, including venue selection, scheduling, the coordination of special guests, seminar presenters, and speakers.

**Participation:** The event is open to all members of the USMAA, their families, and invited guests. Attendees are encouraged to participate in the event to honor the inductees and honorees and to engage in the celebration of martial arts.

**Funding:** The USMAA will allocate funds for the organization and execution of the Annual Hall of Fame Event. Additional funding may be sourced through event or table sponsorships, donations, and event ticket sales.

**Publicity and Media:** The event will be publicized through all USMAA channels, including USMAA social media sites and the official USMAA website. Media coverage may be sought to highlight the achievements of the inductees and honorees. All media requests shall be directed to the International Director.

## ARTICLE X: MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

This Article establishes a clear process for accreditation, setting eligibility requirements, a detailed procedure, and guidelines for maintaining or revoking accreditation status.

### **Section 1: Purpose**

The purpose of the United States Martial Artist Association – Martial Arts School Accreditation Program is to provide third-party evaluation of martial arts schools and to ensure that the martial arts school maintains the highest standards of safety, integrity, and instructional quality, thereby promoting excellence in martial arts education. School accreditation is for all size martial arts schools from those operating in commercial store fronts to small schools operating in a residential garage.

### **Section 2: Eligibility for Accreditation**

To be eligible for accreditation, a martial arts school must meet the following criteria:

1. The school must have been in operation for a minimum of two (2) years.
2. The school employees and instructors must pass background and sex offender registry checks. The school owner must provide a certificate of compliance to the USMAA accreditation team.
3. The school must pass a facilities safety audit virtually conducted by a member of the USMAA accreditation team.
4. The school must demonstrate a commitment to the Martial Artist Code of Ethics, ensuring the promotion of martial arts values such as respect, discipline, and violence avoidance.
5. The school must have a written curriculum and clear under black belt ranking requirements.
6. The school must have clearly written enrollment and cancelation policies and procedures.
7. The head instructor(s) must hold recognized black belt certification(s) or equivalent in their respective martial art disciplines.
8. School instructors hold recognized instructor certification issued by a third-party association/organization.
9. School instructors receive documented professional development including training at a minimum in inappropriate relationships, first aid, and CPR.
10. The school must pass a virtual instructional observation.
11. The school must demonstrate appropriate insurance coverage for general liability and instruction.



### **Section 3: Accreditation Process**

The accreditation process shall involve the following steps:

1. Application: Martial arts schools seeking accreditation must submit an application to the USMAA International Director, including documentation of their compliance with eligibility requirements.
2. Documentation Review: The martial arts school owner must provide artifacts such as enrollment/cancelation policies, insurance, curriculum and ranking documents, instructor certifications, and professional development records.
3. Virtual Site Inspection: An appointed USMAA auditor shall conduct a virtual inspection of the school's facilities, safety standards, and instructional practices to ensure alignment with the USMAA accreditation standards.
4. Review and Approval: The USMAA BOA will review the application, artifacts provided, and inspection report. Schools that meet the necessary criteria will be granted accreditation status, which shall be valid for a period of three (3) years.
5. Remedial Audits: Accreditation is a vigorous process. Often there are issues that can be improved and adjustments that need to be made prior to awarding accreditation. Remedial steps may be required to earn accreditation.
6. Appeals: Schools that are denied accreditation may appeal the decision in writing within 30 days of notification.

### **Section 4: Maintenance of Accreditation**

To maintain accredited status, schools must:

1. Abide by the USMAA's Code of Ethics, maintain high standards of instruction, and safety.
2. Submit an annual report to the USMAA International Director detailing any significant changes in leadership, curriculum, or facilities.
3. Undergo re-accreditation every two (2) years, which will include a review of updated documentation and a new site inspection.

### **Section 5: Revocation of Accreditation**

Revocation decisions will be made by the USMAA BOA, and schools will have the right to appeal in writing against the decision within 30 days of notification. Accreditation may be revoked if a school:

1. Is found to be in violation of the USMAA's Code of Ethics.
2. Fails to maintain the standards set forth by the USMAA accreditation committee.
3. Does not comply with the reporting or re-accreditation requirements.

### **Article 6: Accreditation Fees**

The USMAA shall charge a reasonable fee for the accreditation and re-accreditation process. The fee structure will be reviewed annually by the USMAA International Director.

## ARTICLE XI: ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION

### **Section 1: Constitution Ratification**

The USMAA Constitution and transfer of authority were ratified after a majority affirmative vote of the USMAA Directors during the USMAA leadership meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024 and on behalf of the greater association membership.

### **Section 2: Adoption of the Constitution**

This Constitution, its covenants, and authority are adopted and effective upon execution by the promulgation by the USMAA International Director and Chairman of the USMAA BOA. This Constitution, its covenants, and authority are assumed and enforceable by both past and future USMAA members based on their choice to continue as a member of the USMAA after it is ratified and adopted. An official digital copy of the USMAA Constitution is publicly published and available on the official USMAA website.

## PROMULGATION STATEMENT

The undersigned and USMAA Founder, Dr. William Rankin, appointed Grandmaster Matthew Antkowiak as the USMAA International Director on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of August 2024. As such, Grandmaster Matthew Antkowiak is to assume and maintain full control and responsibility of the United States Martial Artist Association. Both Dr. Rankin and Grandmaster Antkowiak certify that a majority affirmative vote of the USMAA Directors that were present at a USMAA leadership meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024 and on behalf of the greater association membership, ratified this Constitution. The newly installed USMAA International Director and newly installed Chairman of the United States Martial Artist Association Board of Advisors are responsible for executing promulgation of this Constitution, which supersedes and rescinds all previous USMAA Constitution or governing documents. If any portions of this Constitution are held invalid by judicial or administrative review, such ruling shall not affect the validity of the rest of this Constitution.

Signed & executed this 6<sup>th</sup> day of September 2024.



Dr. William A. Rankin, Ph. D, 10<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Grandmaster, Grandmaster, Uchuno Shorin-Ryu  
Founder & Chairman of the BOA, USMAA

Grandmaster Matthew D. Antkowiak, CPP, PCI, PSP  
8<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt, Invictus Martial Arts  
International Director, USMAA