

Leslie Jaw: a future martial art sifu and medical doctor

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Leslie Law

Helen Gee Chin Scholarship Foundation

Leslie Jaw, 18 from Lexington, MA, is another recipient of 2011 Helen Gee Chin [Scholarship](#). She started her [Kung Fu](#) training at age 11 with multiple sifus and learned many forms and styles. Interestingly, like Client Wu, she was encouraged to take [martial arts](#) training at the advice of her mother. Same as Clint, she got full support from her family in pursue her martial arts interest. Inspired to be a doctor one day, Leslie is currently attending Northeastern University. She shares some of her thoughts on learning martial arts in the below interview:

Violet: Did you like it when you first tried Kung Fu?

Leslie: Kung Fu was alright, not unbearable but not that fun.



“ Violet: Which styles and forms have you learned and from whom?

Leslie: Wah Lum forms, Choy Lay Fut forms, Hung Gar forms, and [Wushu](#) forms from Kevin Chan, [Shaolin Master Hu Jianqiang](#) and [Master Calvin Chin](#).

“ Violet: How many classes do you take on a regular base and how often do you practice and average for how long each time?

Leslie: 6 classes a week. Practice about 3-4 days a week, a few hours each time.

“ Violet: What are the benefits of practicing Kung Fu?

Leslie: I've learned a certain degree of self-control, became more conscious of my body and what it is capable of doing and not. As I became more self-aware, my self-confidence grew. **Kungfu, besides being a form of exercise, is also a way of thinking. It teaches respect, discipline, and the value of hard work which is also what the words "gong fu" in Chinese translate to.**

“ Violet: What does your family think about your practice and what type of support did you get?

Leslie: My parents view it as something I should take seriously. It's not enough that I am a black belt to them. If I truly love Kung Fu, then I should strive to become the best, and aim towards becoming a sifu and owning my own Kung Fu school. At times, my parents are even more enthusiastic and focused on my martial arts training than I am. My mother has constantly supported me by paying for private lessons, driving me to practices and performances, buying weapons, and also by making my silks(?) herself. At one point, my dad supervised my training daily for two months. He would make me do a form, and then critique it and give me advice on how to improve and make me do it again.

“ Violet: What are your favorite style/ form and weapon?

Leslie: I love Fu Hok. Sadly, my form is not up to par in comparison to some of my friends at the academy. It's such an essential form of the Hung Gar style that everyone knows it and recognizes it, but rarely do I see it done exceptionally well. My favorite weapon is the straight sword. It was the first weapon I learned, and I grew used to the fluidity and power that one needs to wield it.

“ Violet: How many tournaments have you participated? How many medals/trophies have you got?

Leslie: I've been competing since 12 in 8 different regional and national tournaments. I have won about 8 trophies and 67 or so medals.

“ Violet: What is your goal of learning Kung Fu?

Leslie: I aim to get a sifu status, but my level is nowhere near that area. I practice for the next tournament, trying to see how I can improve tournament to tournament because **oftentimes the only**

way to really understand where your level of Kung Fu is to place yourself in a highly competitive atmosphere where you have to overcome the pressure and nervousness.

“ Violet: Who is/are your role model(s) both in and out of the Kung Fu area?

Leslie: Sifus Calvin Chin and Hu Jianqiang. What I admire about both of these individuals is that they both started from scratch and brought their school from basically nothing. Sifu Calvin Chin gained the right to teach Fu Hok Tai He Morn from his master, and later worked diligently with his wife Simo Helen to form his own school. Sifu Hu Jianqiang traveled from China to America and started a Wushu school back in 1997. He didn't have any relatives here. Just his wife, his daughter, and a few of his students from China.

“ Violet: What is the toughest part in your journey of learning Kung Fu?

Leslie: After training with Sifu Hu Jianqiang in contemporary Wushu, I found it difficult trying to transition back to traditional Kung Fu. I had gotten used to the flashy moves that weren't always practical or applicable, and found the traditional blocks and punches a little less familiar. Something else that really made me realize my worth as a martial artist was when I transitioned from intermediate to advanced. Now, I cannot be lazy because I am *advanced*. I have to work hard to improve, and show that I wasn't some intermediate martial artist competing among advanced and skilled individuals, but a martial artist that matched their level and more.

“ Violet: How do you overcome your obstacles?

Leslie: Through sheer force of will. Everyone has a lazy day. Sometimes, I don't want to practice or I don't want to make the drive up to the academy, but I know I must. So, I quickly force myself into the gym to run or I get into the car and start driving. I throw myself forward so that I cannot go back.

“ Violet: What would you say to other young people about learning Kung Fu?

Leslie: When you first start, give it a try. Don't grumble and complain that your parents are dragging you to class and forcing you to do something you don't like. Because, in the end, some of the things you love most are complete by accident. Also, never forget who you are or what you represent. **Being a martial artist isn't just being any random person on the street, it's about presenting yourself with dignity and behaving honorably.**

“ Violet: How did you hear about the scholarship and what do you think about winning the scholarship and?

Leslie: After Simo's death, our school continued to run, but I began hearing plans of creating a scholarship in Simo's memory. After the scholarship was created, Sifu approached me and recommended that I submit an application. In some ways, receiving this scholarship is more important than receiving my college acceptance letter. I really, really wanted it. I felt I had something to prove.

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SUGGESTED LINKS

- **Clint Wu and Leslie Jaw are the first two Helen Gee Chin Scholarship recipients**



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