

flatbush life

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Garden Showcase For Martial Arts Stars

By Gary Buiso

For Aaron Banks, the grand patriarch of the martial arts scene, the roots of an upcoming event at Madison Square Garden can be traced back to a brawl he had over 40 years ago on the streets of midtown Manhattan.

Banks, 72, a great grand master, offers showcases of varied martial arts disciplines, as well as incredible displays of strength and agility for public consumption, education, and live, in-your-face entertainment.

But back in 1958, Banks was naïve to the world of self-defense. He lost that fight with a burly record store co-worker, but it left an impression on him.

"At the end of the fight I was wearing a tie...and no shirt," Banks recalled.

"If I would have known then what I now know, I would have taken him in seconds," he said.

Banks, a Bronx native, said he was determined to scientifically learn the art of self-defense — not to instigate fights, but to get in touch with who he was "as a human being."

Today, Banks is gearing



Martial arts legend Aaron Banks.



Maurice Elmalem makes mincemeat out of slabs of glass.



World Champion breaker Master John Drames. Don't get him angry.

hallowed halls of Madison Square Garden.

"The Oriental World of Self Defense" is an event that encourages, motivates and stimulates the people to do something for themselves—martial arts style," Banks said. "A person can watch others doing things for the rest of their lives."

battle inside the ring.

Attendees can look forward to a real battle of the sexes—cross-gender bouts, as well as weapons bouts. Another feature will be disciple vs. discipline bouts: Karate vs. Kung Fu; Kung Fu vs. Judo; Judo vs. Wrestling, and Kickboxing vs. Boxing.

Banks said, "But here, everything is up front, everything is real."

Since then the show has traveled to Europe, Asia and South America. And it's played such venues as Radio City Music Hall, Nassau Coliseum, Studio 54, The Ritz and the Beacon Theater.

Banks said that at events

martial arts.

Besides the ring battles, spectators will also witness how the discipline of martial arts can be channeled into shattering seemingly unbreakable objects, like thick slabs of glass, wood or concrete.

The event will feature World Champion Martial

and 450 trophies.

In 1990 Elmalem, a fourth-degree master instructor established a new world record when he smashed four wooden boards with a speed head break. Aside from a head like steel, Elmalem's elbows are pretty tough too. He broke his own record in