



# City of Cambridge

R-9.

## IN CITY COUNCIL

January 29, 2001

COUNCILLOR REEVES  
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN  
COUNCILLOR BORN  
COUNCILLOR BRAUDE  
COUNCILLOR DAVIS  
COUNCILLOR DECKER  
MAYOR GALLUCCIO  
VICE MAYOR MAHER  
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

- WHEREAS: Keith Pearson, a martial arts practitioner, King Fu Master and a Rindge Technical School graduate is the concierge at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge; and
- WHEREAS: During his four year tenure as concierge, Keith has collected numerous thank you notes from his clients; and
- WHEREAS: Keith was voted Boston's 2000 Concierge of the Year; and
- WHEREAS: As a student at Rindge Technical School, Keith became interested in martial arts through his teacher and idol Eddie Burke who taught him respect and the use of martial arts for peace; and
- WHEREAS: Keith has been the bodyguard for Patrick Ewing, Goldie Hawn, Jodie Foster and Kevin Costner; and
- WHEREAS: Keith applied for a security job at the Hyatt Regency but was offered the job of concierge which he accepted and he has practiced the adage taught him by Eddie Burke: Politeness is to do and say the kindest thing in the kindest way; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its congratulations to Keith Pearson on being voted Boston's 2000 Concierge of the Year; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Keith Pearson on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council January 29, 2001.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury  
City Clerk

P-9

Councillor Reeves  
C Sullivan 1/25 @ 10:25

& a Rindge Technical  
School graduate

Whereas: Keith Pearson, a martial arts practitioner, <sup>King of the Masters</sup> is the Concierge at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge; and

Whereas: During his 4 year tenure as Concierge Keith has collected numerous thank yous from his clients; ~~which has been~~ &

Whereas: Keith was named Boston's 2000 Concierge of the Year; &

Whereas: As a student at Rindge Technical School Keith became interested in martial arts through his teacher & idol Eddie Burke who taught him respect & the use of martial arts for peace; &

Whereas Keith has also ~~been the~~ ~~had jobs as~~ body guard for ~~famous people~~ Patrick Cving, Goldie Hawn, Jodie Foster and Kevin Costner; &

Whereas: ~~In the~~

Whereas: Keith applied for a security job at the Hyatt but was offered the job of Concierge which he accepted. And he has practiced the Adage taught <sup>him</sup> by Eddie Burke: Politeness is to do ~~the~~ & say the kindest thing in the

kindest way, now therefore so it

Resolved That this City Council go on record extending  
its congratulations to Keith Pearson on  
being rated Boston's 2000 Concierge of the  
year; & let it further

Resolved SEC to Keith Pearson

KR

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Keith Pearson named  
Boston 2000 Concourse of the  
yr.

live art on TV Globe



By Joanna Weiss

GLOBE STAFF

Keith Pearson maintains a strict daily exercise regimen: 1,000 high kicks with the left leg, 1,000 high kicks with the right leg, 1,000 push-ups on a rack in the basement. Decades of martial arts prowess have made him a 6-foot-1 package of lethal force, enough to make you think it's a shame that concierge work isn't more physical.

Because there he is every day, behind the guest services desk at the Hyatt Regency Cambridge, 175 pounds of muscle ready to flatten bad guys. And all Pearson needs to do is track down errant bags, befriend children, and conjure up tables at booked-solid restaurants. He soothes frayed nerves and ties up loose ends. He makes small miracles happen.

"You have to have the power to look in anybody's eye and assume there's nothing you can't get done," he says.

This is the work of a good concierge: to be a buffer between the turmoil of travel and a hotel's veneer of control, the public face for an anthill of cooks and laundry workers and booking clerks, the embodiment of order over chaos. Pearson, 42, is one of the best in town. In only four years of hotel work, he has collected a thick stack of thank-you cards, an ample flow of tips, and the respect of his peers, who voted him Boston's 2000 Concierge of the Year.

Ever since, the red carpet has been rolling for the kung fu master with the soft, sweet eyes, the penchant for hugging, and the button that says, "Perfect Stay." (He also sported a slight limp recently, having

pulled a muscle during his daily kicks.) Once, his ambition was to be the best fighter in the world. Now, it is to buy a hotel of his own.

It's a lofty goal, but Pearson likes a challenge. He has never been the largest or strongest man around, but that didn't hamper his martial arts success. Nor has his unconventional path to concierge work slowed his rise in this genteel profession.

It is possible, of course, that these two facts are connected. It seems at times that Pearson is tapping some ancient skill for his mix of speed and control and charm, his way of crushing turmoil with an easy smile and an unswerving confidence.

It's all about learning to harness your strength.

As a boy, Pearson learned about two things at once: the force and beauty of martial arts, and the rewards of making unconventional friends. He owes this largely, he says, to Eddie Burke.

Twenty-five years ago, Burke was a white Vietnam War veteran, teaching in an alternative program at Rindge Technical School in Cambridge. Pearson was a scrawny black kid from the rough side of the city, intent on giving Burke trouble.

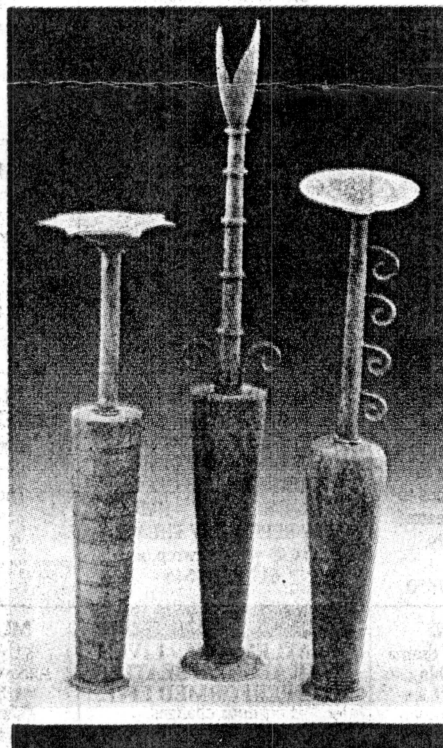
"I thought I was a tough guy," Pearson says. "It was my job to tell him we weren't going to do any work. He looked at me and smiled, and he said, 'Brother, whatever you say goes. You're the boss.'"

Young Pearson didn't know what to do. He couldn't shake this guy up, so he started to respect him. "If I had an idol, other than Bruce Lee, it would

CONCIERGE, Page F6

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## Harvard mulls construction of new museum

By Patti Doten

GLOBE STAFF

Harvard University is considering building a new natural history museum that would draw from the collections of five of its science museums, officials confirmed yesterday.

Among the treasures slated for a new home is the Glass Flowers collection, one of Boston's prized attractions. The 4,000 glass botanical models are now housed in the Museum of Natural History. Other collections would come from the Mineralogical and Geological Museum, the Botanical Museum, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, and the Peabody Museum, which houses archeological artifacts.

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**PG-13**

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**CONCIERGE**  
Continued from Page F1

be Eddie Burke," Pearson says now. "His worst enemy, he treats like his best friend. That's power."

Soon, Pearson was taking Burke's martial arts classes, which always began with an adage: "Politeness is to do and say the kindest thing in the kindest way." He snuck into classes with the masters in Chinatown.

"They'd let me watch, to a point, and finally say, 'Run along,'" Pearson says. "When I finally took my first lesson, it was like I was going to die. What they wanted to show me was that I couldn't take it."

He took more than most people dream of taking, winning kara-

te championships and going to Japan for an intensive two-week training session. He learned to use martial arts for peace: In the turbulent days of late-1970s Boston, Burke, Pearson, and a friend named Ronnie Wong traveled to local high schools in a karate exhibition, a pre-PC race relations variety show dubbed "Dr. Gonzo, Chocolate Chip, and Fortune Cookie."

They demonstrated staffs, swords, ninja sticks, and absolute trust. Burke would lie on the ground with a pickle on his throat. Pearson would spin in the air with a sword and cut the pickle in half.

Clearly, their relationship had evolved.

"He's probably one of the classiest human beings there'll ever be," Burke says.

**A powerful presence**

Still, Pearson learned to create the impression that he could hurt someone if he had to. He has a black belt in karate and a golden sash in kung fu. He was a bodyguard for Patrick Ewing, when the tall Jamaican immigrant played basketball for Cambridge Rindge and Latin School in the late '70s, and the kids at white schools wanted a piece of him.

"The way he carried himself, it's like, 'Hands off,'" says Tim Price, who played on the team at the time. "It's like that James Bond type of... he has that type of way about him. I think of him like a celebrity."

Pearson's reputation grew; he started getting jobs as a bodyguard for visiting sports stars and movie stars (Goldie Hawn, Jodie Foster, Kevin Costner). He was hired as chief of security at the Hong Kong nightclub in Harvard Square. And he occasionally helped keep the peace on the street.

In 1983, on the sidewalk outside the Hong Kong, a Cambridge police officer tried to stop a drunk biker from entering a nearby pub. The biker knocked the officer to the ground and stood on the street with a gun.

Pearson emerged from the Hong Kong, shook his head, and said, "It's all over." In a matter of seconds, he disarmed the biker and locked him in a hold. Pearson received a plaque of appreciation that year at the Cambridge police officers' ball, and kisses from all



**CAMBRIDGE REUNION:** Hyatt concierge Keith Pearson (right) remember when they worked together at the Hong Kong in Harvard

worked at the Hong Kong at night. He met his wife, a therapist, at the club eight years ago; Burke was best man at the wedding. The couple bought a house in Medford and, to supplement the mortgage, Pearson started looking for another job.

He applied for a security position at the Hyatt, but withdrew his name when he learned it had a night shift. That's when the personnel manager, who had been eyeing him with interest, raised a question: Would you consider becoming a concierge?

Pearson's initial response was, "I can't even spell concierge." But five days and a round of interviews later, he was getting a suit and a name tag and a word of advice from his predecessor: "You're not going to learn this job until you get into the line of fire."

Pearson got there soon enough, the day he found himself face-to-face with 15 irritated guests. Eight callers were on hold, and the phone was still ringing.

Pearson lifted an index finger — *sit tight, people* — then fled to the back office and found the outgoing concierge. "I want to see," he said. "I'm visual. You get out there right now; I want to see it done."



view him with admiration when he shows up on a Friday night.

Pearson hugs the bouncers and pulls out pictures of his year-old son, who has his father's ready smile. If fatherhood has its trials, it's nothing compared to the chaos of monitoring a dance club. The third floor is filled with girls in tank tops and painted-on pants and droopy-eyed boys in oxford shirts, dancing so close you'd have to peel them apart. There is one short man wearing red high-top sneakers and a Pokemon costume who Pearson — ever the consummate caretaker — identifies as the only obvious threat.

"The way he dresses, somebody's going to mess with him," he says.

He's right, of course. Every guy in the room is looking at Pokemon.

It's one of the skills Pearson has perfected through the years: how to watch one side of the room while seeming to look at the other side, how to move with speed through a thick sea of people, how to put a hand on a troublemaker to quietly let him know you're in control.

"You have to use your head," Pearson says. "You have to have control, but you have to have respect."

It also helps to have the moves. After much protesting, Pearson agrees to demonstrate his karate skills, starts both hands in circles so fast they soon become a blur. He does it again in slow motion, his arms as strong and stiff as iron rods.

It's not something he gets to do so much in public anymore, now that he works behind the guest services desk next to bellhops and potted plants. Hotel work is quieter work, he explains, pantomiming the act of shuffling papers on a desk, gesturing to get people's attention, waving hello and goodbye.

Except for the fact that he's smiling, it doesn't look so different



# City of Cambridge

R-9.

## IN CITY COUNCIL

January 29, 2001

COUNCILLOR REEVES  
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN

- WHEREAS: Keith Pearson, a martial arts practitioner, King Fu Master and a Rindge Technical School graduate is the concierge at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge; and
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- RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Keith Pearson on behalf of the entire City Council.

159 R

**Resolution #9**

Congratulations to Keith Pearson on  
being voted Boston's Concierge of the  
Year.

**Councillors Reeves and Sullivan**

In City Council January 29, 2001

**ORDER ADOPTED**