

BLACK BELT

TIMES

MARTIAL ARTS NEWS YOU CAN USE. READ IT - KNOW IT - LIVE IT

JUDO PIONEER HAL SHARP PASSES AWAY

On March 21, 2021, judo legend Harold E. Sharp, 10th-degree black belt, passed away in his home. He was 93.

Sharp's judo career exceeded 70 years. In 1953 the Kodokan awarded him a first-degree black belt. In 1954 he was honored by the Japanese government for winning an international judo competition and helping spread the martial art after World War II. He became known worldwide for his 1955 book *The Sport of Judo*.

Sharp was covered extensively in *Black Belt's* formative years. Specifically, his article titled "My Life and Judo" appeared in the November 1964 and January 1965 issues.

In California, Sharp opened a *dojo* in North Hollywood and taught at the La Mirada VMCA. Among his early students was *Star Trek's* William Shatner. In subsequent years, Sharp wrote other books and produced videotapes. His final book was *Boys & Girls Judo & Self-Defense: Road to Blackbelt*, published in 2014.

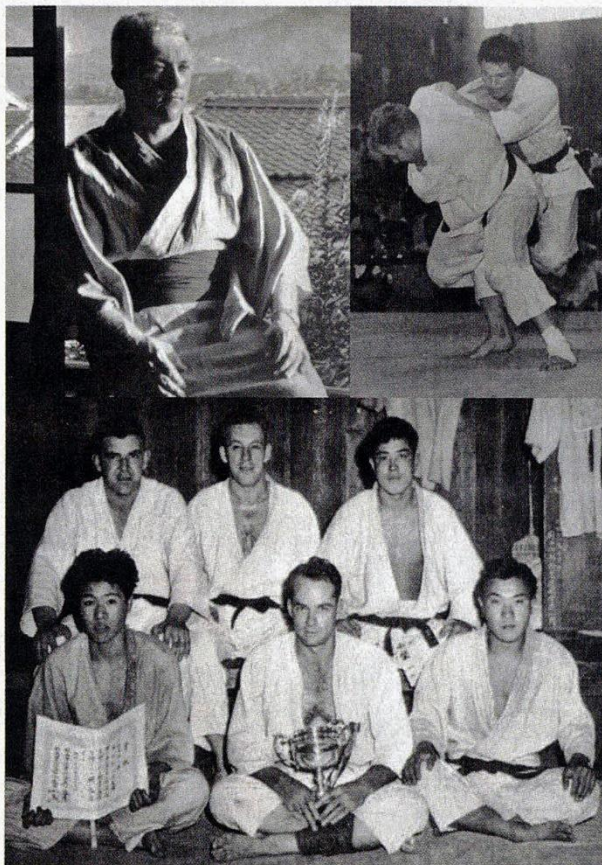
Before moving to San Diego, Sharp served as technical director of the Gardena Judo Club, one of the largest academies in the Nanka Judo Yudanshakai and the U.S. Judo Federation.

Gene LeBell is one of many martial artists who expressed sadness at the loss of the legend. In a conversation, *Black Belt* Hall of Famer LeBell recalled having been banned from judo tournaments after he became a pro wrestler. "However, Hal would still welcome me at his dojo anytime," LeBell said.

"There are few who are as fortunate to have devoted so much of their life in a meaningful activity for the benefit of other *judoka* as Hal Sharp," said Hayward Nishioka, two-time *Black Belt* Hall of Fame inductee. "Much of one's early life in judo is for the self. For Hal, that was 10 percent. The rest was for others, and [this] is evident in his many books, magazine articles, videos, DVDs, social media clips, presentations, tours and countless hours donated to others in our hallowed dojos. There will never be another one like him."

Hap Sharp is survived by his wife of 63 years Joan Joanie, his son Richard, and his daughters Karv, Denise and Lisa.

—Gary Goltz



Black Belt Photos

JUNE/JULY 2021

BLACKBELTMAG.COM

Read Gary Goltz's [Black Belt Blog on Hal Sharp](#) that includes links to videos & early articles