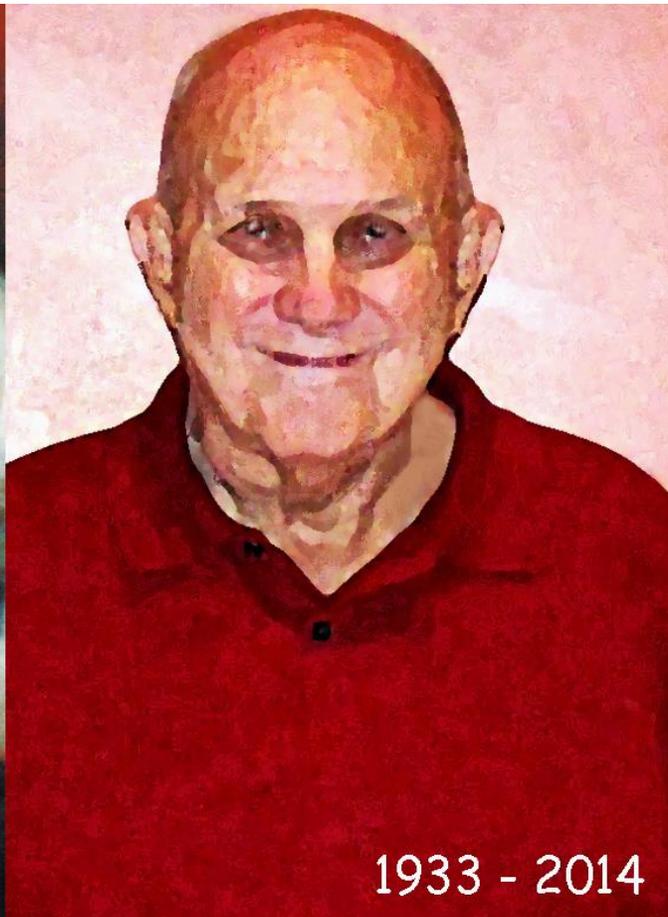


Karl E. Geis

For Immediate Release April 7, 2014: It is with great sadness the USJA reports the passing of Karl Geis early this morning from complications resulting from a long bout with cancer.



Karl E. Geis



1933 - 2014

Karl E. Geis, 10th Dan in both Judo and Aikido, as well as a 9th Dan in Judo was a significant martial arts figure in the United States since the late 1950's. He began studying Judo at the Kodokan in Tokyo, Japan in 1955 while stationed there as a member of the United States Air Force and was introduced to Aikido the next year.

Upon his return to the United States, Mr. Geis continued his studies, both at home and on a number of extended sabbaticals in Japan throughout the 1960's, 70's, and 80's, expanding his training to include Jodo as well. His extensive martial arts experience covers an impressive four-and-a-half decades, and for over 15 years he has headed an international association of martial artists nearly a thousand strong. His individual blend of Western analytical thought and Eastern understanding makes his technical styles unique and valuable to martial artists throughout the world.

Mr. Geis pioneered the positive reinforcement method of teaching the martial arts in the early 60's, long before the effectiveness of this approach was recognized and accepted. His work with children is a model for successful schools everywhere. Over the years Mr. Geis has touched the lives of literally thousands of people and is a living example of a generous and unselfish personality.

The significant milestones of Karl Geis' martial arts career began in 1955 with the study of Judo in the Kodokan in Tokyo, Japan.

Karl had the fortune of having the great Judoka Harold "Hal" Sharp, 9th Dan become his mentor in Judo in Japan. Mr. Sharp introduced Karl to the following teachers; Sumiuki Kotani, Sensei 10th Dan, Yoshimi Osawa, Sensei 10th Dan, and Mr. Toshiro Daigo, 10th Dan who guided his acquisition of Judo knowledge throughout his entire career. Mr. Sharp's influence in the Kodokan was extensive and he unselfishly shared it with Karl. Because of Mr. Sharp's influence Karl received a vast amount of technical information normally not available to foreigners.

Karl's principle training dojos in Japan were Waseda University Dojo, the Kodokan, and Tokyo Central Police Dojo. Karl's judo competitive career was mainly in Japan

Karl was promoted to Judo 4th degree black belt by the Kodokan in Tokyo, Japan in 1967. A rank rarely given to foreigners in Japan. He was fueled by Mr. Tomiki's request at the time to also being promoted to Aikido 4th Dan.

In 1968, Karl was a principle participant in the founding of the United States Judo Association in Chicago which followed a meeting one year earlier in St. Louis. The other principals according to Karl's own recollection who were also present at the founding of the USJA meeting in Chicago were:

George Bass
Jim Bregman
George Harris

Rick Mertins
Phil Porter
Robey Reed

The success Karl's judo students such as Jim Wooley in State, National, Pan American and International competition carried the competitive banner of the USJA for many years. It was in fact the technical superiority of his competitors help to prove to all of American Judo that the new founders of the United States Judo Association were for real in the judo community.

Karl was elected to *Black Belt's* Hall of Fame in 1974, (the same year as Bruce Lee). The United States Judo Association promoted Karl Geis to Judan (10th degree black belt) at a presentation in Houston dojo on March 12th, 2014. Below are letters from the evening's ceremony that were read by USJA President, Gary Goltz.

Dear Gary:

Without reservation, I fully support promoting the judo legend Karl Geis to Judan. Karl and I studied judo together in Japan during the early 1950s. In those days he was truly a tiger on the mat and he had a chance to practice and study with Japan's top instructors and legends like Osawa, Daigo, Kotani, Otaki, Kobayashi, Mifune and Tomiki. When Karl returned to the USA he became a professional full-time instructor. We have always been in touch with each other and each time we would sign off with "I love you Karl" or he would say "I love you Hal". Most important I regard Karl as my brother. It is ironic, that I started out as Karl's teacher and later he became my teacher. In my opinion Karl not only had a brilliant mind but he was also a genius when it came to understanding the aspects of judo and aikido. Karl is truly a teacher's teacher.

Hal Sharp

Dear Gary:

Thanks for including the Promotion Board in your decision to promote Karl Geis to Judan. I have known Karl for many years and I know some of his former students who are still active in Judo at the National and International level. His teaching has made great contributions to American Judo. My vote is Yes!

Ernie Smith

Dear Karl:

I was very happy and gratified to hear from Gary that you are being awarded the rank of Judan. You are joining the ranks of some of the greatest men in Judo History. Men like Kotani, Diego, and Osawa. Thank you for allowing me to be a small part of that amazing journey. I am eternally grateful.

Jimmy Wooley

Hi Gary:

Anything lower than 11th Degree would be an insult to Karl Geis. How many men or women are not only champions on the mat, but are champions off the mat. Karl walks on water in my book!

Keep smiling Gene LeBell



Obituary for Karl Geis

It is with great sorrow that we report the departure of Karl Edwin Geis from this world on April 7th, 2014, after succumbing to a prolonged battle with cancer. Mr. Geis was born in Enid, Oklahoma, on October 1, 1933, the son of Martha and Edwin Geis. He is survived by his loving and devoted wife Mrs. Chamaiporn “Cha” Geis, his brother Richard Geis, his sister Virginia Geis, and his sons; Douglas Geis and Kenneth Geis, and granddaughter Nina Geis.

Mr. Geis was first exposed to Judo while stationed in Japan as a member of the US Air Force in 1955. He took the opportunity to study with at the Japanese Bureau of Police and the Kodokan and embarked upon a lifelong love affair with Judo from then on. He was a profound coach and his students competed at the State, national and international levels. He was considered one of the leading technical authorities in Judo, and one of Judo's foremost master teachers. Mr. Geis' greatest pleasure did not lie with training national champions; however, it was in training his students to have self-confidence and a sense of their own destiny. He was Judo's supreme psychologist, using his martial art as a tool like a master craftsman to sculpt confident, happy and successful individuals.

Additionally, Mr. Geis's Judo background significantly enabled him to understand Mr. Kenji Tomiki Shihan's Aikido system and to carry it forward in the United States. Mr. Geis took the opportunity to develop a safe, viable, and real Aikido randori system which was a unique and significant contribution to the art of Aikido. Mr Geis's efforts were rewarded when he was promoted to 6th Dan by Mr. Tomiki Shihan, being the first, and only, foreigner to be promoted to this rank by Tomiki Sensei. Lastly, under the instruction of Tsunako Miyake Shihan, Mr. Geis internalized Mr. Takaji Shimizu's Shindo Muso Ryu Jyodo system and, using his Judo and Aikido background, Mr. Geis created a viable weapons self-defense system.

Mr. Geis's legacy is not limited to the accomplishments during his life. It carries forward with the very many lives he touched and his many students. He was our Sensei, and we loved him.

Comments on Karl by Gary Goltz, USJA President

Karl Geis was among the most ethical, intelligent, and knowledgeable judoka's I've ever known. He was a pioneer in judo and a key founder of the USJA. I miss our weekly calls, his mentorship, and most of all his friendship. I'm thankful we got to celebrate his attainment of the 10th Dan with his family, closest students, and my colleague Andy and his wife Edie. Rest in peace Karl knowing your legacy will continue to live on through all of us.

Eulogy for Karl E. Geis, by Jim Wooley

The life we celebrate today is a paradox inside of a puzzle wrapped in an enigma, a combination of General George Patton and George C Scott. A man who was our athletic coach and Judo Sensei. A man with nerves of steel and a caring heart. A man, who knew when to pat you on the back or kick you in the behind. A man, who possessed a fountain of knowledge. All of us here drank from this fountain. I enjoyed some of the fruits of a long relationship with Karl Geis.

But how do you fully describe the many facets of such a complex man. Can we find a prism with which to view the marrow of such a soul.

One answer can be found in the lyrics of a famous song. For me, these lyrics capture some of the complexity of the life we celebrate today.

“My Friends, I will say it clear. I will state Karl’s case of which I am certain. He lived a life that’s full. He traveled each and every highway. And more, much more than this, He did it his way. Regrets, He had a few but then again too few to mention.

He did what he had to do and saw it through without exemption. He planned each charted course, each careful step along the byways. And more, much more that this, Karl did it his way.

Yes, there were times, I am sure you knew, when he bit off more than he could chew. But through it all when there was doubt he ate it up and spat it out. He faced it all and stood tall and did it his way.

He loved, laughed and cried. He had his fill and his share of losing. And now as our tears subside, we find it all, all so amusing. To think he did all that and may I say not in a shy way. O’ no, no not Karl he did it his way.

For what is a man, what has he got, if not himself then he has not. To say the things he truly feels and speak the words of one who kneels. The record shows, Karl took the blows, and did it his way.”

Now I have a brief poem that I think captures some of the essence of Karl Geis:

Some men give good advice but why, He who’s a ground knows where the reef doth lie. And to find a wet stone many men do hunt, to sharpen others while themselves are blunt.

In conclusion, Bruce Wood may have said it best by saying. “None of us would have the pleasure of knowing each other or be here today if not for Karl Geis.” Now Karl: Thanks for the Memories and may you rest in peace.