

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Slain man was judo enthusiast, trying to reform life

[Melissa Pinion-Whitt, Staff Writer](#)

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Memorial site for Micheal William Turner, who was shot and killed Thursday in Pomona. (Gary Goltz Photo)

POMONA -- When Micheal William Turner was released from prison last year, he developed a passion for martial arts and was preparing to start a new job at McDonald's.

It appeared the 27-year-old had escaped the dangers of his past, a time when he ran with gangs in Pomona and found himself behind bars, friends said.

That past apparently caught up to him Thursday when he died of gunshot wounds in Pomona. He was shot while walking in the 900 block of Indian Hill Blvd.

Pomona police dispatchers received several calls at 11:16 p.m. regarding a shooting victim at 971 Indian Hill Blvd. Officers arrived and found Turner lying on the sidewalk with multiple gunshot wounds. Los Angeles County firefighters pronounced him dead at the scene.

Homicide Detectives responded to the crime scene and began their investigation. Detectives were able to identify Arthur Wright (37 year old Pomona resident) as the suspect. Surveillance teams were used to locate and arrest Wright in the 1500 block of Cordova Street in the City of Pomona.

Police say the shooting may be gang-related.

"We're all devastated," said [Gary Goltz](#), Turner's mentor and judo instructor. "We all kind of took him under our wings."

Goltz, 60, an Upland resident who runs [Goltz Judo in Claremont](#), said Turner's brother, Leroy Cooper, asked Goltz to help Turner when he was paroled last year.



Micheal William Turner, 27, was shot and killed in Pomona on Thursday evening. He was a judo enthusiast who trained at Goltz Judo in Claremont. He had earned an orange belt before his death with O.J. Soler & Gary Goltz. (Gary Goltz Photo)

Cooper would not get to see the friendship that eventually developed between Goltz and Turner, because Cooper was [shot and killed in Boston](#) a month after he spoke to Goltz.

Goltz said he invited Turner to come to his judo studio. Since then, the Pomona man has been training three or four times a week and competed in the Judo Winter Nationals.

"He was just there on Wednesday night and I was going to take him to the California State Games on Sunday," Goltz said.

Goltz said he doesn't know what prompted the shooting.

Police also don't have a motive.

Anyone with information may call Pomona detectives, 909-620-2085. People wishing to remain anonymous may call Crime Stoppers, 800-222-8477.

Song for Micheal



Written & Performed by C.J. Nagel



[YouTube Video of Performance](#)

I've been down
I've been out
I've spent way too much time just
trying to figure out
if I'm a good man?
and what's God's plan?
will test me or will he bless me like he
can?
I've done wrong
trying set it right
until I do all I'll do is fight

it's not as easy for me, as it is for you
try walking 2 miles in my shoes
it's not as easy for me as it is for you

I've been black
I've been blue
nearly threw my back out working for
you
I've been poor
on the streets
had to fight for my life just to eat
I've lost hope
and my mind
I can't deal with the stress this time

it's not as easy for me, as it is for you
try walking 2 miles in my shoes
it's not as easy for me as it is for you

and it's hard
trying to change
especially at my age
still I'm up 8
and I'll be working until 10
after that I'll stop
and see my friends
it all pays off in the end

Obituary

Micheal William Turner was born March 21, 1986 to Barbara Edwards in Los Angeles. Along with his younger brother Micheal Lucas, they were raised in the home of Donna Johnson and often stayed with their grandmother, Mary Lene Robinson. Micheal grew up in Claremont, California, knew no strangers, and had countless friends. His smile was not only electric but infectious; he could light up any room by simply walking in and introducing himself.

Big Micheal, as he was known, was a sucker for pretty girls and a good story, a fun time and friends. Micheal was a lover of life, but in this life, he enjoyed more than anything his family, friends, and most importantly, judo. Such an integral part of his life, Judo played, that he rarely missed practice. He was beloved by everyone in his club, and carried a well-rounded reputation that listed him as: hard working, athletic, morally sound, friendly, and someone who was an absolute pleasure to be around. Judo was the turning point in Micheal's life, lending to him opportunities he would not have been afforded elsewhere. He was a proud Judoka and an even better friend, son, and brother.

Micheal was preceded in death by his brothers James, Leroy, and LaMeka and is survived by an extended family that ranges from not just family, but to friends who took him in and made him one of their own. This includes: his mother Barbara, Grandmother Mary, brother Micheal Lucas, and sisters; Brittney, Whitney, and Nicole. His foster parents Donna and Leroy, sisters: Shondrella, Evelyn, Jovan, LaToiya, brothers: Christopher, Matthew, and Adonnis. The adoptive family of his sister, parents Nadine and David, and sisters: DeVeon, Sherrell, and Annie. He was welcomed into the homes of the Goltz Family as if he were one of their own children and the home of his judo partner, C.J. Nagel.

Micheal leaves behind a gratuitous amount of friends that will greatly miss his presence.

One of Us

by Nick Nguyen

July 18, 2013

On a hot summer evening in 2012, I met one of the most spectacular people that I ever had the pleasure of meeting. It was like any typical judo night for me. At the time, it was my normal routine to show up half an hour before the kids' class to practice kata with my partner. As I walked in the door to the center, I noticed a tall, lanky guy sitting on one of the chairs. He appeared to be waiting around, not in a rush to be anywhere, or had anything better to do.

Not thinking twice of it, I entered the dojo, turned on all the lights and got into my gi to do my stretch while my partner got ready. The man walked in behind us and took a seat in the corner of the dojo. He put his bag on the folding table that we used for tournaments, and proceeded to watch us struggle through all the sets of the Nage no Kata.

When I took a break to catch my breath and wipe the sweat away from my forehead, he kindly asked, "Is Sensei Gary here?", to which I replied "No, but he will be here shortly". Thinking to myself that he was one of those guys about to enroll in the class, I mentally sized him up and wondered how long he was going to last. The man struck me as a little peculiar.

He was taller than most of us in the class with a lanky gait, walked with what some of us would call a swagger, while wearing dress pants and a dress shirt, but topped off the outfit with basketball shoes. All he had with him was a backpack; packed full with God knows what, while at the same time leaned back in the chair like he was at his own house.

Well, this dude isn't going to last very long here with an attitude like that, was my last thought as class started. At the end of class, Sensei called me into his office and said to me "This is Micheal. Please give him a ride home. He lives up the street from you". Yes, Sensei, I responded. As I packed up my gi and headed out to my car, Micheal walked right next to me, shook my hand and said "Hey, I'm Micheal thanks for offering to give me a ride home".

And thus a friendship began. I learned that Micheal was recently released after a nine long years in prison, and was trying to get his life together the best that he can. His past didn't bother me at all, and he made up for the detour on the way home with jokes that we used to tell each other. He kept me company when we sat in traffic and soon it became a routine for both of us. He would haul his overly large backpack into my trunk, lean my seat all the way back because he was so tall, and tell me about his family, all the things he had been through while in prison, and the plans he had for the future. He even held my new puppy on the way home one night and I don't think that dog has ever slept so well since.

A couple more months had passed. Sensei Gary had arranged for Micheal to move into a new place, and I was too busy with work to come to judo. And then the unthinkable happened. I received a text from Sensei, informing us that Micheal was shot and killed the night before. I couldn't believe it. His brother, who grew up with Sensei Gary's sons, also had been shot and killed last year, and now him!

It was almost unbearable to think about. I was at a loss for words. I didn't know what to say or who to say it to. All there was - was silence. There were so many posts on Facebook of condolences, but I couldn't find anything in me to say until now.

Sitting here at work staring into the busy streets of the city, I suddenly realized what Micheal meant to me. What he meant to all of us. You see, Micheal was a hero. He made a decision to get away from his old life. Sensei Gary had invited him to take up judo, and it became something that he held dearly to his heart. Sometimes he rode the bus for more than two hours twice a week to get to the dojo.

Micheal didn't let his past deter the betterment of himself. Instead, he used it to remind himself of what he didn't want in his life and replaced it with the gentle way. We never thought of him as someone who just got out of prison, we saw him as a friend. It's like Alan Raskind says in his book "The Second Life of Judo," the judo mat is the great equalizer where the lawyer and the garbage collector become equals.

Micheal became one of us. He graced us with his smile, his comical demeanor complimented by his intensity during tournaments. But in the end, no matter what the outcome, he always smiled and said that he had a great day hanging out with all of us.

Indeed, Micheal was a textbook example of Mifune's saying "fall down 7 times get up 8". No matter how hard we fall, as long as we get back up on our feet, we can learn to better our judo and our lives. It is a lesson that Micheal embellished. It is in his remembrance that I will always embrace this thought; as in the dojo, so in life.



Here's what Micheal had to say on the tribute page to his brother Leroy

Hey brother it's me man words cannot even explain the sadness that encompasses me and our family over this, but God holds He's up and we push forward resolute in the knowledge that you are still watching over us and that keeps me striving to live a life as full as yours. I will be the big brother that I need to be. And the son that mom needs cause she misses you dearly. Gary and Nathan have been a true God send I thank God that you have put me in contact with such great people as the Goltz's. When I win in competition it's for you and when I win in this life it's for me but it's the corner stone you laid that I will follow love you Larry. And on this I will celebrate your life. I'm still the better dancer :-)

Posted by Micheal William Turner (Big Micheal) - Claremont, CA, March 21, 2013