



INDUCTEE CLASS OF 2026

Youth

Julia Azevedo

Youth Martial Artist of the Year

Inspired by her father, Julia's martial arts journey began before she was born. She already had two Kimonos awaiting her arrival. From crawling on the mats to becoming part of the first Leadership program at Six Blades Jiu-Jitsu South Denver, she's become a true force on the mat. Today, she serves as an assistant instructor, and stands as a powerful role model for younger girls, leading with confidence, kindness, and a quiet strength. She's also a Straight-A Student, modeling excellence as an example to others.

Melissa Azevedo

Youth Martial Artist of the Year

Starting her martial arts journey at the age of three, Melissa's curiosity sparked a hunger to learn and a passion to help others succeed. Her smile and contagious energy shows that leadership starts with kindness. Off the mats, she loves dogs (especially Daisy), cheerleading, riding her scooter, and playing with friends. Her favorite throw is Osoto Gari and favorite submission is the Cross Collar Choke. Her dream, besides becoming a world class competitor, is to become a veterinarian or a scientist.

Antonio Bell-Perez

Youth Kickboxer of the Year

Antonio has been training in martial arts since he was 4 years old. In November 2025, he became the youngest professional kickboxer in the state of Kentucky, at the age of 16. Antonio devotes his free time to training and helping others in the gym achieve excellence. He asks for nothing, but serves out of a desire to make others better. He lives by the motto, "hard work will never betray you," and his life is a testimony to that.

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Xander Davenport

Youth Martial Artist of the Year

At the ripe young age of 9, Xander has been a Top 3 Finisher in the Keystone Championships for four years in a row. His tournament accolades already include several first-place finishes and grand championships. He's a Junior Shodan in Tomosa Bujitsu where he is already leading in the dojo, helping warm up the kids class and assisting with class instruction under the tutelage of his father, Therold Davenport.

Sofia De Luna

Youth Competitor of the Year

A dedicated martial artist, student leader, and top team performer, Sofia De Luna models leadership on and off the mat. A representative of Team USA at the World Martial Arts Games in Oslo, Norway, she took 1st place honors in traditional Kelly and 2nd place honors in traditional weapons after only 6 months of training. Outside the studio, Sofia pursues excellence through academics and music, with a goal of mastering voice and the violin. She also looks forward to earning her Black Belt and becoming an instructor.

Mason Gallardo

Youth Martial Artist of the Year

Mason began his training at the age of 4 and has since built a strong and diverse foundation across multiple disciplines. In 2018, he earned his first national title, taking Gold in Weapons and a Bronze in Olympic-Style Taekwondo. In 2019, he took Gold in Board Breaking and Weapons. In 2015, he represented the USA at the World Games in Oslo, Norway, earning three Gold, one Silver, and one Bronze medal. When not training, he participates in music and sports.

Eliana Gleeck

Next Generation Leader

Eliana began studying BJJ at age 8, and by age 12, she became an assistant instructor, teaching introductory classes. Homeschooled until age 13, she skipped 9th grade and enrolled in Highbanks School. Eliana will graduate this year, at the age of 16, and has maintained a 3.9 GPA while competing on the swim team, singing in chorus, and playing percussion, guitar, and piano for her state championship marching band. She exudes leadership as a martial artist, student, and community member.

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Siersha Johnson

Outstanding Student

According to her instructor, Rodrigo Antunes, Siersha is one of the most dedicated, polite, and hardworking students in their BJJ community. Her commitment to training, combined with her kindness and inner strength, makes her a remarkable example of what martial arts is truly about. She represents the values of discipline, humility, perseverance, and kindness through her actions on and off the mat. Seirsha inspires others, showing that true strength is built through character.

Eli Limon

Youth Competitor of the Year

This young warrior is preceding all his peers at a rapid rate, where his instructors are amazed at his ability to grasp and grow as a martial artist. A natural born competitor in kata, weapons, demo teams, team kata, point sparring, continuous sparring, as well as board breaking and sword sparring, he competed in 24 tournaments in 2025, winning 78 medals in the process, including the Top Black Belt Athlete Grand Championship at the Spirit of the Dragon Tournament. He also competes in submission and point grappling.

Ethan Lopez

Outstanding Student

A true gentleman on and off the mats, Ethan Lopez has trained under Professor Rodrigo Antunes for two years. He has not only demonstrated BJJ proficiency, he has consistently demonstrated outstanding character and a positive attitude. Ethan was invited to join the very first Leadership Program at Six Blades Jiu-Jitsu South Denver where he's learning to inspire fellow students and help to cultivate the next generation of martial artists.

Conner Oberste

Inspiring Greatness

A 1st Dan Black Belt in Karate, and also trains in Kickboxing, BJJ, and Wrestling. He's won multiple tennis tournaments as an 8th Grader on the Lincoln Christian School Tennis Team, all while maintaining academic excellence. In his spare time, he is active in music, playing piano and drums. This young man exemplifies the values of discipline, perseverance, and character.

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Genevieve Paul

Leading by Example

Genevieve is no stranger to leading. She's made the Principal's Honor Roll, qualified for a spot on the club volleyball team, and won the election for Class President this past year. She's previously served on Student Council, Eco Club, Dance Team, and the School Safety Team. Genevieve created a suggestion box for students to recommend ways to improve the school, and had several of these implemented by school officials. And, she's even had the privilege of serving as Principal for the Day. That's in addition to her strenuous training at Bellicose Martial Arts under Charles Cherry. Lead on!

Kylee Seigriest

Junior Female Instructor

Kylee has already taken the first step in her leadership journey as a martial artist, serving as an assistant instructor at 4 Mile Hill Taekwondo, where she helps GM Goodwin instruct children and adult classes. She's a 2nd Dan and Junior Instructor at the dojang. Kylee continues her own journey toward martial arts excellence, even as she continues to be a valuable asset to GM Goodwin and 4 Mile Hill Taekwondo.

Shane Bailey-Scherman

Leading By Example

A BJJ practitioner under Lt. Colonel Tharp, Shane is truly leading by example. He's a member of the Navy JROTC, World BJJ, Native American of Cherokees, and is active in the Youth Groups of Restoration Church and Friendship Church. He's a 2-time recipient of the ROTC Stephan Decatur Award and has been recognized for exemplary personnel conduct. Shane is also the Team Captain of the ROTC Physical Fitness PT Varsity Chord, earning the coveted Physical Fitness Gold Lamp.

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Jeffery Stout III

Black Belt of the Year

Jeffery is one of those exceptional individuals who early on develop the characteristics associated with leadership and martial arts excellence. He's currently a 1st Dan in ChunJiDo and a 1st Dan in Taekwondo. Each week, he assists at Coffman's Martial Arts, demonstrating excellence in instruction and a passion for helping others. He's the epitome of what a role model looks like, serving with honor, dignity, and respect. Jeffery serves others even as he continues to hone his craft as he prepares to test for 2nd Dan.

Dathan Thompson

Youth Competitor of the Year

A homeschool student, Dathan has become a dedicated athlete who consistently challenges the competition in local tournaments. In 2025, he took Gold at the World Martial Arts Games in Point Sparring and Continuous Fighting. Dathan showcased technical skill, strategic awareness, and the ability to perform under pressure as he bested the rest of the world. Win or lose, he is respectful, hardworking, humble, and supportive of others, qualities that make a great martial artist.

Nathan Thompson

Youth Competitor of the Year

Demonstrating courage in adversity, humility in growth, and unwavering dedication to his Craft, Nathan has matured into a disciplined and focused student. In 2025, he traveled to Oslo Norway as part of the US Martial Arts Team, earning a Bronze Medal. He has also bested the best to earn Grand Championship honors at the Kajukenbo Championship. Nathan holds a 1st Dan in Universal Karate under Gregory Borrego.

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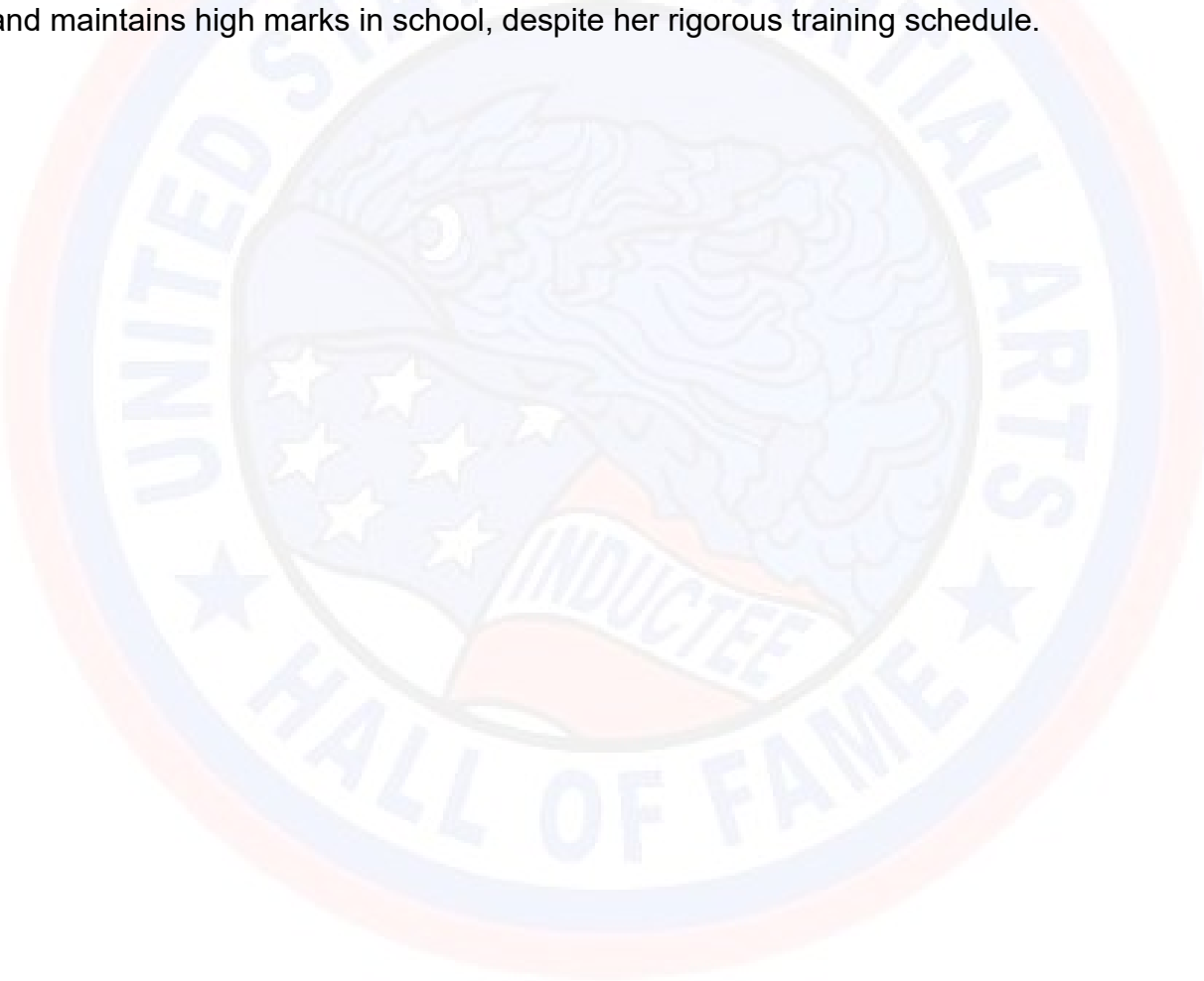
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Zayden Zimmerman

Youth Competitor of the Year

Zayden's journey began four years ago, but it was clear from the start she possessed a rare passion. Over the past four years, she has fearlessly embraced competition, honing her skills, and earning an impressive collection of medals and trophies. This past year, she first secured a Silver Medal and later the esteemed title of National Champion at the Moo Doo Taekwondo Nationals. Zayden is now cross-training in Jiu-Jitsu, already racking up the wins on the mat. She is also a champion basketball and track and field athlete, and maintains high marks in school, despite her rigorous training schedule.



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Bronze

Manuela Azevedo

Female School Owner of the Year

From the sands of Copacabana Beach in Rio to the Mile-High City of Denver, Manuela's life has been one of resilience and dedication. When her parents lost their business, she paused her architectural degree and stepped into the workforce, rebuilding the family's financial stability. Today, she has helped to transform Six Blades Jiu Jitsu South Denver into one of the premiere schools in Colorado. She leads by example, inspires everyone around her, and reminds us that real success is not only measured in results, but in the lives touched and transformed.

Sean Alvis

Instructor of the Year

An assistant instructor under GM James Goodwin at 4-Mile Hill Taekwondo, Sensei Alvis helps teach and train the next generation of martial artists. He has trained for 12 years, currently holding a 2nd Dan in the Art of Taekwondo. He's a former member of the NTFA, ITA, and ICHF. He's loved by students and parents, and serves as a shining role model of what a true black belt leader should be.

Logan Bezoni

Assistant Instructor of the Year

The Captain of the Fighting Dragon Taekwondo Demo Team, Sensei Bezoni helps spread awareness of martial arts at community events throughout Houston. As the Assistant Instructor in the school, he helps teach junior and adult students from the age of 5 to 55. Always eager to learn and expand his knowledge, Sensei Logan participates annually in the IMACUSA National Training Camp and TKA Training Conference, as well as training with his senior instructor (and father), Master Brad Bezoni.

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Rodney Bhally

Inspirational Martial Arts

Rodney is an advanced instructor in Wudang Taiji and Qigong. His instructor, Ismet Himmet, says of him, *"I've had the rare privilege of training with world-class martial artists, including Shaolin Monks. I can say without hesitation that Rodney's dedication to the martial arts is truly exceptional. His discipline, humility, and relentless pursuit of excellence were immediately evident. Today, his programs embody the highest ideals of the martial arts, guiding others toward physical, mental, and personal transformation."*

Rodney Brown

Martial Arts Excellence

Having served with distinction for 23 years, including two combat tours, Rodney Moore continues to exemplify discipline, resilience, and leadership both on and off the mat. He recently served as the Nutrition Coach for the United States Martial Arts Team, playing a vital role in supporting the athletes' performance and well-being. He also represented the U.S. on the world stage, earning a Silver Medal in Oslo, Norway. Mr. Brown is also a devoted husband, father and a proud dog-dad to two rescue dogs.

Cole Cathey

Man of the Year

GM Janis Fraley says that Cole Cathey changes lives. After earning his black belt in Shotokan, Sensei Cathey expanded his training to include Tora Tora Kickboxing. He brings a contagious smile to class and is always ready, willing, and eager to help. When he is not training, you'll find him helping others hone their craft as a fighter. Sensei Cathey also teaches important life skills that are transformational in the lives of students.

Timothy Chambers

Empowering Others

A U.S. Army Veteran, Mr. Chambers' life reflects a deep commitment to service. His focus is on empowering people to lead themselves and others. Mr. Chambers is a Recreation Aide at the Medical Education and Training Center at Fort Sam Houston. Guided by faith, he founded Still Fit 2 Serve, a movement dedicated to uplifting individuals through discipline, service, and spiritual founding. His long-term vision is to open a community-centered gym in San Antonio to further expand his mission and calling.

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Christopher Cisco

Adult Student of the Year

Christopher Cisco is on a quest, pursuing Black Belt Excellence as he continues to train in the Art of Shiro Tora Ryu under Sensei Nikolaj McLeod in Humble TX. His commitment and dedication to learning, growing, and maturing as a martial artist serve as a shining example for the other students in class. Mr. Cisco currently holds a purple belt in Shiro Tora Ryu and has embraced the martial arts journey as a way of life.

Heather Coffman

Female Competitor of the Year

GM Hoffman is truly an outstanding martial artist and competitor, winning 12 World Titles in the past 3 years while competing at the US Open ISKA World Martial Arts Championship and the WKU World Championships. Her dedication to martial arts, the art of ChunJiDo, and to her students stands as a tremendous example of an amazing leader, which includes leading herself to train at the highest levels to compete on the World stage. GM Hoffman continues to best competitors almost half her age, even as she coached one of her female students to win 3 World Titles at the 2025 US Open ISKA World Championship.

Brandon Crick

Instructor of the Year

Known as Coach Brandon, Sensei Crick has been involved in combat sports since 1998. He's competed in MMA and coached athletes at the highest levels. His biggest passion is his dedication to personal growth with his kids program, installing wisdom, knowledge, and important life skills. Coach Crick is currently one of the top officials in the IKF, and embodies the spirit and integrity of a true martial artist, both in and out of the ring.

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Milka Diaz

Woman of the Year

A Chodan in Taekwondo under GM Michael Hornsby, Sensei Diaz' life was shaped by faith, service, and a steadfast commitment to uplifting others. When she's not training in the dojang, she's caring for her family or serving as a caregiver in her local Texas community. She also faithfully serves as a security officer I her local church. Chodan Diaz sees the martial arts as a ministry, an opportunity to inspire, encourage, and guide others toward their faith-centered purpose. She believes that martial arts is transformative, empowering them with the strength, courage, and confidence to overcome.

Thomas Dillard

Black Belt of the Year

A student of GM Sandy Larwood, Sensei Dillard has proven to be a great asset not only to Shotokan Karate, but also as a Cardio Kickboxing and Functional Fitness Instructor at "And Fitness." He's spent more than 3 decades studying martial arts and fitness. His illustrious military career earned multiple awards including the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and Army Commendation for Valor. Sensei Dillard has also been recognized by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for excellence as a self-defense and tactical instructor.

Justin Dunham

Martial Arts School of the Year

A 6th Dan in Taekwondo under GM Jason Wadley, Master Dunham is a UTA National Champion, a 3-time Gold Medalist at the International Goodwill Games. He teaches at Jenks Martial Arts Academy, one of Oklahoma's premiere training facilities. If a school is measured by the success of its students, Master Dunham ranks among the best in the state, as recognized by Tulsa World with a "Best in the World" ranking in 2023.

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Steve Furmedge

Combat Arts Operator of the Year

With numerous state, national, and world titles in several athletic and martial arts disciplines, GM Furmedge is a 9th Dan in Zen Di Kai Karate and BJMA. He also holds a 6th Dan in Muay Thai, a 5th Dan in Krav Maga, and a 1st Dan in Okinawan Kobudo and Eskrima. GM Furmedge is best known for his work as an international weapons and tactics specialist, and is recognized as a counterterrorism expert. He's taught throughout Australia and New Zealand, as well as Israel, Germany, Austria, and the USA.

Chris Galaviz

Black Belt of the Year

With 5 Texas state championships under his belt, Sensei Galaviz understands how to bring the best to the ring, and that only comes through persistence in training and a commitment to continual self-improvement. A student of Nikolaj McLeod, he currently holds a 4th Dan in Taekwondo and a 3rd Dan in Shiro Tora Ryu. He is also a member of the Texas Karate Organization and the Ko-Hu-Sai Nihon Ren-Go-Kai.

Cathrine Hancock

Master of the Year

After immigrating from Norway in 2001, Cathrine started training in kickboxing under Grandmaster Bill Logan, where she was exposed to Kenpo and fell in love with it. She has climbed the ranks, grinding through each grueling step under the watchful eye of Grand Master Logan, eventually earning her 5th degree and Shihan title, becoming the Chief instructor of the school. Her dedication to excellence is on full display with her own training as well as the high standard she keeps in the classes she teaches and the quality of the Black belts under her. Shihan Catherine has been designated as Soke-Dai and inheritor of Grandmaster Logan's Tetsuko Rei Kenpo system.

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**Mark Harris****Martial Artist of the Year**

A 4th Dan in Taekwondo under GM James Goodwin, Master Harris is the Chief Instructor at 4 Mile Hill Taekwondo. Loved by his students, Master Harris brings energy and warmth to his instruction, with an attention to detail. From forms to sparring, to takedowns, he is a well-rounded martial artist and instructor. He is also a 2025 Momentum Grappling and MMA Super Fight Gold Medalist.

Mark Hawley**Grandmaster of the Year**

The founder of ATAVISM, an adaptive martial arts system, GM Hawley has spent the past 5 decades honing his craft. He is also ranked in Poly-Goju, Ju-Jitsu, Kenpo, and Lua, and dedicated his life to perpetual learning. One of our National Training Camp instructors this year, GM Hawley is a member of IMAC, the Hawaiian Karate Association, North American Karate-JuJitsu Federation, and Findlay's Pacific Rim Martial Arts.

Kenny Hird**Officer of the Year**

Captain Hird represents the pinnacle of discipline, leadership, and martial arts excellence. From championship mats to combat zones, his journey reflects an unwavering spirit of a warrior devoted to mastery, mentorship, and service. A former collegiate wrestler, Captain Hird serves as a highly decorated Forward Support Company Commander in the 10th Mountain Division. He's also a Pan American BJJ Champion and a seasoned grappler and coach who rebuilt and revitalized Fort Drum's Combatives Team.

Abigail Horne**Woman of the Year**

Sensei Horne will win your heart with her cute little smile and contagious laugh. She shows up not only ready to train and better herself, but to lend a helping hand to other students, helping them hone their craft. When she's not training or teaching, Sensei Horne volunteers at the Little Light House for Physically Challenged Children in Tulsa, giving back to her community. She holds a 2nd Dan in Shotokan under GM Janis Fraley.

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Derek Wayne Johnson

Black Belt of the Year

Master Johnson is a 4th Dan in American Karate under the late-great Robert LaMont. He is also a 4th Dan in the Superfoot System, under the legendary Bill Wallace. As a filmmaker, Master Johnson is perhaps best known for directing, producing, and editing five documentaries with Sylvester Stallone, including “40 Years of Rocky: The Birth of a Classic.” He’s spent the past 30 years training, teaching, and empowering others, constantly stretching himself in the process, as well as teaching filmmaking at SFASU. He also has a solid competition record with numerous grand championships and state championships under his belt.

Brett Keel

Grandmaster of the Year

GM Janis Fraley describes GM Keel as “one of a kind.” Not only does this 10th Dan in Shotokan love martial arts, he also enjoys challenging each student to stretch themselves to discover they are capable of more. When he’s not teaching at Shotokan Tigers Karate, he’s teaching in his own Tora Tora Kickboxing dojo preparing his students for their next competition. GM Keel has been previously recognized as Black Belt of the Year in 2018 and received a Silver Life Award in 2021.

Tavia Leach

Martial Artist of the Year

A 3rd Dan in Shotokan, Sensei Leach recently found a home at Shotokan Tigers, where GM Janis Fraley saw her talent and put her to work. Today, she is an instructor in the school, specializing in kata. When she’s not training or teaching, she’s competing in tournaments where her talent shines. Leaders prepare those who will one day take their place, and Sensei Leach embodies this mindset as she teaches the Art she loves.

Aloen Lucero

Black Belt of the Year

Sensei Lucero is one of those exceptional women that leads by example. She currently holds a 2nd Dan in Shotokan under GM Janis Fraley. For Sensei Lucero, it’s a family affair as most of her family is involved in Karate, Kickboxing, or Krav Maga. An asset to Shotokan Tigers Karate, she focuses on ensuring new students are solid in their fundamentals, blocking, punching, and kicking, preparing them for advanced training.

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Christian McCauley

Christian McCauley Legacy Award

Christian was a kickboxer trained, in part, by Randy “Boom Boom” Blake from 2019 to 2025. But his real passion was soccer. Having missed the cut for his High School Team, Christian joined a Club Team to prove to his coaches (and himself) that they made a mistake. He went on to receive several scholarship offers, and was the only graduating senior in his class to receive an offer to play soccer at the college level. Whether in the ring or on the field, Christian was a man of integrity, perseverance, discipline, and indomitable spirit. Christian passed unexpectedly on September 28, 2025 and is survived by his parents, Frank and Lilia McCauley, and his brother, Matthew.

Matthew McCauley

Martial Arts Excellence

The younger brother of Christian McCauley, Matthew is a kickboxer with more than 12 years of training under his belt. Randy Blake says what sets him apart is his athleticism and intelligence. He also noted he’s a quiet guy, at first, but once you get him talking, he won’t stop. Coach Randy notes that Matthew is truly a “golden child,” a young man with incredible talent not only as a kickboxer, but in any endeavor he chooses to pursue now or in the future. He lives a life of excellence, both in and out of the ring.

Honor McDonald

Competitor of the Year

GM Janis Fraley says not to let this young man’s smile fool you. Inside this 1st Dan in Shotokan is a warrior’s heart, with incredible skill and talent. He trains daily as if there is no tomorrow, putting all of himself into each training session. When he’s not training or teaching, sharing with others what he’s learning, he’s competing in karate tournaments or full contact kickboxing in the XFN mixed martial arts circuit in Tulsa.

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Sylvia McDonald

Woman of the Year

A 3rd Dan Black Belt in Taekwondo and Lead Instructor at Christian Taekwondo League under Master Jose Ramirez, this woman stands as one of the most dedicated, versatile, and service-driven women in the martial arts community. Her leadership is defined by humility, discipline, grace, and an unwavering commitment to uplift others. Whether teaching, mentoring, coordinating logistics, or supporting senior leadership, she constantly elevates the environment around her with her purpose-driven approach to life.

Bryan Marshall

Instructor of the Year

Under the tutelage of GM Sandy Larwood, Sensei Marshall continues to develop himself, even as he develops his students in Jasper, TX. He's a member of the United States Black Belt Federation and The Karate Association. Sensei Marshall is a three-time Martial Artist of the Year and a recipient of the Enduring Spirit Award. He lives by the principle of sharing what he has learned, passing his knowledge on to the next generation.

James Moore

Community Service

GM Moore has previously taught defensive tactics for the State of West Virginia, as well as the Department of Homeland Security and other governmental entities. As an EMT, he is continually serving his community in a tangible way. Shawn England says GM Moore has become an invaluable asset to Golden Dragon Taekwondo, where he now trains and teaches. He also offers free CPR classes to students and the local Las Vegas community.

Justin Murray

Master of the Year

Known by his peers as a Book of Knowledge in the Art of Shotokan, Master Murry teaches the history of the Art, not just the application. He wants students to understand the methodology that led to the technique. His ability to make the complicated simple allows him to effectively teach younger students the techniques and applications of the Art in a way they can easily grasp and understand. He's not only a Master in Shotokan, he is a Master of Effective Communication in the classroom.

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Gavin Oberste

Inspiring Greatness

A 2nd Dan in Karate who has also trained in Kickboxing and BJJ. He is a graduate of Lincoln Christian High School with a 4.0+ GPA, earning Merit Scholar Honors and an induction into the Honor Society. He is currently pursuing a degree in aerospace engineering at the University of Oklahoma where he heads the Capstone Rocket Program in collaboration with NASA. This young man models discipline and leadership and he continues to prepare himself for what's next.

Cecil Piercy

Instructor of the Year

A member of USA Judo, USA Boxing, and Ron Van Clief's Chinese Goju Association, Master Perry holds a 6th Dan in Goju Ryu Karate Do under GM Sam Stanford. A gifted instructor, Master Perry has made his son, Corey, a priority in his life as he trains him for a future in the world of kickboxing. His reputation for giving back to youth is well known, and he's respected as a knowledgeable, thoughtful, and competent instructor.

Steven Purvis

Instructor of the Year

An accomplished martial artist and leader whose life reflects discipline, service, and integrity. A retired E8 Senior Non-Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Army with 20 years of honorable service and multiple deployments, he brings the same strength and commitment to martial arts. Sifu Purvis is a 7th Dan in Kung Fu San Soo, a 3rd Dan in Danzan Ryu Jujitsu, a 2nd Dan in Kenpo, and a 1st Dan in Modern Arnis. His teaching blends real world effectiveness, technical precision, mental toughness, and strong character development.

Magdiel Rivera

Martial Artist of the Year

Since 1994, Sensei Rivera has been cross-training in multiple disciplines, including Kenpo, Escrima, and Aiki-Jujutsu. He is a member of the Kada Anan Martial Arts Association, and has been recognized for his contributions to this organization. GM Mark Hawley notes that Mr. Rivera is well versed and knowledgeable in multiple disciplines, while remaining humble and hardworking while always willing to learn and grow.

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Seth Robinson

Black Belt of the Year

A 1st Dan in Taekwondo under GM James Goodwin, Seth Robinson has nearly a decade of experience and continues to train daily to learn, grow, and improve. As an assistant instructor at 4 Mile Hill Taekwondo, he leads by example, training hard and demanding the same quality and quantity of effort from the students he exhibits himself. He's always willing to give struggling students some extra attention to help them progress on their personal journey to Black Belt.

Jennifer Rogers

Woman of the Year

Known by her peers as a woman with an open mind, always curious, always open to learning, Ms. Rogers is only the second person to receive a black belt in Adaptive ATAVISIM under GM Mark Hawley, who notes she has been instrumental in continuing to refine this adaptive Art. She also holds a 2nd Dan in Polynesian Goju, and is a ChunJiDo member in good standing.

Steven Royce

Master of the Year

A man on a mission, Master Royce is one of the most dedicated and multi-talented leaders in Florida martial arts. He's a constant presence at major national events, where he teaches, trains, and elevates the experience for everyone around him. His technical skill is matched only by his creativity and service. His work ethic is relentless, always pushing himself to improve and contribute more than is asked. He continues to carry forward the legacy of his father, GM Marvin Royce, with dignity and respect.

Jeremiah Ryor

Black Belt of the Year

A 2nd Dan in ChunJiDo, Sensei Ryor shows up as a tremendous leader, role model, and mentor for all those coming behind them. He is an assistant instructor at Evansville ChunJiDo Academy, helping with Tiny Tigers, Youth, and Adult Classes. He's the first one to step up and volunteer anytime help is needed. Outside the dojo, Sensei Ryor is active at his church, teaching, leading music, and modeling what a true servant leader looks like. He continually develops himself, so he can keep developing others.

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Dustin Smith

Black Belt of the Year

A student of Master Chris Wetherington, Mr. Smith has found not only a home, but a calling as he continues on his quest to master the Art of Tang Soo Do. His instructor says Mr. Smith's best attributes are honor, integrity, loyalty, perseverance, and unwavering dedication. He strives for improvement during each training session, with the goal of Kaizen, constant, never-ending improvement.

Steve Taylor

Lifetime of Service

Master Taylor has selflessly taught Hawaiian Lua since the 1970s, never charging for lessons. He previously served with distinction in the United States Navy, later recruited by the CIA to work as a Counter Intelligence Operative in Southeast Asia. His missions were of critical importance to the war efforts, repeatedly putting himself in danger to complete the tasks assigned to him. Today, he continues to perpetuate the Art of Lua, not only keeping it alive but adapting it to serve the unique needs of his students.

Cheryl Thompson

Female Competitor of the Year

A member of the US Martial Arts Team, Sensei Thompson has taken both Gold and Silver Honors at the World Martial Arts Games, competing alongside her three sons. She is also a prior Grand Champion at the Kajukenbo Championship. She's trained in Karate for five years and Muay Thai for three years, even training while pregnant. Sensei Thompson currently holds a 1st Dan in Karate. She balances her martial arts training with active involvement in a family business and homeschooling her children.

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Joseph Tummons

Overcoming Adversity

Overcoming a 100% military disability due to a traumatic brain injury, Joseph Tummons has demonstrated that anyone can overcome adversity. A 1st Dan in BJJ, he teaches at Troy Holton BJJ in Harrison AR, demonstrating exceptional skill, discipline, and a deep commitment to the values that martial arts embodies: respect, integrity, and perseverance. Mr. Tummons has made a lasting impact through his teaching and mentoring, fostering confidence in students of all ages. He remains active in his community, giving back and inspiring others to overcome their own adversities.

Chris Wetherington

Master of the Year

A 5th Dan in Tang Soo Do, Master Wetherington's passion is helping those who can't help themselves. A 4-time silver medalist and 2-time World Champion at the UMAHOF World Championships, he constantly tests himself against the best of the best. He's humble in victory and supportive in defeat. Master Wetherington believes the martial arts are for everyone, so he focuses his efforts on private or small group instruction and teaching complementary self-defense workshops.

Joe Yager

Competitor of the Year

A former D1 athlete from Central Michigan University, Joe's 35 years of wrestling experience allowed him to compete on the big stage of MMA in Bellator, where he won several matches. His accolades include a multi-time Greco Roman State and National Champion, a two-time Absolute NAGA Championship, and a multi-time freestyle National Champion. His only professional kickboxing match was against Randy "Boom Boom" Blake, leading to a long-time friendship that continues to this day.

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Silver

Johnny Atkison

Honor Award

GM Atkison's life could be summed up in four words, "Fight and train hard." This was a way of life back in the old days, and molded this amazing man into the martial artist he is today. He's given many years of knowledge to students as an instructor at Shotokan Tigers Karate. He lives a life of self-discipline, self-control, and respect, something he learned during his military service in the U.S. Army, and expects it of his students. He is an honorable man, and an open door of knowledge for all who seek it.

Tracey Atwood

Sport Karate Museum Ambassador

With over three decades of diverse experience spanning competitive dance, theater, choreography, and kickboxing, Tracey has cultivated a deep, lifelong connection to the performing and martial arts. This background, paired with her studies in theological and trauma-informed care, fueled her passion for humanitarian efforts and local museum consulting. As a writer and cultural arts ambassador, Tracey dedicates herself to celebrating diverse traditions, preserving heritage, and building creative spaces that bring communities together.

John Bar Hoover

Distinguished Law Enforcement Officer

A 3rd Dan in Taekwondo and Judo, Sensei Bar Hoover serves not only as head instructor in his school, but a deputy sheriff in Cortland OH. On top of teaching kids and adults, he never says "no" to teaching defensive tactics to his fellow officers. In 2025, he traveled to Alabama to compete in the World Police Fire Games where he placed 2nd in Judo and 3rd in Taekwondo. He's also competed and won on the AAU and world stage.

Lou Blazquez

Distinguished Master

Holding a 5th Dan ranking in the Art of Chung Do Kwan Taekwondo under GM Don Richardson, Master Blazquez has been expanding his knowledge of martial arts for 50 years. He's been a member of the United States Judo Association and the United States Martial Arts Federation. A teacher for many years, he's received Teacher of the Year honors. He's a member of Central Arizona Writers, the Arizona Education Association, and the National Rifle Association.

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Nili Block

Woman of Distinction

A 7-time world champion, Ms. Block is a Muay Thai practitioner with more than 2 decades of experience. She's a 7-time World Champion and a 4-time European Champion in Muay Thai and Kickboxing. Ms. Block has been chosen six consecutive years in a row as the Athlete of the Year in Israel. She's a mentor and example to girls and women, demonstrating that discipline, strength, and courage are built through consistent work. Ms. Block's influence extends beyond the ring into community impact, inspiring women to train, lead, and surpass perceived limits.

Misty Bryant

Distinguished Master

Sensei Bryant's instructor refers to her as an "*enduring martial arts student and instructor*." She currently holds a 4th Dan in the Art of ATIVISM under GM Mark Hawley, as well as black belt rankings in other systems. In 1998 and 1999, she was ranked #2 in the nation for forms. Today, she teaches the next generation of students, preparing them not only for the tournament circuit but for a life well-lived.

Krista Camarillo

Distinguished Master

Master Camarillo holds a 5th Dan in Shotokan under Gordon Andrade. She teaches at Kihido Martial Arts in Altus OK. Master Camarillo is a 2024 and 2025 Ozark Mountain National Champion, a 2025 ABKA National Champion, and an ICO World Qualifier in 2026. She's a member of USA Karate, 360 Krav Maga, and Carlos Machado Jiu-Jitsu. Tavia Leach says, "*She pours into each and every one of her students and is a true example of a great martial artist.*"

Rick Cowan

Distinguished Master

A student of GM Tim Fox, GM Billy Brammer, GM Billy Smith, and GM Steve Parks, Master Rick Cowan has spent 27 years expanding his knowledge and application of martial arts. He currently holds a 5th Dan in Shuri-Tei and is known as an excellent instructor in the Arts. Master Parks is committed to passing on what he's learned (and is still learning), modeling the example of remaining a perpetual student.

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Brian Gooch

Serving with Distinction

A member of the Sayoc Tactical Group, Brian Gooch is an Oklahoma Defensive Tactics, CLEET Firearms, Vehicle CQB, Long Range Rifle, LEDT, CQB Tactics, LASER Active Shooter, and Impact Munitions Instructor. He's been recognized with a Distinguished Service Award by the OK Bureau of Narcotics and an Outstanding Achievement Award by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Mr. Gooch continues to prepare the next generation of Oklahoma law enforcement officers at the Academy, ensuring their safety and success.

Jeffrey Hamilton

Distinguished Master

Master Hamilton is a lifelong instructor who recently retired after 30+ years of teaching troubled teens martial arts and sword at an alternative high school designed to give teens one more chance. He is the creator and founder of Warrior Camp, Warrior Goddess Camp, and the Warrior Phoenix Challenge as a way to influence, inspire, and transform lives around the globe. Master Hamilton is a 6th Dan in Taekwondo.

Dan Hugill

Leading By Example

An example of recovery and personal discipline that comes from utilizing martial arts to transform your life, Sifu Hugill dove headfirst into his own sobriety work transforming himself, then guided hundreds of young adults into a better life. He's served at the Phoenix Multi-Sport Recovery Center, getting young adults off the street, out of treatment, out of jail and into their transformational future. Sifu Hugill currently holds a 2nd Dan in Shaolin Kung Fu under Master Tanisha Martin.

Peppe Johnson

Leading by Example

For the past four decades, Sensei Johnson has trained in boxing, kickboxing, and karate. In 2014, he connected with Randy Blake, teaching him the art of boxing. Since that time, he's helped guide "*Boom Boom*" to four World Titles, 27 career wins, with 20 of those by knockout. Randy Blake says of Coach Peppe, "*He's the reason I get to claim the title of 5-time World Champion. He made a difference in my life and still makes a difference in the lives of others. He's a real coach and a father figure to many.*"

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Eric Jones

Silver Life Award

With more than 35 years of experience, Senior Master Jones holds a 6th Dan in Tang Soo Do. He is a respected member of The Karate Association and serves as the testing and conference coordinator for the annual TKA Conference. He opened his first school at the age of 16, D.C. Karate, and grew the school to nearly 100 students within seven years. His approach was to blend martial arts with mindset and personal development, transforming lives in the process. Master Jones is also a gifted photographer and graphic designer serving others with this unique skill set.

Chris Landino

Sport Karate Ambassador

Previously recognized as an Outstanding Taekwondo Instructor, Master Landino was awarded the International Medal of Merit by the United Taekwondo Alliance in 2020. He is a member of the PKA, AMAA, WAKO, USA Kickboxing, and is the founder of Jishin Do. Master Landino also holds a 4th Dan in Taekwondo. He is a Master Member of the Sport Karate Museum, and a 4-time national champion. Master Landino is a recipient of the Who's Who in the Martial Arts Natural Fighter Award.

Kenneth Lowe

Honorable Grandmaster

A 10th Dan in Shotokan, GM Lowe has trained for more than 3 decades under the tutelage of GM Janis Fraley. Today, he serves as an instructor at Shotokan Tigers and helps to direct the school's tournaments. He is a distinguished member of the Shotokan Tigers Testing Panel, directing the fighting elements of rank advancement. He is a member of the Black Knights Karate Association, and Taylor Family Lua. He understands that to whom much has been given, much is required and pours his knowledge and wisdom into the lives of students during each training session.

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**Eric McAffrey****Serving with Distinction**

Trained by GM David Bailey, Mr. McAffrey is a Master Combatives Instructor for the Probation and Parole Division of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. He became a DTI Instructor in 2013 and two years later completed FBI DTI training. Mr. McAffrey certified as a firearms instructor in 2015 and a knife fighting instructor in 2018. Today, he teaches defensive tactics to law enforcement officers at Tigertactics Training Academy

Jim McCleskey**Silver Life Award**

With more than three decades of experience, Master McCleskey holds a 5th Dan in Shiro Tora Ryu Karate Do. He also holds a 4th Dan in Jhoon Rhee Taekwondo, a 3rd Dan in Ho Am Taekwondo, and is the cofounder of the American Karate Systems fighting style. Renshi McCleskey is a member of Ko-Ku-Sai Bu-Gei Ren-Go-Kai. He was recognized as East Region Instructor of the Year by the Amateur Organization of Karate in 1998. Renshi McCleskey now trains with GM Nikolaj McLeod at Team Karate Academy.

Nikolaj McLeod**Distinguished Grandmaster**

An IMACUSA National Training Camp Alumni, GM McLeod is the founder of Shiro Tora Ryu Karate Do. He also holds a 7th Dan in Shotokan, a 5th Dan in Nihon Ju-Jutsu, and a 4th Dan in Taekwondo. He's a member of the Japan Budo International Federation, Professional Karate/Kickboxing Association, and is a recipient of the Excellence in Youth Training and Development by the ATTU. Having recently expanded and revamped his studio, GM McLeod hasn't just built a dojo, he's created a culture where continual self-improvement is encouraged and celebrated.

Chad Masters**Distinguished Instructor**

Known by his senior instructors as a teacher with an excellent depth and breadth of martial arts knowledge, Chad Masters is a 5th Dan in Tang Soo Do. In keeping with the school's community focus, he and his students have raised thousands of dollars for charitable events ranging from feeding children to cancer research and scholarship for underprivileged children. He also offers free kid's and women's self-defense clinics.

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Kristen Neary

Distinguished Master

A mother of six, Master Neary has led by example. She and her children train together in martial arts at Shotokan Tigers, all earning their Black Belt. When she's not teaching in the dojo, you'll find her at Tulsa Little Light House, providing education to disabled children or teaching karate classes at Gateway, a facility for physically disabled adults. On the weekends, she's competing in tournaments, or assisting with judging of competitors.

Randy Ong

Empowering Others

An 8th Dan in Kanjkenbo / Lua under Sigung Mike Whittle, Sigung Ong has spent the last 53 years exploring the world of martial arts. He's a member of the Family Self-Defense School, Na Koa Martial Arts, Kam Kenpo, and Karate for Christ. For the last 10 years, Sigung Ong has been teaching Kajukenbo at Chandler Gilbert Community College, where he practices positive reinforcement to build confidence and competency in martial arts. Through this, he is empowering others to live their best life, on and off the mat.

Jose Ramirez

Silver Life Award

Head coach of US Martial Arts Team South Texas, Master Ramirez has taken his 30 years of martial arts leadership, athlete development, and competitive excellence to build a world-class team in only five months. At the 2025 World Martial Games, his team won 16 Gold Medals, 10 Silver Medals, and 4 Bronze Medals, including winning a bronze medal himself for traditional Korean Forms. Master Ramirez operates the highly successful Christian Taekwondo League, where he and his team create Black Belt Leaders in Life who strive for excellence both on and off the mat.

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Natalie Royce

Leading by Example

Continuing the legacy of GM Marvin Royce, Sensei Royce holds a 1st Dan in Hapkido and serves as the Administrator for Emerald Coast Taekwondo in Lynn Haven, FL. Beyond the dojo, she's a respected leader in the security and public safety field. As Deputy Chief of Security and co-founder of two security agencies, she brings two decades of experience protecting communities, businesses, and families. Her leadership, integrity, and service reflect the same values she upholds in martial arts.

Will Shelton

Sport Karate Ambassador

A student of Al Francis, GM Will Shelton is approaching four decades of martial arts training. He's currently an 8th Dan in Taekwondo and a Sport Karate Museum History General. GM Shelton is an alumnus of the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame and the Masters Hall of Fame. He has previously been recognized by the Hall of Honors.

Tom Terwilliger

Leading By Example

A champion among champions, Sifu Tom Terwilliger is a former national bodybuilding champion and winner of the Mr. America title. He competed twice in the prestigious Mr. Olympia competition. Tom holds a 1st Sash in Kung Fu, and has been a longtime student of Kali, Pencak Silat, and Jeet Kune Do under Sifu Ray Kahn and Guru Dan Inosanto. He has overcome tremendous adversity and challenges throughout his life and continues to help others discover their own path to greater health, strength, and personal achievement. At the young age of 67, he still remains active in the health, fitness, and martial arts communities and maintains a level of fitness that reflects his lifelong commitment to performance, health, and wellness.

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Dan Walthers

Silver Life Award

GM Walthers more than 3 decades of dedication to the martial arts reflects a steadfast devotion to preserving the traditions and a lifetime of learning. As a 7th Dan in Tang Soo Do, GM Walthers has been a teacher, mentor, and guiding influence to countless practitioners. His impact has shaped character, instilled discipline, and inspired confidence in generations of martial artists. He continues to elevate training standards, ensuring that the status quo is constantly challenged to change things for the better. He is a Hall of Fame alumnus and an esteemed member of The Karate Association.

Dameion Williams

Distinguished Instructor

A student of the legendary GM Ted Gambordella and GM Michael T. Dealy, GM Williams holds a 9th Dan in Chung Do Kwan 4.0. Seven days a week, you'll find GM Williams at the school, teaching the Art of loves to students young and old. When he's not teaching, he is active in his community, giving back to make the lives of New Yorkers better. GM Williams is a member of the World Karate Masters Federation, the World Kenpo Federation, Tactical Hapkido Alliance, and the World Council of Masters. He is also the founder of Blue Wave Taekwondo Academy.

Gold

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Kevin Bankens

Lifetime Achievement

With nearly 5 decades in martial arts, Master Kevin Bankens currently holds a 6th Dan in Shotokan under GM Rod Prejean. Today, he is the chief instructor of Bankens MMA in New Mexico, and is a member in good standing with the North American Karate Association. Master Bankens was recognized as a History General by the Sport Karate Museum in 2021.

Frederick Burke

Lifetime Achievement

A former law enforcement officer, Sensei Burke has been protecting and serving others most of his life. He's a 34 year veteran of martial arts, currently holding a 1st Dan in Karate. A History General with the Sport Karate Museum, Sensei Burke continues to do his part to keep the lineage and legacy of sport karate alive as he passes on his wisdom and knowledge to the next generation of martial artists.

Alyxzander Bear

Lifetime Achievement

A 10th Dan in the Art of Kaito Gakko, GM Bear has dedicated more than 50 years of his life to martial arts training. He's been previously honored by the International Karate and Kickboxing Hall of Fame, Masters Hall of Fame, and the NBL Hall of Fame. GM Bear is a member of good standing with the American Ju-Jitsu Institute, Kapa Kuialua, Lua Halau, and Kodenkan Danzen Ryu.

Barry Byers

Lifetime Achievement

GM Barry Byers comes from a long lineage that includes SGM Yong Sung Lee, GM J. Pat Burleson, GM Daryl Stewart, and GM James Toney. He's a 2-time International Martial Arts Hall of Fame Inductee and has been recognized with Who's Who Martial Arts honors on three occasions. GM Byers is a former Olympic Heavyweight Champion and a former undefeated Texas Heavyweight Kickboxing Champion. He is in the Superfoot Hall of Honors and serves as a History General with the Sport Karate Museum.

Moises Colon

Martial Arts Legend

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A 10th Dan in the Art of Shorin-Ryu, Hanshi Colon spent 60 years of his life learning, mastering, and perpetuating the art of Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu in Florida and the Caribbean. He also held a 9th Dan in Kobudo, 7th Dan in Goju Ryu, a 5th Dan in Shinto Yoshin Jiu-Jitsu and American Kenpo, and a 1st Dan in Kendo. Hanshi Colon passed away in 2026 at the age of 78, and is survived by his highest-ranking student, Kyoshi Anthony Ferguson, who will continue to carry on his legacy and the Art he loved. GM Colon also proudly served in the U.S. Navy and as a Miami-Dade police officer.

Bob Cruise

Lifetime Achievement

Often mistaken for Captain America, especially when in costume, Master Bob Cruise holds a 5th Dan in American Full Contact Karate. He's a 2022 World Karate Champion, a 4-Time Texas State Champion, and has won two Karate Olympics. He's a member of Main Street Boxing and Muay Thai, Northside Karate, the Houston Stuntman Association, and the Screen Actors Guild. His cosplay role as Captain America in the local Children's Hospital has inspired and encouraged children recovering from serious illness and injury.

Shannon Hall-Girolamo

Lifetime Achievement

Perhaps best known for her role as "Dallas" in the TV series, American Gladiator, Sensei Girolamo is a 1st Dan in Kongo-Do. She's a Toughwoman World Champion, an IFBA Heavyweight Champion, a Wushu Sanshou Tournament Champion, and a former WWF Pro Wrestler. Sensei Girolamo is also a USA Boxing Coach and a member of the World Wrestling Federation, International Sports Science Association, and Kongo Do MMA. Today, she teaches Boxing, Muay Thai, and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

Arthur Heller

Lifetime Achievement

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A 10th Dan in Taekwondo under the legendary Allen Steen, GM Heller has been training for more than 65 years. He's a SEKA, TKI, and Georgia Tech Karate Institute member and a recipient of the Joe Lewis Eternal Warrior Award and the Who's Who Legends Award. GM Heller is a former Taekwondo Black Belt of the Year and a Legends of Carolina Martial Arts Trailblazer. He is also a Sport Karate Museum History General.

Guy James

Lifetime Achievement

GM James entered the world of martial arts in 1962, training in Judo. In 1965, he added American Karate and Taekwondo, and cross-trains in Jiu-Jitsu. He's a 1993 Karate International World Champion and was the 1994 National Black Belt League Champion. Now a 9th Dan under the legendary G. Pat Burleson, GM James has spent the last several years conducting self defense and martial arts workshops. He is also been a trainer and pioneer presenter at the Masters World Symposium. Today, he also serves as President of the Hill College Advisory Board and is actively involved in ministry.

Jerry F. Jones

Golden Life Award

A 7th Dan in Matsubayashi-Ryu Shorin-Ryu, Kyoshi Jones is a direct student of GM Moises Colon and Kyoshi Anthony Ferguson. She has also earned black belts in Shinto Yoshin Ryu Jujitsu, Kobudo, Aido Shinkage Ryu, and Capoeira. A six-time FBBA State Champion, Kyoshi Jones is the owner of White Dragon Karate, where she teaches martial arts values of character, resilience, and respect to her students as she perpetuates the life and legacy of GM Colon.

Mike Jones

Golden Life Award

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For years, GM Jones has captured the spirit, emotion, and legacy of the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame through his lens as its official photographer. His work preserves the stories of inductees, honors the achievements of leaders across the nation, and ensures the history of the HOF is documented with dignity, accuracy, and artistry. A 7th Tan in Tang Soo Do, GM Jones is a distinguished member of the TKA and Tang Soo Do Association. As a martial artist, he embodies the highest ideals of discipline, humility, and lifelong dedication to the Arts, inspiring excellence in every student he encounters. GM Jones is truly a cultural and historical steward of the martial arts.

Dexter Kennedy

Lifetime Achievement

A consummate gentleman and all-around good guy, Master Kennedy has devoted more than 5 decades of his life to martial arts. He's currently a 5th Dan in Isshin-Ryu under Mike Genova and has been previously honored by the USMAHOF and the National Martial Arts Hall of Fame. GM Kennedy is currently working on a national sport karate team circuit, the National Martial Arts League, pitting martial arts teams from around the country in formal competition. During his military career, he led the Army's weight management program and competed as a member of the Army Boxing Team. GM Kennedy is also an inventor, speaker, and best-selling author.

Sandy Larwood

Female Pioneer

A distinguished member of the IMACUSA Grandmasters Council and National Training Camp Alumni, GM Larwood stands as one of the most accomplished and influential women in American martial arts. She holds a 7th Dan in Shotokan and Kyokushin and a 4th Dan in American Tang Soo Do, representing a rare level of cross-disciplinary mastery achieved through more than four decades of training, teaching, leadership, and service. GM Larwood is the owner of Shotokan Karate and Fitness, where her pioneering influence has inspired other women to pursue martial arts excellence as a lifestyle. She is widely recognized for her ability to bridge traditions while upholding the highest standards of discipline, humility, and technical excellence.

Lowell Lyle

Golden Life Award

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A true humanitarian who empowers the lives of others, GM Lowell got his start in 1980 as the very first student of GM Johnny Thompson. From the onset, he displayed uncommon discipline, focus, and natural leadership. Even as he built a 20-year career with Wal-Mart, he has continued to train, teach, and represent the Tang Soo Do Association with unwavering loyalty and professionalism. He has mentored hundreds of students across multiple states as one of the longest-active practitioners of American Tang Soo Do. GM Lyle's influence spans generations, and his commitment to the Art has never failed. He has upheld the traditions and ethics of the TKA and consistently modeled the virtues of integrity, perseverance, and respect.

Scott Moore

Pioneer Award

Hanshi Scott Moore has devoted more than 6 decades to studying and teaching martial arts. His illustrious career began in 1961 training in Judo and Aikido under Sensei Robert Koga. In 1971, he began training in Kyokushin, and this became his passion. Hanshi Moore's experience in physics and biomechanics only enhance the application of what he teaches. To date, he's trained over 400 students, with more than 50 who have earned their black belts.

Mike Pachico

Lifetime Achievement

Approaching the four-decade mark as a martial arts practitioner, GM Mike Pachio currently holds an 8th Dan in Goju Ryu. He's a former NASKA World Heavyweight Champion, and has won 11 state titles in his illustrious career. Numerous students over the years have joined the rank of Black Belt under GM Pachico's tutelage. He is an active member of the Sport Karate Museum serving as a History General to help preserve the lineage and legacy of Goju Ryu for future generations.

Linda Pugliese

Lifetime Achievement

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An 8th Dan in Okinawan Karate, GM Pugliese has achieved more than 100 Grand Championships in her 5-decade career. She is a 5-time NBL world champion, a Gold medalist for Team USA at the AAU All American Games in Mexico City, and a recipient of the International Hall of Fame's International Champion Award. She's a member of the American Karate Association of Champions and is proud to be in the lineage of the legendary GM George Annarino.

Gregory Robinson

Pioneer Award

A quiet man with an incredible depth of knowledge, GM Robinson has devoted more than 5 decades of his life to the martial arts. He's become one of the San Antonio region's most respected and influential leaders. GM Robinson is the creator of the Black Dragon System of Self Defense, a blended disciplinary art devoted to personal protection. He is a member of the IMACUSA Grandmasters Council, an alumnus of the United States Martial Arts Hall of Fame, and a distinguished member of The Karate Association. Countless students and instructors are better at their craft because of GM Robinson.

Geoffrey Spohn

Golden Life Award

Since 1982, GM Spohn has dedicated his life to the mastery of martial arts. Even today, he continues to teach, train, build, and serve the martial arts community. He founded West Michigan Karate Academy in 2001, with the school celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. He intentionally charges only \$5 a month, making it affordable for anyone to train in martial arts. He also uses the dojo as a martial arts ministry, helping people grow in discipline, character, and purpose. For students, it's more than a place to train; it's a place for guidance, support, stability, and equipping.

Platinum

Al Decascos

Lifetime Achievement

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Best known as the founder of Wun Hop Kuen Do, Great Grandmaster Al Dacascos is a legendary Hawaiian-born martial artist. His son, Mark Dacascos, is a renowned martial artist and Hollywood action star. GM Dacascos began studying Judo and Jiu-Jitsu at the age of 11 and later trained with the legendary Sijo Emparado in Kajukenbo. In the 1960s, he founded Wun Hop Kuen Do, a system heavily rooted in Kajukenbo but including elements of Northern Kung Fu, Kenpo, Eskrima, and Western Boxing. GM Dacascos has been inducted into the Black Belt Magazine and Inside Kung Fu Halls of Fame and has graced the cover of over 200 martial arts magazines in his illustrious career. His son, Mark, who starred in John Wick: Chapter 3 and Only the Strong, continues his father's teaching worldwide, perpetuating the legacy of Wun Hop Kuen Do.

Mike Stone

Lifetime Achievement

Martial artist, fight choreographer, stuntman, actor, and motivational speaker, GM Mike Stone started training in Shorin-Ryu while stationed at Fort Chaffee in Fort Smith, AR, earning his black belt in only 6 months. Nicknamed "The Animal" for his ferocity in the ring, he won the sparring title at the first-ever International Grand Championships in Long Beach, CA, in 1964, before. He then went on to enjoy an illustrious career fighting, amassing a record of 91 consecutive wins. GM Stone has also spent a number of years in the film industry, choreographing, directing, and even starring in fight scenes for a number of well-known actors.

GM Stone has also authored several books and toured as a motivational speaker for some time. He is also infamously known as the man who "stole Elvis Presley's wife", Priscilla. In 1985, Stone sold all his possessions and moved to an isolated island in the Philippines, where he and his wife, Taina, live a quiet and peaceful life.

Ron Van Clief

Lifetime Achievement

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Known as “The Black Dragon”, Ron Van Clief is a legendary American martial artist, actor, author, and military veteran. He is a 15-time All-American Champion and made history as one of the first Black actors to lead a Hong Kong martial arts film. GM Van Clief served as a US Marine and later as a NYC Transit Police officer. He holds a 10th Dan as the founder of Chinese Goju-Ryu, and earned his moniker while training with Bruce Lee in Hong Kong.

He starred in *The Black Dragon* and *Tao of the Black Dragon*, and later served as the fight choreographer for the 1986 cult classic, *The Last Dragon*. At the age of 51, he stepped into the cage to fight Royce Gracie at UFC 4 and remains the oldest fighter to compete in the UFC.

Diamond

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