

The Kufferath Obi Award

By: Professor Mike Tucker

Professor Sig Kufferath was undoubtedly one of the more influential instructors in Danzan Ryu History. Being a direct student of Master Henry S. Okazaki, the good Professor was early on a favorite of his teacher. His skill, teaching ability and personality, along with the list of notable black belts he has produced represent a true legacy within the Danzan Ryu Ohana. He truly dedicated a major portion of his life to teaching and training in Danzan Ryu Jujitsu.

Professor Kufferath's daughter, Leslee Kufferath, has created a special recognition she has labeled the "Kufferath Obi". The award represents a belt and certificate given by Leslee Kufferath herself. The belt is a black belt, but it is capped on either end by a white panel. One end has the recipient's name in red script; the other end is emblazoned with Prof. Kufferath's name and personal chop. Each numbered certificate is signed by Leslee with remarks on how this award is given to those "who have given far more than their time, they have given the essence of their beings to their art..."

There are 22 recipients of this award on record as of November 12, 2016. Most recently Professor Bob McKean and Professor Chris Nicholas, of the Pacific Jujitsu Alliance, received this recognition at the 20th Anniversary of the Kilohana Martial Arts Association celebration held in Campbell, CA.



Professor Chris Nicholas and Professor Bob McKean wearing the Kufferath Obi



Each individual certificate shows the name of the recipient and a registration number

The Obi is a symbol of the martial path you have chosen to walk. As you progress through various kyu ranks, the color of the belt changes because your achievements are rewarded with a new belt of a new color. Once you obtain your black belt, it continues to change, but in a much more subtle way and refined way. The change is very gradual, and comes about not because you have been presented a new belt, but it changes on its own in response to wear and tear you receive from continued training, slowly wearing away to reveal more and more of the white core of the black belt. This change does not reflect achievements - it reflects insights - insights that can only be gained through extensive training, and can never be truly comprehended by those who are uninitiated. Thus, we see that at the core of the black belt is a white belt again.

This belt that you are being presented with, are given to those who have given far more than their time - they have given the essence of their beings to their art, and, as natural consequences, find themselves having completed the circle, having transcended the pure black belt that they received as a shodan. In honor of my father, Professor Sig Kufferath, this belt is given to you. The "Kufferath Obi" are given with the greatest love and respect for those receiving them. You are truly the best of the best.

Aloha

Leslee Kufferath

Recipients of the Professor Sig Kufferath Obi Award

1. Professor Sig Kufferath - March 26, 2011
2. Professor Joe Holck - March 26, 2011
3. Professor Libert O'Sullivan - March 26, 2011
4. Professor Wally Jay - March 26, 2011
5. Hanshi Ronnie Colwell - March 26, 2011
6. Professor Willie Cahill - June 18, 2011
7. Hanshi Jim Mather - June 15, 2011
8. Professor John Chow Hoon - November 12, 2011
9. Professor Russ Cohelo - November 12, 2016
10. Shihan Russ Rhodes - November 12, 2016
11. Professor Hans Ingebretson - November 12, 2016
12. Professor Dale Kahoun - November 12, 2016
13. Professor James Muro - November 12, 2016
14. Professor Bob McKean - November 12, 2016
15. Professor Chris Nicholas - November 12, 2016
16. Professor Rowdy Hall - November 12, 2016
17. Professor Richard Bunch - November 12, 2016
18. Professor Tom Jenkins - November 12, 2016
19. Professor Al Ikemoto - November 12, 2016
20. Professor Mike Esmailzadeh - November 12, 2016
21. Olohe Solomon Kaihewalu - November 12, 2016
22. Hanshi Bruce Juchnik - October 1, 2016

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