

June 30, 2014

Paul Tagliabue, Esq.
Covington & Burling
1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20004-2401
United States of America

Paul Tagliabue - sensei,

Dear Commissioner ~~Tagliabue~~,

It has been sometime since we met last in Washington, D.C.

Belated congratulations on your completing an absolutely successful career as Commissioner of NFL. As for myself, I have resigned as Commissioner of NPB (Nippon Professional Baseball) at the end of October last year.

As you know, I have been a life-long "baseball nuts", and yet, I wish my friends to know that I have got a real warm spot in my heart for "judo" as well. I have never been a good judo player myself. My late father, however, was an all Japan national university judo champion, and he was absolutely proud of the fact that Dr. Jigoro Kano, founder of Judo and the Kodo-kan ("mother school of judo"), played a role of "go-between" (Nakodo) at his wedding; which means, were it not for judo, I would not have been existent in the world today, to begin with.

Dr. Kano served on the IOC (International Olympic Committee) for many years until 1937, and made an incomparable contribution for the internationalization of the great game of judo. His legacy together with his philosophy has been inherited by a number of judo players/ instructors across the ocean and throughout the world. I am greatly impressed and pleased to see judo so well received and deeply rooted in the United States, not just as a martial art but as a "common cultural commodity" bonding our two peoples in broad walks of life.

For this, the credit should be given to a group of excellent judo players/ instructors in the

United States, one of the centerpieces of whom is undoubtedly James Haruyuki “Jimmy” Takemori.

During World War II, Jimmy Takemori was a member of the 442nd Infantry Battalion. After the war, he became an ambassador in a very real sense; in that he did not wear a tuxedo but that he was an ambassador in judogi- or judo uniform.

In recognition of his meritorious contributions as ambassador in judogi, the Emperor of Japan endowed upon him a truly great honor of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays in 2004. To mention only a few of his accomplishments, he founded, with the utmost humility, the Washington Judo Club and Shufu Yudanshakai in the early 1950s.

Judo became a demonstration sport in the Olympic Games in 1964, and a permanent sport in 1972. The first American Olympic medalist, James Bregman, had studied judo under Mr. Takemori before taking a bronze medal in 1964 at the Tokyo Games.

Mr. Takemori has been teaching judo in and around Washington, DC, altogether for more than 60 years. He has been teaching judo at Yates Field House at Georgetown University three nights a week for almost 30 years now, to Georgetown students and outsiders alike.

From my perspective as a citizen of Japan, it is extremely telling that Mr. Takemori has attracted world and Olympic gold medalists such as Yasuhiro Yamashita and Kosei Inoue to give clinics at Yates Field House.

In late 2011, Mr. Takemori received an honor from the International Judo Federation: the honorary rank of “A” Referee – meaning the level of judo referee eligible to officiate the Olympic Games.

It should also be noted that Mr. Takemori has been awarded the rank of Kudan – 9th-degree black belt – by the Kodokan. It is hard to convey how meaningful that judo rank is, but I hope you will accept my representation that it is far harder to obtain than any university-awarded doctoral degree.

Mr. Takemori has four daughters – all judo champions – and nine granddaughters. His son-in-law, Jason Morris, took a silver medal in 1992 at the Barcelona Olympic Games.

A listing of Mr. Takemori's accomplishments could be much longer. It is my strong hope that Georgetown University might find a suitable way to honor Mr. Takemori in 2015 on the occasion of his 30th anniversary of beginning to teach there. If more information is needed in considering whether and how Georgetown University should honor him, I do encourage you to contact Lt. Gen. Hesterman, Dr. Medani, or Mr. Englert.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in Japanese calligraphy, reading '加藤良三' (Kato Ryozi).

Ryozi Kato

Former Ambassador of Japan to the United States
Member of the Board, Mitsubishi Corporation