



UNITED STATES JUDO ASSOCIATION

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For Immediate Release

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I am pleased announce that the United States Judo Association has promoted George Lee Harris to Judan (10th Degree Black Belt) effective January 15, 2011, which would have been his 78th birthday. This honor was approved unanimously by both the USJA's Promotion Board and Board of Directors. Mr. Harris passed away on January 7th, 2011. This is the first recognized 10th dan promotion by one of the 3 major judo organizations in the United States.

Sid Kelly, the Chairman of the USJA's Promotion Board stated, "Mr. Harris won six Air Force judo championships, four US National titles, two Pan American games Gold medals, and represented the United States in the 1964 Olympics. After his retirement from competition, Mr. Harris became a goodwill ambassador for judo." He served as one of the leaders of the Armed Forces Judo Association (AFJA) that became the United States Judo Association (USJA) which he and several others founded in 1968. Mr. Harris was one of our early presidents then chaired our promotion board for several decades.

In addition, Mr. Kelly said, "Mr. Harris was one of the founders of the YMCA International Judo Camp which is now in its 39th year. He also has worked with the AMCAN International Tournament directors every year since its inception. Mr. Harris is known not only in the United States but in many other countries for his judo accolades and his service to judo. For this he was one of the first in the United States to be promoted to Kudan, 9th Degree Black Belt on October 24th 1997."

A formal presentation and tribute to Mr. Harris will be held during the opening ceremonies at this year's Joint USJA/USJF Junior Nationals on July 2nd in Toledo, Ohio. For further information please visit our website usja-judo.org.

Thank you,