

BRIEF HISTORY OF HOLLYWOOD JUDO DOJO

Hollywood Judo Dojo was founded in 1932 by the Issei (first generation) Japanese who lived in this area. Their aim in starting Judo was for the betterment of the young people in this community and the development of the physical, mental and moral character through this art. The property was bought by, and the dojo was built by the hands of the Issei members of the judo dojo through funds collected from the judo dojo members and the Japanese residents in this area.

The first sensei (instructor) was Mr. Yokoyama, Yodan, (4th degree black belt) from Japan. He was succeeded by Mr. Tadasu Iida, also Yodan, who remained as head instructor until 1941. The Dojo was closed during the war years due to the expulsion and incarceration of all persons of Japanese ancestry living in the West Coast into concentration camps for the duration of World War 2.

In 1945, after the war ended, the Japanese returned to California and Hollywood Dojo re-opened with instructor Takashi Kikuchi, hichidan (7th degree black belt) at the helm. Kikuchi Sensei was a student at Hollywood Dojo during the pre-war days. He passed away in the mid-seventies.

Assistant instructor Frank Emi became head instructor at this time. Emi sensei, Rokudan, (6th degree) and assistant instructor, Arthur Emi, also Rokudan, were students at Hollywood Dojo since 1937. Arthur passed away in 1996. Another instructor who was a prominent member of Hollywood Dojo from post-war period until his retirement in the late seventies, was assistant instructor, Frank Watanuki, Godan, (5th degree black belt). He was living in Las Vegas until he passed away this summer. (2002)

Hollywood Dojo has had its share of honors in both team competition and individual championships. After winning the California State team championship for three consecutive years, Hollywood retired the state team championship banner in 1956.

Individual national championships developed at Hollywood Dojo in the various weight divisions are as follows:

Ben Takahashi	- 130 lb. Div.	at Los Angeles	- 1955
Arthur Emi	- 150 lb	" at Seattle	1956
Gene Lebell	Heavyweight	at San Francisco	1954
" "	"	at Los Angeles	1955
Gene Lebell also won the Grand Championship both years.			
Toshiyuki Seino	160 lb Div.	at Tampa, Fla.	1960
" "	" "	at San Jose	1961
" "	" "	at Fresno	1963
" "	" "	San Francisco	1965

All black belts that help instruct at Hollywood Dojo donate their time and services without compensation.