



# Kyu Ha Kim

FEB 24, 1935 - MAY 14, 2021



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## **Kyu Ha Kim**

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**K**yu Ha Kim passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on Friday, May 14, 2021, at age 86.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Ursula Reis Kim. He is survived by his children Mary Kim Garrity and Eugene Kim (Jodie Lynn) and their mother Dr. Hakyung Kim; and his grandchildren, Tyler and Tanner Kim; Madison, Grant and Luke Garrity.

Kyu Ha was born on February 24, 1935 in Daejeon, South Korea. He was a “Grand Master,” of Judo and Taekwondo and held the rank of 9th degree black belt. He attended the Yudo College (Yong In University) in Seoul which was famous for producing world caliber martial artists. He became two-time All-Korean National Champion. His teammates nicknamed him “the tree” because his feet were so deeply rooted into the ground making him impossible to knock down and because of his large stature. Grandmaster Kim trained numerous members of the United States armed forces that were stationed in Korea. He was invited by the US government to teach authentic martial arts making him one of the first Korean masters to arrive on American soil. His first stop was Oklahoma City, OK, where he was a guest of honor at the US Air Force National Judo Championships. It was customary for high caliber masters to “take the line,” which meant lining up black belts and fighting each one. They lined up 20 black belts and one by one, he tossed, threw and slammed each one. Word of his prowess spread quickly and he was invited to many cities to teach clinics. Everyone wanted a chance to challenge a legend so he was asked to take the line everywhere he went. Sometimes there were 40 black-belt lines and he was never defeated. Grandmaster Kim was invited to teach in NYC as a full-time instructor. After teaching a seminar in Pittsburgh, the members here implored him to stay. He fell in love with Pittsburgh and cancelled his contract with NYC. He opened his own school, Kim’s Martial Arts and Fitness Inc. located in Brentwood in 1965 and later Cranberry Twp in 1987. In 1975, he started teaching Judo and Taekwondo at the University of Pittsburgh as an elective credit course. He also coached the US Olympic Team in 1978-80. He is an inductee into the US Judo Hall of Fame and Martial Arts Hall of Fame.



## Obituary

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Grandmaster Kim has literally taught tens of thousands in his more than 65 year teaching career. His other passion was his family. Daughter, Mary Kim Garrity of Boston is owner of Zen Den Medical which specializes in sports medicine and integrated medicine. Son, Eugene Kim continues his father's legacy by operating the Brentwood and Cranberry schools with his sons Tyler and Tanner.

He was an inspiration to his family, students and friends. His charming sense of humor and infectious laugh will be missed. He was always the first to praise others yet be so humble about himself. He made everyone feel special, even complete strangers. He taught life lessons that inspired generations of families. He lived by the principles that he taught. He walked the walk.

Visitation will be held on Saturday, May 22, 2021, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm & Sunday, May 23, 2021, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm at the JEFFERSON MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME, INC., 301 Curry Hollow Rd., Pleasant Hills, 15236. A Chapel Service will be held Monday, May 24, 2021, 12:00 pm, at Jefferson Memorial Funeral Home Chapel.

In lieu of flowers please make a donation in Kyu Ha Kim's name to the Center for Organ Recovery and Education, CORE, [www.core.org](http://www.core.org).

Condolences may be shared at [www.jeffersonmemorial.biz](http://www.jeffersonmemorial.biz).



## Tribute Wall

**Kyu Ha Kim**

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ET

**Eiji Teragouchi** posted:

The Teragouchi family send our deepest sympathy to your family. Mr. Kim will be greatly missed. I just learned that loss of my good friend this afternoon. I first met Mr. Kim in November 1968 in Pittsburgh, Rt. 51 dojo and we have stayed in touch for the past 53 years. He was certainly a gentle giant of judo and everyone around him. He was very kind person and always had a big smile when he greets you in dojo or around the city. So many great memories to remember rest of my life.

July 24 at 11:18 AM

LS

**Lisa S** posted:

What a amazing man. Inspiring and so thoughtful and such a strong and kind presence. He taught my 4 sons Tae Kwon Do and just such a wonderful spirit. God Bless his family and friends he will be so missed. sincerely Lisa

July 16 at 11:48 AM

RD

**Richard Place (5Th) Degree Tkd** posted:

Grandmaster Kim was a very special man and teacher. Always had a nice laugh or chuckle to give. Your students will miss you very much. Deepest sympathy to Mary and Eugene/grandsons Tyler & Tanner/other family members. God Bless

July 16 at 11:48 AM

BS

**Bob Stock** posted:

It was an incredible privilege to have had the opportunity to learn Judo at Mr. Kim's dojo. Starting at about the age of about 6, I fondly remember the old Route 51 location, with its I-beam that all the kids would hang on to and traverse at the end of class to practice pull-ups and get strong. I remember Mr. Kim showing me how to do breakfalls on my first day there (almost 50 years ago!), and how I looked forward to the chance to "spar" with him. He would always encourage us to "develop" our "repetitions." After about a dozen on-and-off years, I finally got my black belt, and had the chance to practice with many world-class champions. Not only did Kim's dojo attract the best students, but everyone had the right Judo attitudes of humility, respect, and helpfulness, or else they wouldn't last long there -- and that all came from Mr. Kim's example. He and his school truly embodied the ideal philosophies of Judo, and I have been forever spoiled by that, such that no other dojo I've encountered since then has been tolerable. We were all lucky to have had such a remarkable teacher. With sympathy, Bob Stock, aka "Robert Stock Jr"

May 25 at 7:18 PM



## Tribute Wall

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RP

**Richard Pro** posted:

Eugene, like so many others, I got my start in judo through your father. That legacy was later passed to my daughter, Christina. I always admired your father for his humility and demeanor. As odd as it may sound, I have fond memories of seemingly holding my own during randori only to find myself on the business end of a chokehold a half-second later. It was the speed and grace that he brought to judo that so amazed me. I send my prayers and condolences to you and your family and I know that your fond memories will keep your father alive in your hearts forever. Rick Pro

May 25 at 6:15 PM

RF

**Randy Firth** posted:

My experience with Sensei began in the summer of '72. I was 12 and getting bullied by boys and girls alike! My Dad in frustration took my brother Rusty and I into the Rte.51 dojo and my life changed forever. Mr.Kim told my Dad he would toughen me up with \"lots of uchikomis\". Sensei was larger than life, his Rokudan red/white belt is etched in my memory as sacred. Currently I am Godan but never do I see myself as Rokudan! Mr.Kim and his senseis all led by example for the kids. Andy Bernard, George Mower, Frank Brzenzski, Mr.Terachuchi, Anne Heath, and Darlene Erdner were always there to help out as expected. My new judo family friends Brett Hauber, Andrew Bernard, Tom Conley, Dave Heckler, Tom Boettger, Eddie Addelson, the Nicholas family and of course Mijan and Hojin! The next year my brother and I started Karate nightly 6-7:30 in black gi's with Dan Kestner and Larry Scarpino then into white judogi's for 7:30-9 M-F and Saturday classes. I eventually earned shodan in karate then TaeKwonDo and Judo in 1978. Sensei Kim made sure I was ready for my test having my test partner , Robin Chapman and I both do 1000 uchikomis the night before!!During college years, Pitt then NTSU, Sensei had me look up Sensei Tamura in Dallas. Later when I was blessed with my son Ryan, at age 6 we again began a new chapter of judo with Denton Optimist Judo Club with the Woodson family started in 1957 with Sensei Bill Nagase. We journeyed back to Pittsburgh for family and visited the new dojo where Sensei awarded my son his orange belt and Mr.Pardini gave me 6-7 stitches in my upper lip(mouthgaurd?). Later my son turned 15 and as brown belt my son and I competed as a kata team in the USA Judo Senior Nationals in Houston. Of course I was uke and we had the great fortune to again meet up with Sensei, Mr Teraguchi, and Eugene for a photo and stories of \"back in the day\". It was there my son helped me earn my first Nationals medal, a bronze in the kata mens all around for our NageNo, Katame No, GoshinJitsu, and Itsutsu performance with Sensei looking on. The photo of us all together still rests in a place of honor in our home dojo. My son and I are now preparing the third Gen Judoka my grandson Adam just turned 1 and already he loves hold downs with Mr.Kim's \"lots of uchikomis\" in his future. Our judo family here in Texas send our deepest prayerful thoughts to the Kim family, Heaven has a new Sensei again on the mat.

May 14 at 8:14 PM



## Tribute Wall

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CD

**Carol Davis** posted:

Grandmaster Kim was a very kind person. He truly lived what he taught. I can remember how nice he was to me when I was waiting for my daughter to finish class. In the winter he would invite me in to sit with him and Ursula in the office "where it was warm" he would say. In the summer he would invite me into the office again "where it was cool." If I was on the bench outside the office he would walk by and give me a piece of Worthers butterscotch and when walking back to the office he would tell me my daughter was working hard and that "she was a good girl." He was kind, thoughtful and cared about his students. Rest in Peace Grandmaster, you will be missed.

May 23 at 6:26 AM

RS

**Robert B. Stock** posted:

I first met Mr. Kim at a Christmas party in late 1972. By chance I happened to get Mr. Kim's attention when I caught, before it hit the floor, a full glass that was falling from a table. Mr. Kim said, "You are quick. You must come to my dojo." I started studying judo with Mr. Kim in January 1973 and my five-year-old son, Robert Stock, Jr., started a few months later. Under Mr. Kim and his able leaders such as Andy Bernard, George Mower, Dee Nicholas, Ron Pardini and others, my son, Bobby, and I both achieved the rank of shodan. My family's association with Mr. Kim was of great benefit to us. Mr. Kim was not only a great martial artist but he was also a great, and good, man, an excellent example to countless young men of how to conduct one's life. My wife Alice and I watched Mary and Eugene grow up in the dojo, and recently we ran into Mr. Kim and Ursula and were delighted to be able to chat with them for a while. We will miss their presence in our lives. Our deepest condolences to Mary, Eugene and the rest of Mr. Kim's "family." Robert "Bob" Stock

May 22 at 8:01 AM

AK

**Alice Stock Katsigiannis** posted:

My brother and father were honored to be Mr. Kim's students in the '70s and '80s. I will always remember him because of his strong composed presence, warm smile and encouraging words for me. My deepest condolences for your loss. With respect and love, Alice Stock Katsigiannis

May 21 at 9:28 AM



## Tribute Wall

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TQ

**Tim Quail, Jr** posted:

First and foremost I would like to offer my most sincere condolences to the entire Kim family. My earliest recollection of Mr. Kim was whenever I would come to watch my younger brother Ryan practice judo at the dojo on Route 51, and how impressed I was with this gentle giant. A couple of years later when I was about 16, I wanted to be like Bruce Lee and learn "karate." I remember expressing my interest to Mr. Kim about starting Taekwondo. Somehow knowing what was best for me, he "persuaded" me that I would be starting judo, for which I am thankful for to this day. Another memory that I have of him is his overwhelmingly kindness and empathy. Let's just say that work was sometimes a little scarce for my dad being an Ironworker during the mid-1980's. And because Mr. Kim cared so much that I continue practicing judo, he offered me a job cleaning the dojo, and that is something I will never forget. That is the kind of person that Mr. Kim was, and inspired others to be. God bless you and your family, and may you be comforted by the memories of Kyu Ha. Sincerely, Tim Quail, Jr

May 19 at 5:13 AM

GH

**Gina Halbedl** posted:

My father knew Kyu Ha Kim. He spoke very highly of him. They spent many years at the gym lifting together. Sending our thoughts and prayers to Kyu Ha Kim family and friends. Prayers, Dave julian and family.

May 16 at 4:11 PM

MS

**Maresa (Shackelford) Saunders** posted:

Kyu Ha Kim was my instructor when I was attending LaRoche College in the Fall of 1970. I believe he was borrowed from the University of Pittsburgh? He was so kind, yet he was so strong with discipline. I may not have gone far with education he gave us but I went on to become a Special Education teacher for 30 years. He as well as his family will be in my thoughts and prayers.

May 16 at 3:58 PM



## Tribute Wall

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EC

**Elizabeth Casey** posted:

My childhood is filled with memories of being on the mat with Mr. Kim. He would remember me by the name of "Isabish"...thats how'd he say my name... (Elizabeth). I started judo when I was 4, so Mr. Kim was a great big giant to me. I remember practicing many uchimomis on him and receiving his infamous choke holds. He helped shape my childhood into understanding what it meant to be competitive, humble, respectful, dedicated, disciplined and to feel empowered as a girl. He'd let me compete against boys or girls 5x my size and he never wavered in his confidence or my belief in me that I would be a okay and more so, be a winner. Mr. Kim was an intricate part of my development. As a child I was too young to realize the affect he would have on me, but as an adult with hindsight in my corner, I have realized he was a very special force that helped pave a path for me. Judo in many ways has helped me to be a better mother and know how to teach my children to deal with both successes and failures. I have leaned on many experiences I had with judo to share with my kids for examples. Kim's Martial Arts was a second home to me and Mr. Kim was part of what I knew as family. My deepest condolences go out to his family as I know the pain must be deep. I still have the brown belt that was given to me that was passed down from many of the greats that Mr. Kim taught. I believe that we are all given a special gift in this life and what makes a person remarkable is if they are willing to share their gift with others. Mr. Kim has done so, unselfishly, and has touched and changed many lives. He will be greatly missed from so many. I hope his family can find comfort in this.

May 15 at 5:49 AM

WD

**Wendy Davis** posted:

I've trained at the dojo in Brentwood since 2004. Master Kim was a teacher, a mentor, a leader. He was practically family, by this point. So much someone I looked up to, respected, admired. He accomplished so much and led such a long, full life. He'll be so much missed.

May 14 at 8:14 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Kyu by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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