



THE CANADIAN JIUJITSU COUNCIL REMEMBERING SHIHAN FORRESTER



Special Edition
February 2014

VISIT: www.jiujuitsucouncil.ca

LOYALTY~COMPASSION~BRAVERY~HONOR~SINCERITY~RESPECT~RIGHT ATTITUDE

The following is an excerpt from the life story written and presented by Sensei Hal Batke at Shihan Forrester's memorial on February 25th, 2013. Sensei Batke was Shihan Forrester's most senior student and knew Shihan Forrester for more than 50 years (All quotes are attributed to Sensei Batke except one on the following page attributed to Shihan Forrester as noted.)

Sensei Forrester; teacher, author, historian, innovator and friend to all of us. A driving force that took a basic form of Jiu Jitsu in 1962, transformed it into a combative martial sport and then took it to the world stage. He was a major contributor especially in the first 30 years to what Jiu Jitsu is today --- virtually a household name.

His story began in England where he enlisted in the Royal Air Force at the age of 18 and became a member of the fencing team and boxing team --- I think, that's really where he got a taste of the martial arts.

In 1958, a few years after coming to Canada, Sensei transferred from Hatashita's Judo Class to Hank Jensen's Jiu Jitsu class, and in 1962 became Chief Instructor of the Hatashita Jiu Jitsu class. In 1960 he also enrolled in Sensei Tsuroka's Karate class, where he met Monty Guest in 1961 and became long-time friends.

"During the early years there were many good times, we had many dances and various functions, like the fund raiser that we had at Sensei's three acre property and home in Norval --- those were great times."

"Sensei's philosophy to his students was to "never stop learning and always have fun", a philosophy that he tried to maintain throughout his own life."

Sensei's vision for Jiu Jitsu was threefold. Transform Jiu Jitsu into a combative sport, spread Jiu Jitsu across Canada, and elevate Jiu Jitsu to a world class martial art --- Sensei had no idea where that would eventually lead.

Sensei founded the Canadian Jiu Jitsu Association in 1963 and started the transition of making the current grappling art into a combative style of Jiu Jitsu with emphasis on striking techniques.

Sensei was also an innovator and pioneer. He was concerned about the safety of his students, so he introduced sparing safety equipment at a time when bare fists were still being used in tournaments, and the Black Belt Standards were changed so that all Black Belts had to possess a Canadian Coaching Certificate, and a First Aid Certificate.

Next he started to do local demonstrations, including the Sportsman Show, the CNE, the Business Board of Trade, and public events, which increased the popularity and membership across Canada for many years.

"He was a very shy and humble man, however he had a great sense of humour and loved a good joke, especially from Bruce Stanton, but he was hard as nails when it came to demonstrations ---- he showed no mercy --- he believed it had to look real and it had to feel real --- and I've got the arthritis to prove it. "

Sensei was now ready to expand the knowledge of his Black Belts by inviting masters of other martial arts --- he invited boxing champions, wrestling champions, judo masters, aikido masters, karate masters, he invited World Champions Bill Wallace and Joe Lewis, Bruce Lee's senior student Dan Inosanto, George Sylvain- Pressure Points Control, Professor Wally Jay, Richard Kim-Hanshi of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai, and many others. He wanted to integrate the most effective techniques from a mix of martial arts into the very best fighting martial art --- to what he sometimes referred to as "Scientific Street-fighting".

Sensei took the strategies and skills from these other martial arts, such as angular attack, broken rhythm, and critical distance, and combined them with the special skills that he developed that would increase explosive speed, reaction time, versatility, and counter moves. He also added kinesiology and bio-mechanics, the scientific aspect of human movement. He then blended all of these martial arts skills into his own unique style of Jiu Jitsu, called "Canadian Jiu Jitsu".

"I believe history will recognize Shihan Forrester not just as the "Father of Canadian Jiu Jitsu", but rather as "the Father of Modern Day Jiu Jitsu".

The following is a synopsis of the highlights of Shihan Forrester's many accomplishments achieved through obvious dedication, hard work, and the love of Martial Arts.

- Convinced government officials to let us become a member of Sport Ontario and the Sports Federation of Canada, which allowed us to get financial support for future tournaments.
- In 1972, the first Jiu Jitsu Tournament and also participated in many Karate Tournaments. And finally in 1977 the first International Tournament in Hawaii was planned and won!

"The Hawaiian Tournament was incredible. Who would have thought that we would be celebrating our first international victory by enjoying a luau BBQ on a beach in Honolulu? We had great fighters, like Gerry Knowles and his flying scissors, Al MacClean with those great roundhouse kicks, but it was a

young 17 year old girl named Darlene Kranz that stole the show, beating a much taller, stronger and more experienced fighter."

"We received recognition in the "Guinness Book of World Records", for having won three consecutive World Team Jiu Jitsu Championships. However, we actually won five consecutive World Team Championships and were "Undefeated", including all the other team tournaments over the years in which we had participated. An incredible feat."

"Although I am retiring from the administration part of the C.J.C., I won't be like John Wayne and ride off into the sunset. I'll be staying on the grading board and I will continue to teach seminars."
~ Shihan Forrester

- Won Canadian

Championships and Pan American Championships in Canada and the U.S.

"It was at this point in time that Sensei felt we were ready for the final test. He wanted to challenge the world. And that resulted in literally taking the Canadian Teams half way around the world --- an incredible time and life long experience."

- In 1984 Sensei founded and organized the World Council of Jiu Jitsu Organizations. The mandate was to have a World Team Championship every two years in a different country, and every country was responsible for raising their own funds to pay for their expenses.
- In 1984 Canada hosted our first World Championship held at the Brock University in St. Catharines
- In 1986 Sensei Forrester and Sensei Paul Stegweit created a detailed video of the tournament rules and how they were to be applied.
- In 1987, Sensei had a professional film producer create a video about emergency self-defence for women in various situations, called "Fight Back", using Karen Roe, undercover police officers and myself as actors. Sensei used the Fight Back Video to teach women's self-defence courses for many years at YWCA's, clubs and Teacher's Associations.
- Won the second World Championship, held at the London Docks in London England in 1986
- 1988, the championship was held in Brisbane Australia. Their third consecutive World Championship.

- North Carolina USA in 1990. Held in the middle of a massive hurricane and flooding; survived and won their fourth World Championship.
- 1992 the Championship was held near Buenos Aires in Argentina. They did it again, won the fifth straight World Championship under the guidance and management of Paul Stegweit.
- Later that year Sensei felt content in competing on the world stage and placed Jiu Jitsu into the History Books.
- In 1988, wrote a comprehensive technical manual about the history of Jiu Jitsu and detailed instructions with pictures, of the Jiu Jitsu curriculum techniques
- In 1994 Sensei formed a new organization, the Canadian Jiu Jitsu Council. The mandate was to focus on the further development and growth of Jiu Jitsu in Canada.
- In 2007 Sensei stepped down from the President's position and appointed Paul Stegweit as the first President of the Canadian Jiu Jitsu Council to follow in his footsteps. Paul was a Jiu Jitsu elder who made significant contributions to the growth of Canadian Jiu Jitsu, he was an experienced business man, organized many events and tournaments, was Head of Tournament Rules and Officiating, attained the highest level of the Canada Coaching Certificate, and is a specialist in teaching Bio-Mechanics. Due to reasons of his own, Paul resigned after eighteen months as President in 2008.
- In 2009 the reins of the organization were handed to Bob Walther, who became the new President of the Canadian Jiu Jitsu Council. However, Sensei Forrester did remain on as Chairman of the organization. At that time, Sensei also awarded Bob the title of Shihan. This was an enormous challenge for Bob Walther, which he has carried out with his usual high energy, excellent business skills and his never ending enthusiasm. Sensei's retirement banquet, which was organized by Paul Stegweit and held in Oakville, was attended by the Board of Directors and several special guests. The key focus of the evening was all about 50 years of incredible memories.
- Professor Wally Jay awarded Sensei Forrester the title of Professor as the result of Sensei's extensive and detailed research into the history and path of Japanese Martial Art and the rank of Judan for his development of Canadian Jiu Jitsu and world recognition, and for bringing the combative style of Jiu Jitsu back to Japanese roots.
- Professor Richard Kim, representing the Butoku-kai in Kyoto Japan, appointed Shihan Forrester, Canadian Representative for the Butoku-kai, and awarded Sensei Forrester the title of Hanshi
- In 1997 Hal Batke had the honour of presenting Sensei with a "Life Time Achievement Award"
"The banquet was held at the Kai Shin Karate School, and was attended by the Masters of the various Martial Arts, and members young and old, from clubs in the southern Ontario region."
- Shihan Forrester was recognized by many World Martial Arts organizations and our Federal and Provincial government leaders, and in 2009 was inducted into the Canadian Black Belt Hall of Fame.

Did Sensei Forrester achieve his vision and dream ---- and I say absolutely ---- without a doubt.

And the other question we have to ask ourselves --- did we have FUN, riding on Sensei's coat tails and competing on the world stage in one of the most popular martial arts in the world, and did we enjoy the growth and development in Canada via the hundreds of seminars taught by Sensei Forrester, his Black Belts and the many invited Masters of other Martial Arts --- and we all know the answer to that.

"I joined Sensei's Jiu Jitsu class in 1961, where Ron Forrester became my Sensei, my mentor, and eventually a close friend."

Sensei, thank you for all those great memories and life skills that you taught us --- and Sensei, you will never be forgotten.

Sensei Hal Batke

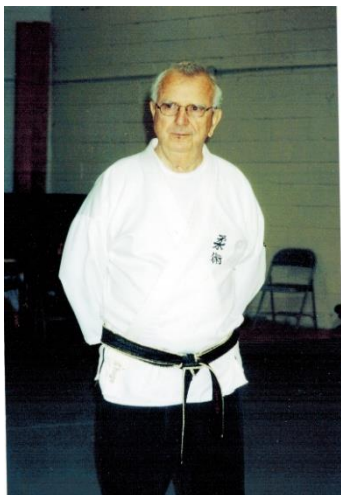
I first met Shihan Forrester in 1964. At the time, I was attending high school, a teenager with a big chip on his shoulders and with little respect for his teachers. Shihan was conducting classes at the famous Hatashita Dojo in Toronto. I climbed the long flight of stairs up from Queen Street and was greeted at the top by a man wearing a Jiu Jitsu uniform. He shook my hand, which I found strange since adults and teens weren't in the habit of shaking each other's hands in the turbulent 60's.

Two things about the man struck me right away. As we shook hands, I looked down at his wrist: it was perfectly round, and looked very strong; in fact the wrist that I was staring at seemed to go beyond the image of the usual weight lifter's. It had depth to the bone, and power that appeared to spring from its very centre.

Then I gazed up into the eyes of the man who had conditioned his wrist to such an unusual point. His eyes were like the eyes of a hawk.

This interchange lasted perhaps all of a few seconds but it changed my life. An unspoken message passed between us. *I'll help you become a man but in turn I expect discipline, tenacity and lots of respect. Also be prepared to learn from pain. That's a given.*

In a daze, I took the long walk at the border of the *tatami* mats back to the dressing room where I remember my surprise at finding heavy white judo uniforms tied to the ceiling with black belts. I had walked into a new home, a new life. The smell of *tatami* mats and cotton uniforms soaked with sweat; the sounds of decades worth of breakfalls on the mats, the sounds of the traffic down on Queen Street when we had the windows open during the hot summer months – this is where I grew up under the tutelage of my Jiu Jitsu father.



I remember in particular his open mind. He allowed me to train in Karate and Kung Fu. I used to come in early before class and along with my Jiu Jitsu techniques, practise some aspects of these disciplines and he'd come out of the office to watch and we'd exchange some viewpoints about the material and about the martial arts in general. His open mind was part of the reason he was so well liked by martial artists such as Mas Tsuruoka, Monty Guest, Paul Chan, Richard Kim, Park Jong Soo, Wally Jay and others. His open mind, along with his invitations to martial artists from other disciplines to conduct seminars for his students, led me to understand that all martial artists belong to one family.

Through the Dojo, I made friends. Through one of the students at the Dojo, Richard Ayres, I was introduced to my future wife. Through Shihan's recommendation, I became manager of a club for Leo Rioux at Samurai Karate, my first job as a professional martial arts teacher.

The directions our lives take may at times depend upon the smallest gesture, such as a handshake, given at the right time and in the right place. I was lucky on that day, very lucky.

In Kung Fu, they say that the masters never leave us, that they're always present. When I go out to teach, Shihan is there. When I train, which I must since there is so much still to do, still to learn, he pushes me the way he did in my first lesson.

There are no boundaries to Shihan's teachings. We are his martial children. He continues to influence and improve the lives of thousands wherever we pass on his knowledge. With the same discipline, the same kindness and with the same willingness to share all he knows.

Sensei Robert Walther

Whatever there be of progress in life
comes not through adaptation but through
daring. ~ Henry Miller

I first met Mr. Forrester in 1976. At the time, I held the rank of 2nd Dan in Juko-Ryu Jiu Jitsu from the USA and a Brown Belt in Judo. I was looking for a new teacher. I called Shihan Forrester and he suggested that I retest my rank. I told him that was OK. So I retested and passed to my 2nd Dan.

I trained at the Oakville club until it closed. Shihan invited me to train at his home in Oakville. I told him that it would be an honour to do so. Over the years, we taught seminars together. In 1994, Shihan asked me to sit on the CJC Black Belt Grading Board. I mentioned to him that I felt deeply honoured by this request.

During the last decade or so of Black Belt examinations, I usually picked Shihan up at his home and drove him to the gradings. I recall that he was very happy the last time we went together and he sang all the way to and from the



grading. When I ask him why he sounded so happy, he said: “The Grading Board is doing a good job and the tests are going well.”

Jiu Jitsu was at the centre of Shihan’s life and I believe that I have been blessed to have had him as my mentor and as my guide throughout my martial arts career.

Sensei Vince Viele,
St. Catharines, ON
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SENSEI VINCE VIELE



Seminar, March 24, 2002

WE FEW
WE HAPPY FEW
WE BAND OF BROTHERS
(Henry V, Act 4, Scene 3)

November 1997 Life Time Achievement Award Presentation Dinner



REMEMBERING SHIHAN RON FORRESTER

It was with great sadness that I learned in a February 20, 2013 e-mail from Sensei Bob Walther of the passing of Shihan Ron Forrester. It has caused me to pause and reflect on the significant impact that this man has had on my martial arts journey.

One of the great benefits our dojo has gained in joining the Snow Tigers Martial Arts organization has been our affiliation with the Canadian Jiu-Jitsu Council, previously known as the Canadian Jiu-Jitsu Association which was founded by Shihan Forrester.

I first met Shihan Forrester on October 13, 1990 at a seminar he conducted at the high school in Bancroft. The first and lasting impression he made upon me was that of a very knowledgeable yet very gentle person. I was a blue belt back then and I was moved by the respect which he showed me.

Upon completion of the seminar, Shihan issued me a signed certificate confirming my attendance (copy and photo attached). It was a truly memorable occasion for me.

I wrote an article with accompanying photos of the event for the local newspaper and copied Shihan Forrester. He sent me a personal thank you note (copy attached). That simple gesture left a profound impression on me.

Over the years, I've had the pleasure of attending many more of his seminars in Toronto as well as Maynooth in 2001 and Combermere in 2004. I always had a good chuckle when Shihan would demonstrate one of his techniques using Sensei Bruce Stanton as his uke. The latter would always end up standing on the tip of his toes, furiously tapping out while Shihan continued speaking without skipping a beat.

During the period leading up to my two appearances before the CJC grading board, I was always very grateful that Shihan Forrester conducted pre-test seminars. The information I gleaned from these sessions were a huge benefit in preparing for the test.

If I had to describe Shihan Forrester to someone, I'd say he was the kind of man every kid would want as a grandfather; someone with a quiet demeanor who exudes superior knowledge and strength of character in a gentle and self-effacing manner.



I'm saddened in knowing that I will never again have the privilege of saying "it's good to see you again, Shihan" or answering his frequent query "how's Albert doing" in reference to our mutual friend, Sensei Albert Vandreumel. However, I am comforted by the thought that when I put on my gi and instruct students in the art of Jiu-Jitsu, I will be sharing the knowledge that Ron Forrester, the man firstly and the Shihan secondly, passed on to me. And I can only aspire that I can have the positive influence on my students that he has had on me.

Rick Dodd

Nidan Jiu-Jitsu
Nidan Chito-ryu Karate

RICHARD KIM SEMINAR

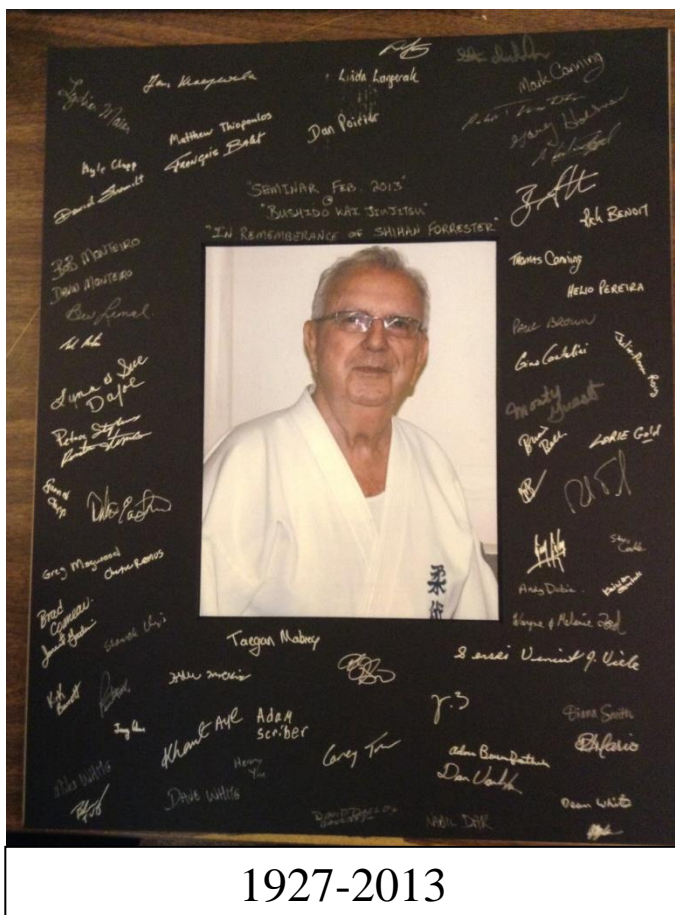
Losing your Sifu

By Robin Young

Chinese Martial Art sifu create a strong connection to their students. When they die their students are tremendously impacted.

Summer~ Contentment

Sifu are not only teachers but mentors, confidants, friends, heroes, historical icons, beloved friends and accepted secondary parental figures. Sifus carry a weight on their shoulders. They carry their own master's lessons, the history of their schools and their martial lineage. The older they are, the more weight they carry. They also carry the practical responsibilities of sharing the lessons, answering the questions and managing the school. They hear the secrets and feel the sorrow of their students' personal lives. To many students, the sifu often becomes the focus for admiration, envy and contest.



The sifu becomes a great part of the student's life. The student has his or her daily routine of school or work or family, but then dedicates one hour, three, five, ten hours a week developing martial skill. Practice becomes a focused event. The time with the sifu is an important part of life's routine. The hours are limited, so the student concentrates effort and intent into those short moments. In many cases the student focuses more time and effort in their classes than into their jobs and home life. The sifu and martial lessons dominant the student's life and "normal" life routines move to a secondary status.

Many students find themselves extrapolating their martial arts lessons into their daily life, so practice, in one form or another, does not end with the final martial bow at the end of the sifu's class, rather, the lessons continue through the day, as situations arise that the martial teachings can apply to.

Sifu form the image and personality of their kwoon. For the younger, more competitive students, this becomes the point of pride and the basis for friendly (and not so

friendly) rivalry amongst martial kwoons. The kwoon is the sifu. The reputation and honour of the school is paramount in the eyes of the competitive student. The sifu intentionally or not creates the student's ego -- controlling it, cultivating it or abusing it. "My teacher is the best. There is no one better and I am his student." Pride....

Autumn~ Anticipation

We put our sifu on a pedestal where we, sublimely (and not so sublimely) worship, praise and admire them. But, like all the signs were there, obvious to us if we allowed ourselves to accept what is presented.

We do not consider the temporary nature of our sifu's existence. We see our sifu as immortal, above the laws of time and fate, much like a child sees his or her parents as always being there. And, like a child who loses a parent, we are hit hard with disbelief when we lose the parent from stroke, Alzheimer's disease or trauma. We are not prepared for the permanence of change. The loss of the sifu, the icon, sets off a deep grieving process. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' stages of grief drag us along and toss us out the other side. We have no choice. The journey through denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance is rarely smooth.

Winter~ Hardship

With the loss of our sifu we begin another journey. Just as we traveled through the lessons of the sifu, bringing us to our present martial being, we move through the psychological lesions of grief and loss. A final lesson from the sifu.

There is the initial shock. There may have been expectation: cancer, emphysema, a car accident. We accept the pathology but deny the reality; there is conflict between our expectation of the permanence of the sifu and the information of the death. We are hit by the truth of opposite things—sifu as here, sifu as gone. We experience cognitive dissonance. This cannot be. The tremendous personal investment we put into creating our connection to the master, works against us.

As denial passes, anger sets in. Our anger can be non-focused, we are just angry, or the anger can be finely focused or even displaced. We can be angry at the doctors for not saving our teacher, at God for being so unfair, at the person who we feel is somehow responsible for the sifu's death. We can be mad at the sifu for dying. We can be mad at ourselves for not being more of a deserving student, not trying hard enough, not agreeing to sifu's last request,...

We play "if only,..." in the attempt to bargain away the inevitable: if I train harder, if I pray harder, if I become a better person. We do not want to lose our sifu. We want life to be the way it was before the illness, before the accident, before the diagnosis.

Depression sets in. We cannot juggle the mix of emotions any longer and move into a dark place within ourselves. How do we rationalize what we have lost? What will we do now? Who will teach us? How do we continue on?

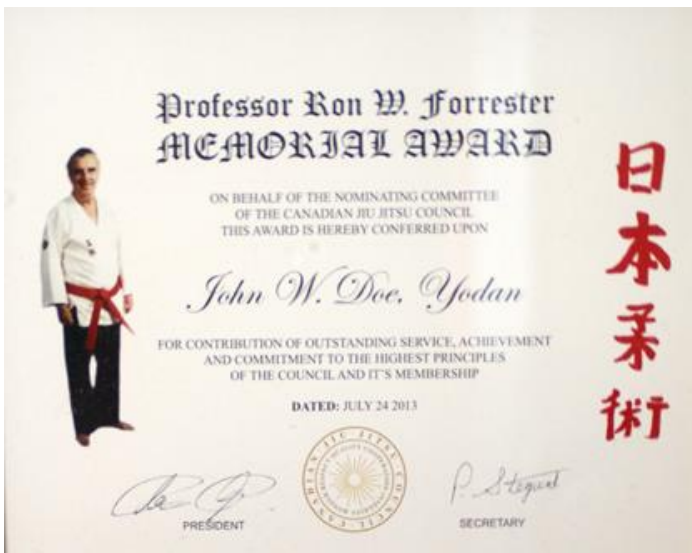
Spring ~ Renewal

The acceptance of the loss of the sifu comes in its own time. Perhaps days. Perhaps years. The meaning of the sifu may remain the same but the expectations, relationship and acknowledgement change form. After the death of the sifu, there is remembrance, reverence and continuance. Depending, there may also be anger, confusion and distance. Perhaps we do not practice any more. We leave the martial community and move on to another focus. Perhaps turmoil ensues. The student membership disintegrates without the leader; each senior going their separate ways, with anger and righteousness in their hearts. Perhaps we regroup and continue on in the memory of the sifu, continuing the best we can, with honesty and cooperation. Perhaps we adapt by developing the sifu's lessons in a new direction. Perhaps,...

The Asian attitude of accepting a sifu is parallel to accepting another parent. The hierarchy within the school, from si-di (younger brother), si-hing (older brother, sifu (father) and sigung (grandfather) emphasizes the family parallel, making the loss of the sifu akin to the loss of a parent. The grieving is the same. As in family situations, the subject of death is difficult to discuss, all too often taboo to discuss. Perhaps it is better to open our eyes early, than keep them closed until too late.

Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul.

~Thomas Merton



Professor Ron W. Forrester Memorial Award

The Professor Ron W. Forrester Memorial Award was created by Sensei Paul Stegweit, a senior instructor of the Canadian Jiu Jitsu Council and long time student and friend of Shihan Forrester. In commemoration of Shihan Forrester, Sensei Stegweit has set out the following criteria to ensure that only the highest standards are met

1. Only the CJC Grading Board can determine who is qualified to receive this award.
2. This award is not designed as an automatic annual award
3. This award does not qualify as a life-time achievement award
4. This award may only be presented to eligible members of the CJC
5. Only a fully paid-up membership is eligible for this award
6. White belt to black belt rank are eligible for this award

Circumstances to qualify for this award must conform to one or more of the following criteria incorporating the vision of Professor Ron W. Forrester in recognizing his standard of achievement.

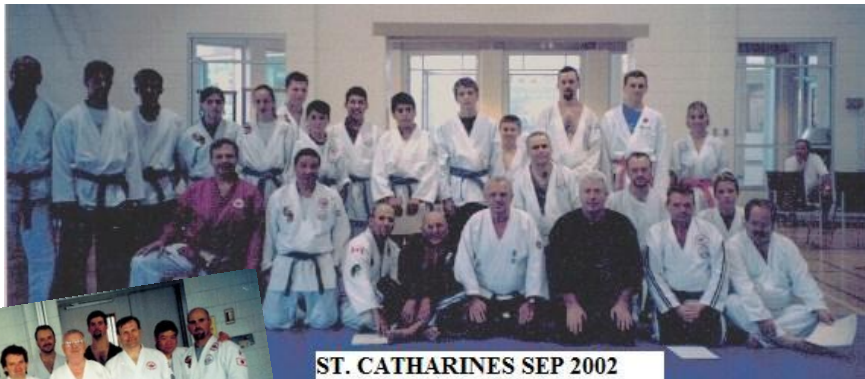
1. Bring honour to the CJC
2. For the greater furtherance of the art of Jiu Jitsu
3. Win a world championship
4. Save or rescue the life of an individual
5. For unselfish service to others
6. For voluntary humane service to others

Simply put, this award is presented to an individual on the basis of heroic merit.

"Martial Arts Night 1971"



TAEKWONDO	KICK BOXING AND KARATE	KARATE	JIU-JITSU	KENDO	JUDO	AIKIDO	TAEKWON-DO	HAPKIDO	TAEKWONDO	JUDO	KARATE
ED. BOUAT	JOE LEWIS	PALLY SLOKIC	RON FORRESTER	M. TOGAWA	G. BUTTLE	T. NIMAYA	PARK JONG SOO	C. WON OH	S. YONG LEE	JOHN HATAISHI	WOLFF LUTZ
				L. NAKAMURA	L. HAUSBRACER						



Acknowledgements

Thank you to Sensei Bruce Stanton and Sensei Vince Viele for submitting pictures. The photo on page seven was an idea carried out by Sensei Mark Canning who placed the photo for view at Shihan's funeral where those in attendance had an opportunity to sign
 ~Sensei Joanne Hill, Editor

Shihan Ron Forrester
 1927 – 2013

We wish to thank all members of the Canadian Jiu Jitsu family for the beautiful floral arrangements as well as the many expressions of sympathy both in person and on line.

It was very heart-warming to see so many of you at the memorial mass and reception in celebration of his life. He would have been honoured.

Your kindness and support was much appreciated at this very sad time. He will be greatly missed.

Thank you all, from the family.