

# Billings tae kwon do grand master Fujiwara dies

Grand Master Karlo Fujiwara was a man who lived strictly by the five tenets of tae kwon do — respect, etiquette, loyalty, modesty and patience — and instilled them in those he knew.

A fixture in the Billings martial arts community for more than 40 years and a nationally known grand master who taught tae kwon do to hundreds, if not thousands, of people in Montana, Fujiwara passed away Thursday morning at the age of 78.

“Everything was based on respect,” Korine Fujiwara said of her father. “It was respect for others and respect for yourself, and he drilled that into every one he knew.”

Fujiwara suffered a stroke on Wednesday while exercising — something he loved to do — at Rocky Mountain College. His wife, Anne, and three adult children — Korine, Kyri and Rinney — were able to be by his side when he died.

Since at least 1969, Fujiwara, an eighth-degree black belt, taught tae kwon do, judo and hapkido in the Billings area.

Friends, students and family members all said that to him, it wasn't a job, but a lifestyle. At the end of each class, often taught at Rocky, he'd have the students line up and shout the five tenets.

“It was something that he instilled in everybody,” said Nicolette Rose, 31, who began training with him when she was 10 years old. “If you abused that way of life or those privileges and what he taught you, he'd probably ask you to leave. Everything we were taught, those were things we lived.” While the discipline of martial arts helped define Fujiwara, he was also a friend and mentor to countless people. At least three of his former students interviewed for this story described him as a second father, and many more said he was a mentor.

“He really helped in philosophical, spiritual and physical guidance,” said Dave Allen, who trained with Fujiwara for 16 years and now runs the Martial Arts Academy of Billings with two other former students. “He was always helpful whenever you had a question about anything, whether it was life or business or personal. He always had a willing ear.”

He was also a talented artist and designed the Kampgrounds of America (KOA) logo.

Jae Ho Park, who now lives in California, has been Fujiwara's grand master since the late 1960s. While their relationship started out as teacher-student, the two men developed a friendship that has lasted much of their lives.

"I am very shocked that I have lost my friend," Park said. "He was of wonderful personality and of strong leadership. He was my best friend."

Fujiwara was the national head of the Dae Myung Moodo Federation, which has martial arts schools all over the globe. In the northwestern United States, he oversaw about 3,200 active students. Park is the organization's international president.

Last year at the Big Sky State Games, Fujiwara was inducted into the Montana Taekwondo Martial Arts Hall of Fame.