

ZANSHIN



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE YOSHUKAN KARATE ASSOCIATION

Winter 2021

KANCHO CORNER

...I SAW PERFECTION ONCE...



I first met **Sensei Mike Foster** in Seattle in the early 1990's. His reputation preceded him. Many karate magazines had written articles about this 'giant' of a karate man out of Florida, USA and how he and his organization had dominated karate in the region. I knew of Sensei Foster as we were from the same lineage (Chito Ryu) and

he, along with **Masami Tsuruoka** (Canada), **Bill Dometrich** (USA) and **Shane Higashi** (Canada) were the pioneers of Chito Ryu and Yoshukai in North America.

Sensei Foster's teacher, **Mamoru Yamamoto**, was an 8th dan under **Dr. Tsuyoshi Chitose** and I had the good fortune to train with him in 1973 when he visited Montreal. He was beyond exceptional in skill and was highly charismatic. Sensei Yamamoto had been Sensei Foster's teacher for most of his life (after he was introduced to **Yamamoto-Sensei** from his Goju-Ryu Sensei). Foster-Sensei was with the American military in Japan and had his 2nd dan under Watanabe-Sensei when introduced to Yamamoto-Sensei. As a 3-time Japan Champion, the 6' tall Yamamoto was better suited to develop this 6'5" American into the exceptional fighter he would become. The story of their introduction is another story for another day...

Over a decade later, Sensei Foster trained and eventually lived with Yamamoto-Sensei. Yamamoto-Sensei had left Dr.

Chitose and begun his 'Yoshu-Kai' organization in Fukuoka, Japan. Having left the military, Foster-Sensei supported himself in various ways, including being a professional gambler (his description, in Japanese, of the guttural Yakuza way of talking would give you chills!). After years of promising Foster-Sensei he would build him a home, Foster-Sensei moved out of Yamamoto-Sensei's home and moved into the local brothel. One month later, Yamamoto-Sensei came to Foster-

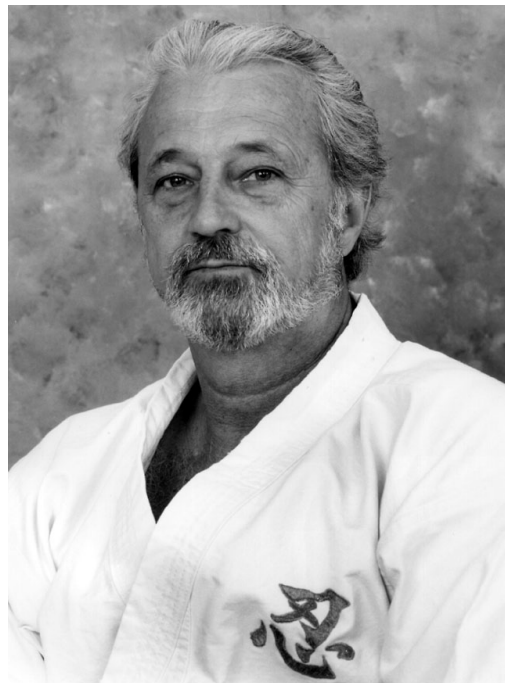
Sensei's new lodgings and told him "Come home now. Built you a home!" Sensei Foster discovered that Yamamoto-Sensei had built a corrugated tin home for him in his backyard! He moved back.

The relationship between these two great men was pre-determined. Sensei Foster had been an orphan, joined the military and found his father figure in Yamamoto-Sensei. Like many father-son relationships, it was destined to clash when the son learned of the father's frailties and the father demanded unswerving loyalty. Again, a story for another day...

When Sensei Foster split from Yamamoto-Sensei's Yoshukai organization (by this time he had relocated back to Florida and had built up his own, large, organization) he renamed it Yoshukai INTERNATIONAL. Sensei Foster had

students in: USA; Germany; Puerto Rico and New Zealand. Our meeting brought Canada into the fold.

After 10 years with the Canadian Karate Association (**Sensei Mike Litwinczuk**) and then 17 years with the



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International Chito Ryu Karate Federation (Shane Higashi and Yasuhiro Chitose) I was also ready to find a new teacher. Sourcing out Sensei Foster, we agreed to meet when we were both in the North West region. I attended a training session with him and immediately recognized the rough style of teaching I had been familiar with at the CKA and his personal excellence. Post training we agreed to maintain the communication with my visiting him at his home in Florida and training with his senior people.

At this point he asked me to be his representative in Canada and provided me with formal letters to take to Tsuruoka Sensei and Higashi Sensei indicating I was his Honbu-Cho (Country Leader) for Canada. I took these letters to both teachers and established the Yoshukai INTERNATIONAL system in Canada.

Over the next 7 years I attended his Natsu Keiko in Florida each summer and hosted his visits to our Quebec and Ontario dojos frequently. I, and **Sensei Louise Provencher** also attended his training sessions in Dortmund, Germany with his German Honbu-Cho, Otto Ruman. His classes were always something special and each occasion would provide new learnings and growth.

5 years after joining Yoshukai, Sensei Foster sat beside me at his camp in Florida and showed me the letter I had written him 1980! After my first Sensei had closed his school in Montreal I had reached out to Sensei Foster asking him if he wanted a Canadian representative. He had kept the letter for 20 years and we both had a laugh how it had come to pass. His explanation for why it had taken 20 years was that "I needed you to mature first".

Kancho Foster was an innovator. Much of what we do in Yoshukan was directly influenced by his teachings, insights and innovations. 'Weapons on line', 'Staying out of the hole', 'Flinching forward', were just some of the many upgrades he had made to our technique. His association was populated by hard, proven, warriors that collectively looked up to him as a leader and father-figure.

This isn't to say he didn't have his demons. No one of us is perfect and we all battle with the intrinsic struggles we face to live up to our promise. In Kancho Foster's defence, he didn't have the same upbringing many of us have had with a support network of loving parents and family. He became a self-made man through his own determination and grit. In later life, when the challenges became insurmountable, he faltered.

Which brings me to perfection. The great Canadian social scientist, **Malcolm Gladwell**, wrote in his book, *Outliers*, that to achieve mastery, you must devote 10,000 hours to your pursuit. Regardless of what your passion is, it takes years to reach that point of complete confidence in your craft. What Mr. Gladwell hadn't identified is how does that passion evolve after 25,000 or 50,000 hours?



Shihan Violoni (as a blue belt) with Kaicho Foster

I saw it one night while Sensei Foster was training our group at our old ROCK dojo location. He was lightly free-sparring with one of our students (since deceased, **Daniel Feist**). Daniel wasn't taking the sparring session seriously enough and I could tell that Sensei was about to 'educate' Daniel. Before I could step in, Sensei Foster, lunged into Daniel and executed a 'gyaku-zuki' reverse punch. Time stopped. The speed, power, timing and distance were perfect! After 52 years of learning and teaching across the world, I have not seen before, or since, such a perfect technique. It is burned into my memory as an example of what 50,000 hours of lifetime passion can produce.

Regardless of personality and political considerations that eventually interfere with partnerships. That evening, that moment, I saw perfection.

Let's all remember Kaicho Foster as a man of integrity, extraordinary skill, a phenomenal teacher and a pioneer that opened the door for all of us that follow.

Rest in peace, Sensei and thank you for leading the way.

GADBOIS AND NDG DOJOS

The Montreal dojos recently held a virtual belt grading, with examinees testing for all levels (yellow to brown belt). Despite my initial skepticism, this turned out to be a very successful event. The focus, effort and technique the students demonstrated was truly impressive. Teaching online is a challenge, but to learn and refine waza (technique) and kata is an accomplishment worthy of note and my heartfelt congratulations go out to all those who challenged themselves. Thank you to all (parents and students) who have sent their appreciation to Renshi, Sensei Matthaus, and me for continuing our classes online. The real credit, however, goes to the students, who themselves have the interest and motivation to push through the difficult training environment and flourish. To all of you who have been sticking with us, congratulations, you are all true champions.

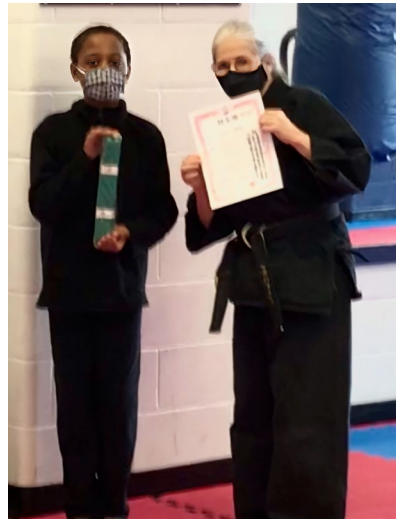
Robert Kalinowicz, Shihan
Feb. 2021

The three students from NDG are:

Sammy Abecassis (passed B/W)

Acori Ross (graded to Green)

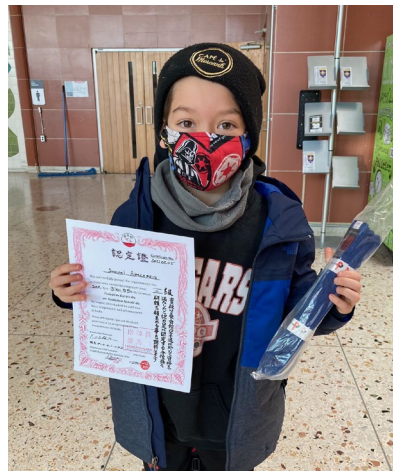
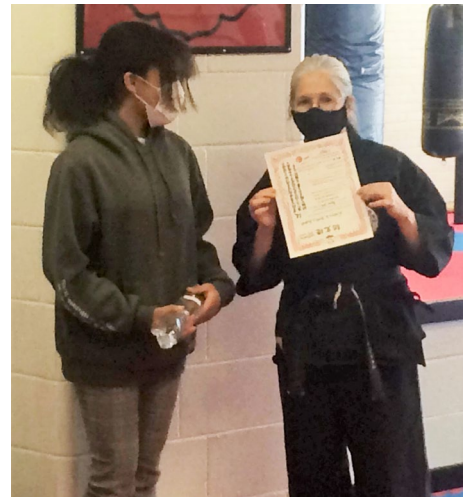
Étènèle Guerin-Girard (graded to Brown/Black stripe)



Acori Ross



Étènèle Guerin-Girard



Sammy Abecassis



Zia a passé sa ceinture bleue en 2018. Elle méritait amplement sa ceinture brune! Sa maman était encore plus fière que Sensei Louise. Voici le texte d'Annie, la mère de Zia:

Félicitations à Zia Perrée qui a obtenu sa ceinture brune de karaté. Elle la mérite tellement car c'est grâce à sa discipline et son travail acharné et cela malgré la covid et les cours sur Zoom! J'aimerais aussi dire un immense merci à sensei Louise Provencher et à toute l'équipe de Yoshukan qui continuent à donner les cours via Zoom. Merci à tous.



Grading Dominique Raymond to Yon-kyu



Renshi Louise provides weekly classes in Karate and Boxing

YOSHUKAN ONLINE TRAINING

Kancho Robertson has been providing Yoshukan Karate-do training every second Saturday from 10:30-11:30 am. Each class covers a different aspect of our system from kata to bunkai, White Belt to 6th dan levels. Any Yoshukan Black or Brown Belt is welcome to join us at the following GoToMeeting link:

Yoshukan Advanced Black Belt Training. Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/434754989>

You can also dial in using your phone.

Canada: **+1 (647) 497-9391**

Access Code: **434-754-989**

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/434754989>

Yoshukan Black Belts are also welcome to join **Sensei Deborah Dometrich for Kobudo training** from 10:00 am to noon every other Saturday. The link can be found at: **Carolina Martial Arts Center – A Traditional Approach to Modern Self-Development.** Simply click on LIVE TRAINING and you will be able to join in.

Sensei Louise Provencher is also offering Black Belt Training every 2nd Friday evening from 6:00-7:30 pm until March 26:

Topic: BBB Zoom Fev | Mars 2021

Time: 06:00 PM Montreal

Every 2 weeks on Fri, until Mar 26, 2021, 6 occurrence(s)

Jan 15, 2021 06:00 PM

Jan 29, 2021 06:00 PM

Feb 12, 2021 06:00 PM

Feb 26, 2021 06:00 PM

Mar 12, 2021 06:00 PM

Mar 26, 2021 06:00 PM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZMrfumprijwrHtTENXcpoSYUObAZvQ5OzaRr/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGvqDlqG9SSsR2HRpwEBI4c-vziGZcgrdpuTHdADBcUTrDGeBjCKRORffK>

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87690107140?pwd=N0ICTmIpCnAyd215Sk5ycExFTlZoQT09>

Meeting ID: **876 9010 7140**

Passcode: **BBB**

One tap mobile

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+1 647 558 0588 Canada

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

+1 204 272 7920 Canada

+1 438 809 7799 Canada

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C.)

Meeting ID: **876 9010 7140**

Passcode: **778403**

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/keoJhrfIEG>



EMBU TAI KAI WITH DOMETRICH SENSEI



Screenshots from the EMBU TAI KAI event held annually with Hanshi Dometrich (remembering our teachers)

Dear Kancho,

So kind of you to write. I told Sammy that Sensei Louise was sharing his photos with you and he was quite pleased!

Sensei Louise and Sensei Rob have been more than amazing during this pandemic. They continue to be so generous with their time and we can't thank them both enough for their dedication towards our kids. Karate has been a savior for our boys in the past year.

We hope you are well and we look forward to meeting in person again soon.

Best wishes,

Nancy & Peter (Louis & Sammy's parents)



2019 Summer Camp with Cyna-Sensei and Renée- Sensei



Yoshukan DVDs – White Belt to 5th Dan

All kata; Bunkai; Kumite; Ukemi; Kobudo and Gosin Jutsu demonstrated by Kancho Robertson and Yoshukan Instructors. DVDs show complete system from White Belt to 6th Dan Black Belt levels in the Yoshukan System.

\$25 Each or \$45 for 2 or \$60 for all three. Please add \$15 for shipping & handling charges. Payments can be made by credit card or check made out to: Yoshukan Inc.

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