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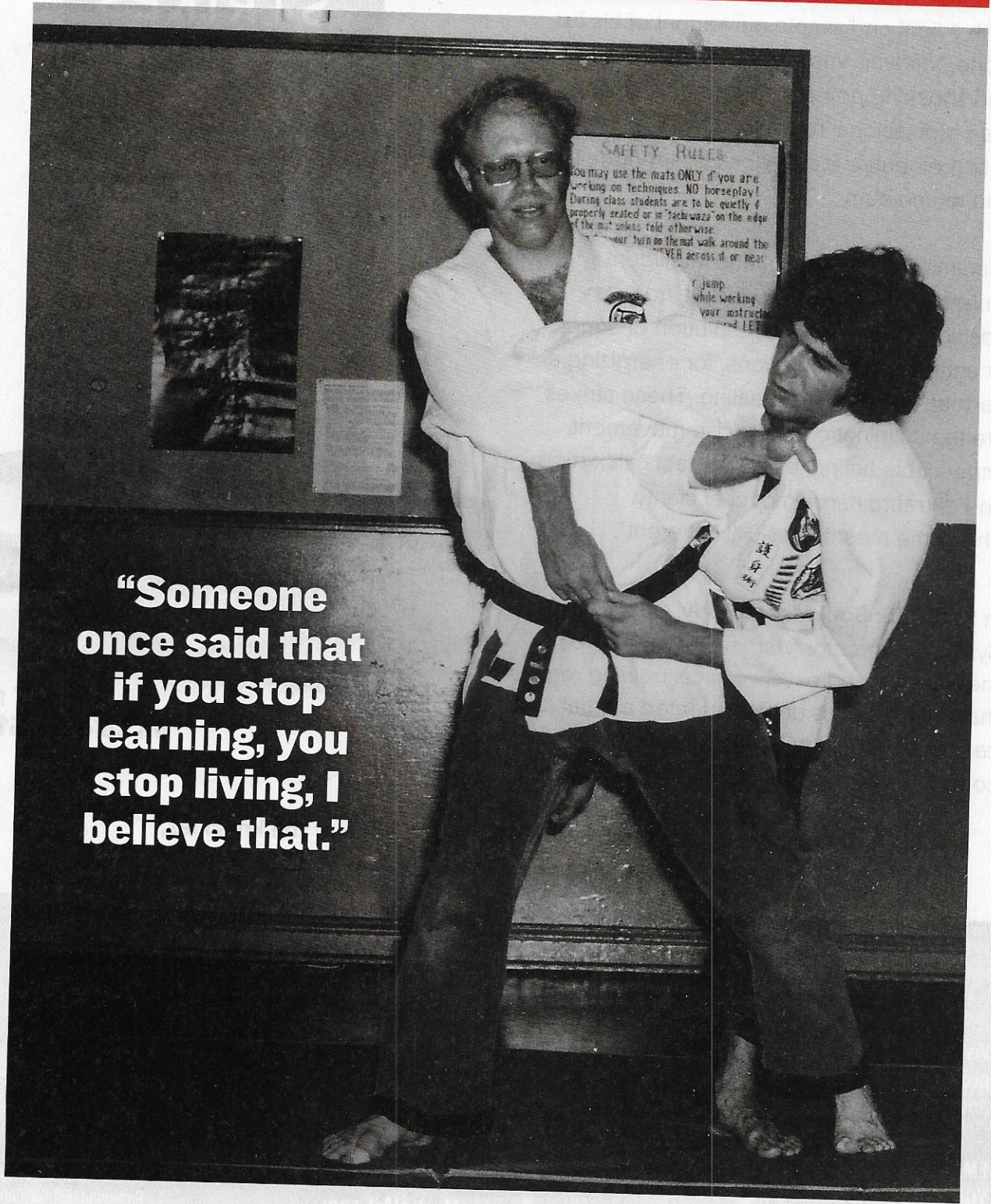
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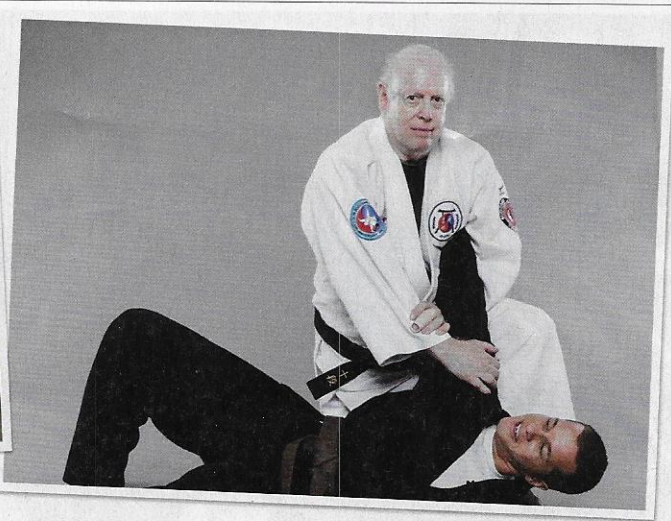
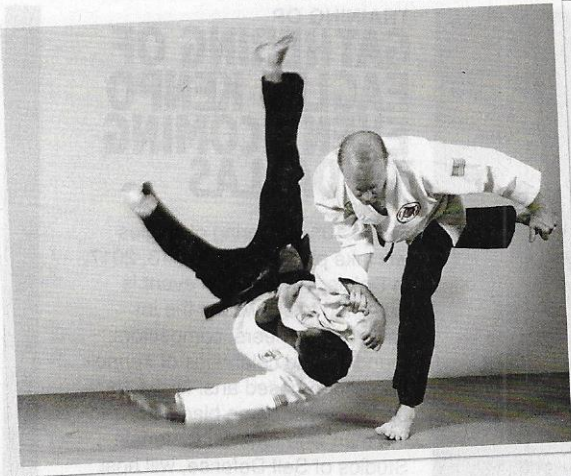
TIMES

MARTIAL ARTS NEWS YOU CAN USE. READ IT - KNOW IT - LIVE IT



“Someone once said that if you stop learning, you stop living, I believe that.”

Black Belt Photos



THEN AND NOW

GEORGE KIRBY

JUJITSU PIONEER FOR 50 YEARS

◀ When *jujitsu* master George Kirby was named *Black Belt's* 2007 Instructor of the Year, it was in celebration of a martial arts career that spanned four decades. His run was far from over, however.

Kirby began teaching jujitsu in 1967. As his skills developed, he sought to spread his knowledge to a wider audience, so naturally he started contributing to *Black Belt* in 1980. "Simply put, I like to write, and *Black Belt* provided an outlet for me — plus it allowed me to meet some great people at the magazine and in the martial arts community," he said.

One day while roaming the halls at *Black Belt*, Kirby ran into Geri Simon, publisher of Ohara Books, the magazine's sister company. "She indicated that she was considering a book on jujitsu and asked if I was interested in submitting a proposal," he recalled.

That proposal was accepted, and the result was *Jujitsu: Basic Techniques of the Gentle Art*, published in 1983. It proved to be the first of many. In 1985 Kirby and Ohara released *Jujitsu: Intermediate Techniques of the Gentle Art*, in 1987 *Jutte: Japanese Power of Ten Hands Weapon*, in 2001 *Jujitsu Nerve Techniques: The Invisible Weapon of Self-Defense*, in 2006 *Advanced Jujitsu: The Science Behind the Gentle Art*, in 2009 *Jujitsu Figure-4 Locks: Submission Holds of the Gentle Art*, in 2011 *Jujitsu: Basic Techniques of the Gentle Art — Expanded Edition* and in 2015 *Jujitsu: Advanced Techniques for Redirecting an Opponent's Energy*.

"Writing books served as a learning process for me because it allowed me to explore and required me to write my thoughts down in an organized manner, thus making me a better teacher and allowing my students to learn the art of jujitsu more efficiently and effectively," Kirby said.

In the middle of his publishing spree, Kirby was awarded the title *hanshi* (1997) and received his 10th-degree black belt (2000).

For much of his adult life, Kirby served as chairman of the board of directors of the American Ju-Jitsu Association, an organization founded in 1972. He retired from that position in 2016. "In a sense, it was like sending my baby out into the world," he said. "However, I have faith that the board of directors will continue to work to accomplish the goals set forth in the AJA constitution and bylaws."

Despite his departure from the AJA, Kirby's continuing his martial arts journey. Now 72, he still teaches for his Budoshin Jujitsu Dojo and manages his Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Yudanshakai. "The Budoshin Jujitsu Dojo evolved into a 501c3 nonprofit educational foundation in the 1980s at the suggestion of our insurance carrier," he said. "One of the criteria was that it operate solely through community agencies such as the park department — which it always has anyway."

"Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Yudanshakai was created by me to serve as a home base for my black belts, as well as those working toward their black belts following my home-study course. It has a senior advisory board and an executive board to help with policy decisions and governance."

This year, George Kirby marked his 50th year as a jujitsu instructor. In this day and age, when people tend to change careers every three to five years, one wonders what the secret of his longevity is. In a word, attitude. "Someone once said that if you stop learning, you stop living," he said. "I believe that. I also think that still teaching jujitsu helps give me purpose in life. I like to see people succeed, especially if I've helped them achieve whatever level of success they accomplish. It's fulfilling."