

How did Betty become involved in Judo?

At the time of writing this 2020 Betty is a 91 years old San Dan (3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt) and misses Judo greatly. I must say that visiting her for the first time after lock down she looks amazing. She has had to stop due to an extremely uncommon break in her right leg that refuses to completely repair.

She has been an active member of Newport Judo club for many years and used to teach Kata at both and Moonee Valley until it closed and Newport until she could no longer due to her leg.

In fact, Betty has taught in Mordialloc and Frankston and ran a Kata class at Caulfield every Saturday for several years.

She was a regular at competitions, assisting with scoring and other administrative duties. This was one of her great pleasures and is misses very much. She still tries to get to competitions but requires assistance to get there and that is not always available.

Betty started Judo in Manchester England when she was about 25. A friend of hers was doing Judo and she thought that it would be good to learn for defence. (Judo in those days would have been possibly the first port of call for any woman wanting to learn self defence and it was much less a sport then as it is now ed.) However, women were also defiantly in the minority on the Judo mat and there was many a time in courses and classes when she was the only female on the mat.

This mismatch in the sexes often bought it own set of challenges but also meant she had to develop a strong Judo.

She was able to attend a number of courses with instructor who had studied in Japan. One of her instructor she recalls was Palmer.

The classes were on the top floor of an old building and she thinks they may have been trying to get everybody fit before they even got on the mat. However all the male attention did work in her favour in the first few week of class where through no fault of her own or her training partner, her ankle broke resulting in her having to be carried down stair by 5 men as the ambulance could not get a stretcher up the stairwell.

As soon as her ankle was healed she went back to Judo.

Betty came to Australia in 1959 as an Orange belt because the climate in Australia suited her. Her she had what she calls "A brief experiment with Marriage that didn't stick. But I am used to being on my own and going back to being on my own was just what I was used to."

In Australia Betty came across an advertisement for Judo At the YWCA whilst at the staying in Brooklyn. She continued with the YWCA to do her grading's up

to the level of Sho Dan (1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black).

When the YWCA close she went to Mat Comps (this is the name of a club that I have never known how to spell ed.) and through that club she eventually came across Cylia and Ivan. It was through Cylia and Ivan that she was given the opportunity joint a class with Miss Fakuda (a very famous female Judo instructor ed.)

This is probably her fondest memory of Judo as Miss Fakuda was very complementary of Betty's commitment to the classes and in fact gave Betty a copy of her book and wrote it and signed it.

(see photo)

Through her contact with Cylia and Ivan she also had the opportunity to do Ju no Kata with Don Drager (another famous Martial artist that was part of the training team for the movies including some of the James bond Movies.

When I asked Betty what her favourite throw was she quickly replied with a big smile "Judo"... I think possibly O-goshi.

Who was the main influence?

Miss Fakuda

Where did Betty learn her Kata?

Miss Fakuda

Betty's favourite Kata.

Ju no Kata

Does she have a favourite Judo memory?

Miss Fakuda Classes

Betty recalls that there was, from a small group of men, a bit of a glass ceiling for women in those days and whilst this was by no means a universal attitude in the Judo community she was actually told at one point that she would never get her 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan. But this only made her more determined.

Betty gained her second degree black through line up (this is where the applicant for the belt has to fight a set number of other players and beat them all ed.). She remembers very clearly that there were a lot of country girls that attended and one was so strong that she couldn't even watch the others fight she was so nervous.

When it came time for the line up the first player she confronted was this very strong country girl. But to Betty's amazement no one seemed to have taught this girl how to break balance and although Betty felt this very strong grip on her she was able to take the advantage and win with an O Soto Gari. To quote Betty she "somehow managed to get through the others.

Betty was getting really tired at this point and so could not recall when or how she obtained her San Dan.

What advice does Betty have for young Judo players?

Betty's other interest.

Betty is a woman who is not only a strong personality but a person of very strong faith. She has travelled the world visiting and staying at convents and other similar places of faith.

She sung in the church choir in the St Francis church in Melbourne. She sang in this choir on the last and the first Sunday of the month for 20 odd years and if it was not for her walking she would probably still be doing something like this.

On a personal note: Betty has not only been a very staunch and loyal member of several clubs particularly Newport Judo and Moonee Valley Judo Club when I was the instructor there but she has been a very true and faithful friend.

What advice does Betty have for young Judo player?  
"Just keep practising and take an interest in Kata"

