

OCTOBER 2022

PRESIDENT:

Sensei Dave Manara, Kudan
(9th Degree Black Belt)

VICE PRESIDENT:

Steve Borda, Hachidan
(8th Degree Black Belt)

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR:

José-Carlos Garcia, Hachidan
(8th Degree Black Belt)

SENIOR DIRECTOR & ADVISOR:

Ray Kennedy, Shichidan
(7th Degree Black Belt)

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR &

FOCUS EDITOR:

Robb Dods, Rokudan
(6th Degree Black Belt)

YUDANSHA MEMBERSHIP

DIRECTOR:

Ron Sheyan, Shichidan
(7th Degree Black Belt)

SENIOR ADVISOR:

Michael McCarthy, Rokudan
(6th Degree Black Belt)

WEBSITE DIRECTOR:

Leaton Bernard, Rokudan
(6th Degree Black Belt)

AMBASSADORS:

Steve Borda, Hachidan
Ray Kennedy, Shichidan
Ron Sheyan, Shichidan

INTRODUCTION

A read of the October FOCUS is a great way to start the autumn season. It is hard to believe it is October already, but although some are still closed, many of the dojos have reopened their doors and training is underway once more.

In this issue, Sensei **Ray Kennedy** shares his thoughts with us regarding his 50 years with the TWKK, and friends of Ray have also shared some insights about this intrepid karate-ka.

2021 marked the 50th year of the TWKK's start at Ryerson, but there are still a number of us around who began our training in the decade of the 1970's. We are thinking it is time for a TWKK get-together sometime in the near future, maybe next spring, to celebrate all of the 50-something anniversaries that are coming up in the next few years. Stay tuned for future announcements about this.

We do not have too much news from clubs in this issue, but a couple of clubs have shared what is happening as the busy season gets going with back-to-school and seasonal events that coincide with dojo activities at this time every year. Thanksgiving is almost upon us in Canada, which means a lot of people will be wanting to get back to the dojo to wear off the extra calories from the wonderful meals I am sure we will all be enjoying.

There is more good news! The Main Yudansha in-person classes with Sensei **Dave Manara** are starting up; the first class is on Tuesday, October 11th. The virtual Yudansha classes with Sensei **Steve Borda** are continuing on a Saturday each month. There is a Senior Ranks class on October 22nd and an all-black belts class on November 26th. There will be no virtual class in December since weekends tend to be busy in that month.

One more thing: Have you been missing the tournaments? Sensei Steve Borda and the Seikikai Martial Arts are holding an invitational **Tournament on November 19th**. Save money with the Early Bird fee if you sign-up in October. A special password will be sent out to Club Heads and Communications Officers to share with their membership. All ranks are welcome to attend. Details are in this issue.

That's it for now. Enjoy your read! > **EDITOR ROBB DODS**

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUB LTD.

TORONTO WADO-KAI WEBSITE: WWW.TORONTOWADOKAI.COM COMMUNICATIONS: TORONTOWADOKAI@GMAIL.COM
PHONE: (416) 801-7435



Celebrating 50 Years Sensei Ray Kennedy 7th Dan Looks Back

It is hard to believe it's been 50 years since I went to the "Demonstration and Registration" of the Ryerson Karate club in October of 1972.

My first impression of the club was that it was very well run, and I have always been impressed with Sensei Dave's organization and his obvious enthusiasm and the respect he showed to all the students.

The class was mostly Ryerson students, so we were all about the same age and I felt very much at home in the class. I have many fond memories of the classes in the lower gym on the Monday and Wednesday nights, and also the Saturday morning classes, which Sensei Dave allowed me to run for many years. The tournaments, both at Sensei Shintani's clubs and our own, were great learning experiences. The Karate Camps were always great fun and a chance to get to know my fellow karate-ka better.

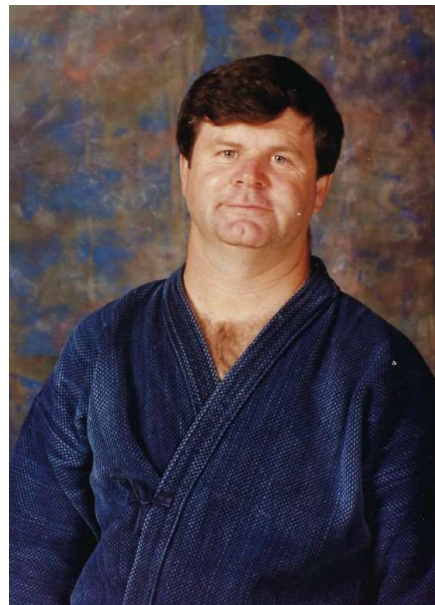
It has been gratifying to see the organization grow and prosper over the decades. Of course, it is due to Sensei Dave's leadership and all the fine people who have joined and stayed with the organization all these years.

I've enjoyed every minute of my training and have met so many great people at the club. Of course, it is the people that make the club and the TWKK organization. We all need each other to encourage us to keep going and to have someone to practice with, and over the years I have been fortunate to have had a lot of exceptional people to train with. Certainly, it was their friendship and comradery that has made my training so enjoyable all these years.

In the early 80's I started a karate club at the high school where I taught, and the club ran for about 17 years. Some of my students went on to get their black belt and some eventually even ran their own clubs as part of TWKK.

After closing the club at the school, most of my time was spent with my growing family and since I wasn't part of any particular club it was difficult to maintain my practice. I always appreciated that every time I met Sensei Dave, he was always very welcoming and encouraged me to come back and practice. Now that I'm retired, I enjoy visiting the TWKK clubs and working out with lots of different groups. Unfortunately, the pandemic has really restricted everyone's ability to do many things including training, but there are hopeful signs that things are getting back to normal, and we can all start practicing regularly again.

Sometimes 1972 seems like a long time ago and other times it seems like just yesterday. Karate has been a big part of my life since that first class, way back when. It has enriched my life with people and experiences, and I have enjoyed every moment of it. I would gladly do it for another 50 years, but somehow, I think my old body would complain.



TWKK Archives, © Larry O'Grady
Photography

What Can We Say About Sensei Ray?

We asked the Yudansha membership to say a few words about Sensei Ray Kennedy, who is celebrating 50 years since he began his training at Ryerson in the fall of 1972. For many years, Ray held the position of Vice President of the TWKK; and now is the Senior Director and Advisor for the organization and, as an Ambassador, he visits dojos and teaches classes whenever he gets a chance.

> FOCUS <

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUB LTD.



What You Shared About Sensei Ray

Sensei Dave Manara:

Wow... Ray Kennedy is celebrating 50 years with the TWKK Club!

It feels like yesterday when Ray joined as a young university student. Ray was very determined and focused in his training, participating in all the grueling drills. He always gave his best effort and when he achieved his black belt, he gave his best to help others. He ran the Saturday class at Ryerson for five years before moving on to running his own club at Neil McNeil high school where he was a math teacher. Ray did this for 17 years and now visits clubs all over to train and assist others.

Ray is well recognised for his skills, especially his burst of speed, which came without notice to his opponent. A big highlight for me was watching Ray win First place in Kata and Second in Kumite at "The North American Wide World of Sports" tournament in 1982.

Ray, congratulations in all your achievements and the great example of "Sincerity, Dedication and Humility" that you display. It is a good model for all your fellow karate-ka to live and train by.

Paul Bird:

I first had the life-changing experience of meeting and learning from one of the best people I've ever met, at Neil McNeill High School, when I was 16 years old. I joined a brand new Karate club at my school, led by my math teacher Mr. Ray Kennedy. Little did I know that Sensei Kennedy, the quiet, excellent math teacher, was also a highly skilled martial artist, with lightening quick speed, a calm, patient demeanor, and whose leadership, mentorship and friendship would alter the course of my life for the better.

Sensei would take me to Tournaments in St. Catharines, Welland, and at Ryerson University. During the trip, we would talk about Martial Arts, family and life going forward. Sensei Kennedy went from being my Math Teacher to a very important friend and a wise older brother to me. He was one of the biggest influences that changed the course of my life. Sensei Kennedy, through his excellent instruction and teachings of all aspects of life, gave me the confidence and courage to be able to accomplish many goals I strived for. Sensei Kennedy was one of the people who was responsible for me having the courage and confidence to apply to the Toronto Police Service, where I worked for 31 years.

Thank you, Sensei, for your time, your patience and your kindness. With much love, Paul (noodle) Bird.

[Editor: We would like to note that Sensei Paul went on to run the Unionville club for many years.]

Ron Sheyan:

When I think of Sensei Ray, the words that come to mind are thoughtful, knowledgeable, experienced, helpful, sincere, and a lifelong learner.

The one interaction with Sensei that I'll always remember was at a tournament at Ryerson. I was a Shodan-Ho and, as a result, I had to spar against Black Belts. To say the least, I was nervous. When my name was called, Sensei Ray's name was also called. I felt as though I was being led to my death. As the match progressed, I managed to score the first point. That was not a good thing to do as Sensei Ray's demeanor changed immediately. He dispatched me to the sidelines in short order with two blistering attacks.

There is a phrase "When sparring, you do not lose. You either win or you learn." That match was a learning experience I'll never forget.



> FOCUS <

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUB LTD.



In later years, Sensei Ray visited our club (Brooklin Wado-Kai Karate) on several occasions to teach. Everyone enjoyed his classes, especially the times when he imparted his sparring knowledge and techniques to us. The students who had never met Sensei Ray, plus the few of us that had, were extremely impressed by how he could engage you in a match to his advantage.

Thank you, Sensei, for your support and dedication over all of these years.

Tony Marziliano:

I would like to wish Sensei Ray all the best in celebrating 50 years in training. I remember the Saturday morning classes at Ryerson, which Sensei Ray led; especially the sparring component. We would spar and all of a sudden Sensei Ray's fist was inches from my face or chest. Sensei would not strike hard, but would have a way of putting you to "sleep" and all of a sudden surprise you, his body being inches in front of you.

Thank you, Sensei Ray for all those lessons, and also the "pep" talks after classes. Your views on life, work and family are now part of my vocabulary, years later. Best wishes and many more healthy years. See you soon.

Steve Borda:

I started my karate training in 1974 at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. When I started, I believe Sensei Ray Kennedy was a blue belt. A few years later, when Sensei Gerry Macpherson left, Sensei Ray became our senior black belt sempai. He was always friendly and helpful to other students and excelled in both kata and kumite. In kata, he was always very detailed oriented. If you had a question on a kata, Sensei Ray would always have a good explanation. In kumite, Sensei Ray seemed to emphasize strategy.



In the early days of the Ryerson Karate Club, we held the Training Camp at the Ryerson Farm. At the time, it was just the Ryerson club attending. Sensei Ray would be there and it was always a pleasure to work with him on drills or sparring. (In the picture, that's Ray at the head of the Sempai line, wearing the visor).

Sensei Ray also organized a black belt sparring class during the Saturday morning classes. A number of black belts would take part. We would spend the entire two hours sparring at one level or another. Every so often we would change partners and each pair would decide on what they wanted to focus on. Sensei Ray's attacks always seemed to come out of nowhere and I was always caught off guard.

I remember a Saturday class when we were sparring together; I finally asked him how he could do that. He told me that he always watched a person's eyes when he sparred (like Sensei Manara has always told us). This was about four decades ago, and I'm not exactly sure of Sensei Ray's exact words, so I'm paraphrasing; he said that he could tell by the way someone was looking at him, when they went from a reactive mental state when they were waiting for him to do something and they were ready to react to his attack, to a planning mental state where they got tired of waiting and were formulating their own attack. It doesn't take a long time to plan your attack, so he attacked immediately when that mental transition happened.

More recently, Sensei Ray has acted as an ambassador to the GTA clubs, visiting the various dojos. He has also been acting as an observer for the Zoom Yudansha classes where he provides concise but relevant questions, usually based

> FOCUS <

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUB LTD.



on what he sees of the Zoom participants. Since he is an observer and not a participant, he notices much more on the screen than I do, so I usually debrief with him after the Zoom class.

Over the years, Sensei Ray has been a great asset to Toronto Wado-Kai and continues to be. It's been a privilege to be able to train with him.

Robb Dods:

I first met Sensei Ray in February 1974 when I joined the white belt classes; he was one of the more senior ranks at the Ryerson Club. He was then, and is today one of the nicest, unassuming people I've met, always with a kind word and ready to help. He has been a great instructor; and I learned so much from him in those early days, during regular classes and at the Saturday classes he led. Sensei Ray also trained in Kendo, and he would share that training with us at the back of the class, showing how to explode out of a stance at the initiation of the attack, from the relaxed moment in the stance just prior. When I began teaching, I copied Sensei Manara in carrying a shinai in class to help correct my students' stances and point out other observations. It was Sensei Ray who gave me some pointers in actually handling the shinai as a weapon.

Sensei Ray was a great mentor for me in my early years of training. I would ask him for his excellent pointers and explanations of some of the lessons in our regular classes. He was very good at providing simple, clear answers and demonstrations of techniques, going over the finer points like keeping my elbows in close on my punches, the twisting snap of the wrist to complete a punch, the locking of the back leg as my punch was driven home. I learned from Sensei Ray the finer technique of how to do a full punch and be able pull it at that last moment so the result was only a tap on the opponent's gi.

Years later, (while I wasn't training any more but still involved with the organisation), I was really happy to see Sensei Ray return to attending work outs and coming to the tournaments, after his own hiatus from his regular training. Somehow, the TWKK organisation had felt incomplete without Sensei Ray. A little belated but, Glad you are back, Ray!

NEWS FROM CLUBS

EDMONTON Karate Club, Edmonton AB

Sensei Randy James, Shichidan
(7th Degree Black Belt)

ST. PATRICK SCHOOL and NORTH POINTE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Zoom classes resumed from our summer break on September 6th and in-person classes resumed along with Zoom classes on Thursday September 9th at Northpointe Community church. Anyone venturing to Edmonton is welcome to drop in at Sensei **André's** or my class, we'd love to see you.

Nine participants from our club took part in a Heart and Stroke First Aid course for the day on September 24th. One of our Blackbelts, **Janelda Cornfield**, [certified to teach the course] along with her granddaughter, **Madi**, facilitated the day.

It was great to have the training provided in-house, and thanks to Sensei André for the use of his Budo Centre. The turnout demonstrated the shared understanding of the importance having First Aiders in the Dojo, and also recognizing medical issues if they occur on Zoom.



> FOCUS <



Edmonton Karate Club,
Edmonton, AB

A fun and skill-development day was had by all.



THORNHILL Karate Club, Thornhill ON

Sensei Dave Manara
Kudan
(9th Degree Black Belt)

Sensei Biller Ching
Rokudan
(6th Degree Black Belt)

C.O. Marion Dimand
Sandan
(3rd Degree Black Belt)

THORNHILL COMMUNITY CENTRE

Greetings from the Thornhill Dojo! We have been up and running for some time now. As a result, after working very hard, there have been some promotions!

In July this year, **Arya P.** and **Jake S.** were promoted to blue belt. Even though both Sensei **Dave**, Ariya and Jake are wearing masks, I am sure we can all imagine the smiles of happiness of achievement under them!



Promotions continued: In August, **Alex Smith** earned his orange belt as well.

> FOCUS <

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUB LTD.



THORNHILL Karate Club
Thornhill, ON

Here is a photo of Alex with some of the senior sensei in the Thornhill Dojo, after he was officially an orange belt. Can you see everyone is smiling behind those masks?



On a totally different topic, 'Bob' visited us again in late July this year. Here are some photos of how 'Bob' brings some reality to our karate training.



> FOCUS <

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUB LTD.



SEIKIKAI INVITATIONAL KARATE TOURNAMENT

**Saturday November 19, 2022.
Etobicoke Olympium
590 Rathburn Road, Etobicoke
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.**

- Early bird registration on-line in October for \$15.00
- Register from November 1st to November 16th for \$25.00
- Register at the door for \$35.00

This is an invitational tournament and the password for registration will be e-mailed to Club Heads and Club Communication Officers. Once you have the password, please use the following link.

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/seikikai-invitational-karate-tournament-tickets-427566562097>



On a Personal Note... How Dry I Am! (or 145 and Counting!!)

By Marion Dimand, Sandan
Communications Officer, Thornhill Dojo

A very long time ago, Sensei Dave asked me to provide a short article for the TWKK FOCUS, regarding the occasion of my 100th blood donation. Alas, life, and perhaps (really) procrastination got in the way. I am finally now able to provide a short article.

When I was 17, my father introduced me to being a blood donor. I won't write how old I am now, but I can tell you that I have been considered a 'senior' for a few years already, so that was a very long time ago. In those days, one just had to go to the Red Cross clinic and donate.

If the donor appeared to be healthy, and weighed enough (yes, there is a minimum weight!), then one could donate. You may be aware that things changed in the 80's with the tainted blood scandal, so now Canadian Blood Services does the collection of blood in all places in Canada, except Quebec. Especially after that scandal, there are many



screening questions, as well as a blood hemoglobin check. Due to biological differences, men can donate about six times a year, women just four.

I donated for the 145th time recently. I have set myself a modest goal of reaching 150 donations. After that, if all things look ok, I will reset that goal to perhaps 175. If one is already a donor, there is no age restriction. The basic requirement is that one is healthy.

As far as I know, the ONLY place that blood can come from is other people. It can provide many benefits to recipients, often life-saving. Personally, I know of my mother receiving two units of blood after some major abdominal surgery. I was there to see what a big difference it made in her recovery.

I know that not everyone can give, for a variety of reasons; to name just a few: taking specific medications, general health, medical conditions, aversion to needles, and even some 'positive' red flags that show up in the basic testing of the blood that is done for every donation. I know of people who are healthy, but test 'positive' in some way on that basic test. A more expensive test could be done to determine if their blood is acceptable, and it often would be acceptable. It is, however, not cost-effective for Canadian Blood Services to do those more complex blood tests.

My guess would be that some of the readers of this article might be fully able to donate blood; maybe some of you have already done so on occasion. I ask that you consider your situation, and perhaps, if possible, start donating regularly. I will be honest, it MIGHT pinch a bit, but that pinch is far outweighed by the knowledge that up to three people might benefit from your donation (sometimes the whole blood donated is split into three components).

My 'bleed' time is about 10 minutes, and often faster than that, so it doesn't take very long. Afterwards, the donor is offered a beverage like juice, and something salty or sweet. (Once and only once, after donating at a clinic at my university, I was able to get a beer!).

If you can't donate, perhaps you know of others, family members or those in your social circle, who might be able to donate. Who knows, it might be you or a loved one who needs blood some time. Wouldn't you be glad to know that there is some there for them because of people who donated blood?



> FOCUS <

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUB LTD.



OUR CONDOLENCES

Our condolences go to Sensei **Alex Nguyen** and his family, on death of his father, **Khue Nguyen**, on August 29, 2022. <https://www.catholic-cemeteries.ca/obituary/khue-nguyen/>

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUBS AND CLUB HEADS

AJAX-PICKERING – Daina Als	EDMONTON – Randy James
André's Budo Centre (Edmonton) – André Beauregard	OSHAWA-WHITBY – José-Carlos Garcia
BEAUBASSIN (Halifax) – Mike LeBlanc	RYERSON (Toronto) – Leaton Bernard
BROOKLIN-WHITBY – Mark Illy	SEIKIKAI MARTIAL ARTS (Etobicoke) – Steve Borda
CALGARY – Steve Henrich	THORNHILL – Biller Ching & Dave Manara
CLARINGTON – Robin Singh	YUDANSHA HOMBUR (Thornhill) – Dave Manara

TORONTO WADO-KAI SENIOR DAN COUNCIL

Kudan (9 th Degree Black Belt)	Dave Manara
Hachidan (8 th Degree Black Belt)	Steve Borda, José-Carlos Garcia
Shichidan (7 th Degree Black Belt)	Randy James, Ray Kennedy, Larry O'Grady, Ron Sheyan
Rokudan (6 th Degree Black Belt)	André Beauregard, Leaton Bernard, Biller Ching, Robb Dods, Steve Henrich, Tony Marziliano, Michael McCarthy, Ed Young
Godan (5 th Degree Black Belt)	Eric Bergman, Ken Buck, Heather Cant-Woodward, Joel Cohen, James Darker, Margaret Michael, Frank Murphy, Ron Ruskay, Jim Sullivan, Anthony Woodward
Yodan (4 th Degree Black Belt)	Andy Basacchi, Dan Duce, Kim Duggan, Alex Nguyen, Annamae Thurston

> FOCUS <

TORONTO WADO-KAI KARATE CLUB LTD.