

# UNITED STATES JUDO ASSOCIATION

## Promotion Board Meeting — Minutes

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**Date:** Thursday, May 14, 2026

**Time:** 9:00 PM – 10:00 PM EST

**Format:** Zoom

### Attendees

- Cheryl Harai (Secretary)
- John Paccione (Chair)
- Osmil Millan
- Jan Finkbeiner
- Jovany Varela

### Absent

- Roddy Ferguson

### Promotion Applications Reviewed

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#### 1. Ken Durand (Shichidan, USJA #648) — application for promotion to Hachidan

**Summary:** Head coach of Keene YMCA Judo Club since 1975 (53 years). Certified National Referee since 1980 (46 years); A-level certified instructor in all 11 USJA kata, A-level kata judge in 8. Past USA National Kata Grand Champion; 2021 USJA Hall of Fame Kata Instructor of the Year. Vice Chair, USJA National Promotion Board 2021–2024. Member/Chair, USJA National Kata Committee 2021–present. Approximately 400+ teaching hours per year (dojo and national Zoom programs). Mentored two club black belts to National Referee and one student to International “A” referee since 2023. 2025 NH Judo Hall of Fame inductee.

**Vote:** Approved to Hachidan — unanimous.

#### 2. Harold Gilbert “Robby” Robinson (Hachidan, USJA LM #22, Member #20001) — application for promotion to Kudan

**Summary:** 91 years old; 77 years in judo; Hachidan since 2007. Earlier career: USAF Combative Measures instructor and DoD civilian, founder of the International Armed Services Judo and Jujitsu Academy (1985), established judo programs across the US, Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Europe. Last 10 years: stepped back from hands-on club leadership in 2009 due to military service-connected disability (VA-rated 90%); recent activity limited to periodic clinics (2015, 2017, 2018, 2023), MCRE service for USJA promotion reviews, and IASJJA outreach. Multiple Hall of Fame inductions and NASDU Menkyo Kaiden – Meijin (January 2026).

**Vote:** Denied — unanimous.

#### 3. Dane F. Grandt (Godan, USJA #307089) — application for promotion to Rokudan

**Summary:** Godan since January 2018; head coach at Bayou Jiu Jitsu (Baton Rouge, LA). Began judo in 1980; coaching since 1994; founded the LSU Judo Club in 1994 (active until early 2000), assisted at Wall to Wall. Activity log submitted with the application: classes taught 2018–2024, Head Club Coach 2020–2024, Technical Official duties 2018–2019, Certified Rank

Examiner 2019/2023/2024 — approximately 110 points total. Rokudan D-level threshold is 360 points. Membership lapse occurred in the interval.

**Vote:** Denied — unanimous. Board advised candidate to develop and submit a fuller record of post-2018 activity and reapply.

#### **4. Ernie Henson (Godan, USJA #12444, LM #720) — TIG waiver and application for promotion to Rokudan**

**Summary:** 85 years old; 60+ years in judo (began 1964–65 with the Armed Forces Judo Association). Gold Patron Life Member, 50+ years (LM #720). All black belt promotions earned through USJA. Currently active at SOHK Judo Club (Spring, TX) under Sensei Andrew Connelly — weekly participation, assists the youth program, travels with them to local tournaments as their coach. Yodan 2014; Godan 2022. Diagnosed with bladder cancer July 2025; cancer has metastasized to bones with ongoing treatment. TIG waiver request submitted by Sensei Connelly without the candidate's knowledge.

**Vote:** By unanimous vote, forwarded to the USJA Board of Directors for consideration of an honorary rank promotion.

#### **5. Frederick W. Fries (Rokudan, USJA Patron Life Member since 1972) — application for promotion to Shichidan**

**Summary:** Rokudan since 2015. USAF Master Sergeant (Ret.), with judo club service across the US, Germany, Japan, Thailand, and the Philippines from 1961 forward. Current club: Head Coach, Space Coast Judo Club (Palm Bay, FL) since 2022; previously Assistant Coach at Samurai (2018–2021), Harbor City (2015–2017), and Gentle Way (1998–2015). Kata: A-level instructor and judge in Nage-no-Kata, Katame-no-Kata, and Goshin Jutsu; C-level instructor in Itsutsu-no-Kata and Ju-no-Kata. National Referee 2004–2019 (Emeritus 2019–present). USJA National Coach since 2021. Member, USJA CRE Committee since 2022.

**Vote:** Denied — unanimous. Insufficient current activity submitted to support promotion to Shichidan.

### **Administrative Note — Applications Not Presented**

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The following applications were returned to applicants as incomplete prior to board review and were not presented for vote:

- Iglesias — USJA Ticket #726978
- USJA Ticket #835332

### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM EST.

### **Minutes Prepared and Submitted By**

*/s/ Cheryl Harai*

Cheryl Harai, Secretary  
USJA Promotion Board

Signed: May 17, 2026 (electronic signature)

### **Distribution**

- John Paccione, Chair
- Osmil Millan
- Jan Finkbeiner
- Jovany Varela
- Roddy Ferguson
- Michael Hall, USJA Office