



# ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

55 Pittsfield Road-Building 10, Lenox, MA 01240

(413) 637-0656 \* zenquestmac@sprynet.com \* www.zenquestmac.com

An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Maia Jiu-jitsu Network and Siyodtong Boston Affiliate

# NEWSLETTER

## July 2019

### In the Spotlight

The area's biggest newspaper, the Berkshire Eagle, recently featured Sensei Connie in an 'Executive Spotlight.' The full page Q&A article covers the big promotions she earned recently, as well as other aspects of her martial arts journey. Here are some excerpts from the article:

Since November, Connie Flynn, owner of ZenQuest Martial Arts Center in Lenox, earned a seventh degree black belt in karate and a black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. That would be enough activity for a lot of people, but Flynn keeps kicking. We caught up with the "Kyoshi" - a title granted to seventh-level black belts that means "teacher of teachers" - to talk about the business of spiritual and physical strength through martial arts.



**Q** What's meant the most to you this year: the black belt in jiu-jitsu, or the seventh-degree black belt in karate?

**A** They're both important. The seventh-degree black belt is significant. We had to travel to Okinawa (Japan) for me to get it. The thing that was really significant to me in jiu-jitsu is that [Brazilian mixed martial artist Demian Maia, the world's 12th-ranked welterweight in The Ultimate Fighting Championship mixed martial arts competition] came here to have me do it in front of my students. ... It's unique to be a female that goes that far, especially outside of Brazil.

**Q** You have a bachelor of science degree in human development and family studies from Cornell University and a master's in education from the College of St. Rose in upstate New York. Did you teach before you got involved in the martial arts?

**A** I explored the traditional teacher role, but with the constraints and restrictions of just being in the educational system, I sought out the community center. ... I can honestly say that both my undergraduate and graduate degrees have been very useful in what I do, because what we

*(Continued on page 4)*

<i>In this Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>
<b>IN THE SPOTLIGHT</b>	<b>1&amp;4</b>
<b>THE BEAST IS BACK, THE KINDEST WARRIOR</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PROMOTIONS, DATES TO NOTE, NEW STUDENTS, BIRTHDAYS, TERMINOLOGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TURNING 21, NEW SHORTS AND MORE!</b>	<b>4</b>

## The Beast is Back

Neil "Beast Mode" Von Flatern will challenge for the AMMO Fight League's Amateur Welterweight MMA belt on Saturday, July 20th. Neil has been training at ZenQuest for nearly eight years training in Jiu-jitsu, Muay Thai and Karate. He will be facing the current champ, Angelo Richardson, who is a solid all around fighter with kickboxing and grappling experience. Neil enters the bout with a record of 4 wins and 2 losses, while Richardson is 3-4. Neil's wins are two by submission, one TKO and one decision. All of Richardson's wins are by submission.

This should prove to be an amazing matchup, but "Beast Mode" is determined to take home the belt. Tickets are available at ZenQuest with prices at \$35, \$45 and \$75. In addition to Neil's match, there is a full card of fights to see at this exciting event. Don't miss it!



## The Kindest Warrior

It is with deep regret that we announce the sudden passing of Sensei Toshio Higa. Master Higa was Sensei Connie's and Mark's direct teacher, and the Chief Instructor of the Chatan Dojo in Okinawa. He had trained in Uechi-Ryu Karate for most of his life in the birthplace of the art, and had risen to the rank of 10th Degree Black Belt or Grandmaster level. He had also served as president of the Okinawa Karatedo Association in 2012 and 2013.

Sensei Higa had made many trips to the U.S., including visits to the Berkshires in 1996, 2005 and 2010. His accomplishments in the martial arts were only eclipsed by his amazing attitude. He had an incredible sense of humor and was always a pleasure to be around. His instruction, leadership, insight and friendship will be sorely missed by Senseis Connie and Mark, and Karate enthusiasts around the world.

He was a long-time training partner and friend to Sensei Shigeru Takamiyagi, who passed in 2012. They originally got to know each other as students of Grandmaster Kanei Uechi at the legendary Futenma Dojo. Master Takamiyagi was also Sensei Connie's and Mark's direct teacher since 2003 and founder of the Chatan Dojo...ZenQuest's parent school in Okinawa.

Rest in peace Sensei Toshio Higa.



**WELCOME NEW STUDENTS!**

YOUTH: Weston Aube, Silas Heck, Leila Sevilla O'brien, Les Freeman, Mia Freeman, Sophia Seme

ADULTS: Jed Devarenes, Michael DeSanty, Ricky Jennings, Martin Winiarski

WELCOME BACK:

**IMPORTANT DATES**

Monday, July 15: NO CLASSES

Saturday, July 20: AMMO Fights @ the Big E  
Neil Von Flatern challenges for the 170# Title

Saturday, September 14: NAGA Albany

***HAPPY BIRTHDAY!***

Levi Stern 7/7  
 Jackson Almeida 7/9  
 Wyatt Smegal 7/9  
 Kyle Wellman 7/10  
 Isabella Bruns 7/10  
 Matthew Gerlitz 7/13  
 Liam Carty 7/13  
 Shaun Sottile 7/14  
 Evan Arienti 7/14  
 Jacob Barrett 7/15  
 Edmund Bertelli 7/16  
 Bill Kopetchny 7/19  
 Jared Bruns 7/19  
 Jax Delaney 7/20  
 Mitchell Clark 7/20  
 Amy LeFebvre 7/21  
 Lucas Davis 7/23  
 Troy Middleton 7/24  
 Gary Freifeld 7/27  
 Beau St. Peter 7/27  
 Cayden Bona 7/27  
 Emily Leonard-Miller 7/29  
 Amelia Hardy 7/30

**RECENT PROMOTIONS****CRANES:**

Gold Star - Turner Lilley, Sonny Gorman,  
Addie Chambers  
 2 Gold - Declan Simmons

**TIGERS:**

8kyu - Liah Winston  
 5kyu - Sam Maschino

**DRAGONS:**

9kyu - Brett Codwise  
 6kyu - Aymeric Loucka  
 5kyu - Victor MacDowell

**COBRAS:****PYTHONS:**

1 stripe white - Troy Middleton  
 2 stripe white - Ashley Heck  
 1 stripe Grey/white - Eli Stack  
 Grey - Sadie Giumarra

**JIU-JITSU:**

1 stripe white - Dede Bradley, Ericka Oleson  
 Ryan Allen  
 4 stripe white - Marissa Maher, Kyle Pezzano  
 4 stripe blue - Dan Dufur

**“Best Martial Arts Academy”**

ZenQuest Martial Arts  
 Berkshire Eagle's  
 Readers Choice Awards  
 2017 & 2018

**Terminology****“Perseverance”**

Japanese: Gambarimas

Brazilian: Perseverança

Thai: Wiriyphāp

## Turning 21

Demian Maia hit a milestone with his win over Anthony Rocco Martin in the UFC's on ESPN 3 event. The 'majority decision' victory gave the grappler a total of 21 wins, the second most of any fighter in UFC history, only trailing Donald Cerrone at 23.

In the Martin fight, Demian clearly won the first and second rounds, totally dominating with his wrestling and Jiu-jitsu. At one point in the second round, Demian had Tony mounted against the fence and was successfully striking, when the referee decided to reset the fighters in the center of the cage. This robbed Demian of perfect opportunity to finish the fight and gave Rocco a huge break. Martin did win the third round convincingly, but it was too little too late.

The vast majority of *Professor* Maia's wins in MMA have come via his grappling skills. He basically goes in and 'restrains' the best fighters in the world so that they cannot execute their own strategies. He enjoys showing the world the effectiveness of the martial art he loves. After the Martin fight Demian stated *"I have immense pride in representing this martial art, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Thank you for the support in yet one more battle!"* He also said that he will likely step into the octagon one more time before retiring from MMA at 41.

Congratulations to Demian on another victory and reaching this amazing milestone in his career.



## The First Courtesy

At ZenQuest, we try to provide as much flexibility and choices possible for enrollment. We do this to accommodate busy schedules and different financial situations among our students and families. Many students and parents choose our 'Interval' enrollments, opting to commit to as little as one month of commitment at a time.

Although Interval enrollments are a perfectly acceptable option, it is very important that the student or parents keep track of their tuition due dates. Ultimately, it is their responsibility to monitor when tuition payments are due and submit payments on or before their due dates. In traditional martial arts culture it is actually considered impolite to create a situation where the instructors have to ask for any payments. Also, imagine what it would be like if the instructors had to ask each student for payment on a regular basis.

At some point, we will update our tuition system and have electronic reminders and billing. But for now, we just have reminders on the attendance sheets at the front desk. Please remember to sign yourself or your child in for each class attended and take note whenever a reminder appears for tuition or any fees associated with belt promotions. Also, enrolling for longer periods or with our 'Easy Pay' option can minimize confusion and take advantage of discounts, too!

(Continued from page 1) *In the Spotlight*

do isn't just training for the martial arts. We're like life skills coaches.

**Q** What advice would you give to girls and women who want to get involved in the martial arts?

**A** Pursue your dream. In the dojo, we're equals. Everyone starts with the same uniform. The same belt. The same expectations. If you go in, work hard, follow the instructions, follow the people who came before, you can get you to where you want to go. The sky's the limit as far as martial arts goes.

Congratulations to Sensei Connie for this incredible honor. Huge thanks to Tony Dobrowolski, Noah Hoffenberg, and the Berkshire Eagle for this. To read the full article online, visit <https://www.berkshireeagle.com>