



# LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

## MICHAEL DEPASQUALE SR.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICHAEL DEPASQUALE JR.

Considered by many to be the father of American *jujutsu*, Michael DePasquale Sr. launched his career in the martial arts in 1940 under a master named Jun Saito. Since then, his accomplishments have been numerous. In 1961 he founded the Yoshitsune Dojo, one of the first Japanese-sanctioned jujutsu schools in the United States. Soon afterward, he became the American representative of the world headquarters of the Hakko Ryu Hombu in Japan.

During the 1964 World's Fair in New York, DePasquale headed the jujutsu demonstration at the Japanese pavilion, partly because he was the only English-speaking representative who could describe the art from personal experience. In 1969 he founded the Federation of Practicing Ju-Jitsuans, now known as the International Federation of Ju-Jitsuans. A 10th-degree black belt, he's established himself as one of the world's foremost authorities on the art.

His drive to succeed was born when DePasquale was forced to take on adult responsibilities while still a teenager. With a deep desire to resolve those issues, he immersed himself in the ever-expanding field of security and law enforcement. That portion of his career is marked by distinguished service and a constant dedication to spreading the benefits of his martial arts wisdom throughout the police community.

His life's work encompassed

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virtually every facet of the protection services. As an officer of the Long Island Railroad Police, he was one of the most decorated law-enforcement officials on the East Coast. He took responsibility for the safety of dignitaries, civic leaders, celebrities and just about anyone who required his unique self-defense abilities and know-how. When he retired from the Railroad Police, he served as a corporate security director in the private sector, launching a company called International Protection Systems Inc.

In the DePasquale household, it wasn't uncommon to have distinguished martial arts masters and tournament champions drop by for dinner or even spend the night. During the early years of the fighting arts' proliferation in the United States, the American master served as a reference point and central authority on the East Coast. If anything was happening in the martial arts world, DePasquale knew about it.

As a teacher, his services have been in demand from the get-go. He's traveled the world to instruct private

citizens as well as police officers in jujutsu and the principles of eclectic self-defense. More recently, his knowledge of communications was exploited by government agencies hungry for counterterrorist training and bomb-deactivation lessons.

For all his deep and abiding interest in security and the martial arts, DePasquale is at heart a defender of his family and his fellow man. At home, he made a point of doing things differently from the way he was raised. He and his wife, Josephine, have been married for more than 50 years, ensuring maximum stability for their four sons. The father made sure he was able to raise his kids far away from the inner-city atmosphere in which he grew up. One of his sons, Michael DePasquale Jr., has become a respected jujutsu master in his own right.

For most of his life, Michael DePasquale Sr. was an unstoppable force in the martial arts and protective services, but a decade ago he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Although the degenerative illness has eaten away at his physical mobility, he remains a guiding influence on everyone he encounters.

For his tireless efforts to make this world a better and safer place, *Black Belt* proudly extends to Michael DePasquale Sr. its 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award. ✘

*About the author: Edward Pollard is the assistant editor of Black Belt.*