

Five years ago, for the first time in Seido history, [Kaicho T. Nakamura](#) and [Nidaime A. Nakamura](#) promoted five senior women karateka to the rank of Sei Shihan (6th Dan).



Sei Shihan Sandi



Sei Shihan Michelle



Sei Shihan Judy



Sei Shihan Maureen



Sei Shihan Nancy

In honor of Women's History Month, we are putting a spotlight on those incredible women who helped paved the way for future Seido female karatekas.

Each week in March you can read about one of these females, where they began, and their incredible karate journey thus far.

### **Meet Sei Shihan Maureen Rouse.**

#### **When and why did you join Seido?**

I became fascinated with karate in the 70's when a movie called "Billy Jack" came out, and the hero was a karate expert. That's how I began my journey and joined Kyokushinkai, and later began studying Seido under Kaicho Nakamura.

#### **Favorite Seido memory?**

I have so many Seido memories. One of my most amazing memories was receiving my Shodan degree. Shortly thereafter I participated in our annual Black Belt Team Tournament. Senpai Mel McCain was the captain of our team. He noticed I had some gymnastic ability, and for our self-defense skit he had me thrown in the air, do a back lay over and land in Kokutsu Dachi! Our team received a perfect score! It is a favorite memory.

#### **Funniest memory?**

I was nine months pregnant with my son Ryan who is now 37 years old and still attending Black Belt class every Wednesday evening. Kaicho told me that this was my last class as I believe he was concerned I would be giving birth at the dojo. I gave birth to my son two weeks later. Another embarrassing moment was, when attending class with a cold, I stuffed some tissues in my gi. I began sweating while throwing punches, and little pieces of tissue flew out like snow all around me.

### **How has your training changed since you began and what are you up to now?**

Karate was top priority in the beginning years of my training as I was going up the ranks. I was so much more focused and disciplined. Karate will always be a big part of my life and a part of who I have become. As I got older my life became full with other obligations such as children and grandchildren. I'm so grateful that I continue to teach a program on Long Island. It keeps me active and I am doing what I love to do.

### **Advice for any new female karatekas?**

I love teaching my beginner students, particularly my female students. They look so shy, lack confidence and are afraid to Kia. I see myself, in my beginning years, in all of them. My best advice to all female Karatekas is to keep training and you will become strong, gain self-confidence and your technique will improve. I never believed that, some 45 years later, I'd be still training and teaching; watching the growth of my students always puts a smile on my face.

