

Rusty Kanokogi Fund for the Advancement of U.S. Judo

This Fund supports the development of U.S. female judo players by providing direct financial assistance to support travel and training expenses for aspiring female athletes with successful competitive records who have the potential to achieve even higher performance levels and rankings.

About Rusty Kanokogi

The Fund is named in honor of Rena “Rusty” Kanokogi. Kanokogi held a seventh-degree black belt in judo, making her the highest-ranking American woman in the sport of judo. Kanokogi first started competing in the late 1950s, when women were barred from judo leagues. In disguise, she competed as a member of the all-men’s team until she was discovered and disqualified. Soon after, Kanokogi dedicated herself to ensuring that women are able to compete in judo competitions. For her years of commitment, she received the honor of World Pioneer of Women’s Judo, which was given to her by the International Judo Federation (IJF) Congress in Japan, which has representatives from 103 countries.

In 2007, the USA Judo Referee Commission voted unanimously to award the John Osako Award for excellence in refereeing to Kanokogi. The prestigious John Osako Award is given to those who have worked continuously to develop their referee skills and contribute unselfishly to the Olympic sport of judo.

Kanokogi was the president of Kyushu Judo & Community Service and the president of New York State Judo Inc. Kanokogi was the NBC sport expert commentator at the 2004 Olympic Games for judo. In 2002, she received a citation from the Brooklyn borough president for her contribution to the Brooklyn fitness program. She also was given the 2002 Woman of Achievement Award by Kingsboro Community College. In 2001, she was presented with the bronze medal by the International Judo Federation.

Kanokogi was a former member of the Women’s Sports Foundation Board of Trustees (1996-2001) and the chair of the International Women’s Sports Hall of Fame Alumnae Association. She is featured in the Women’s Sports Foundation book, “SuperWomen: 100 Women 100 Sports.” She was inducted into the International Women’s Sports Hall of Fame in 1994 and received the 1991 Women’s Sports Foundation President’s Award.



The Rusty Kanokogi Fund will afford young female judoka the opportunity to train and compete worldwide in pursuit of Olympic excellence.

“I have known Rusty for over 30 years, and she has always been a tireless worker in support of furthering women’s judo in the world. Not only was she instrumental in securing a spot for women’s judo in the Olympic Games, but she also helped coach two of our first-ever women’s Olympic medalists at that Olympic Games*. Today she continues to donate her time as president of New York State Judo Inc and volunteer as a coach, referee and organizer of many camps and clinics to help young judoka. But more importantly, she is a kind and generous positive role model who always makes time for others. Rusty is considered to be the matriarch of women’s judo in the United States and one of the most influential people in our sport ever.”

— Jimmy Pedro, four-time Olympian, two-time Olympic medalist, judo

* Lyn Rothke, silver medalist, and Margie Casto, bronze medalist, at 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea, where judo was a demonstration sport; judo became a full medal sport at the 1992 Games

Areas of Support

Assistance is considered for coaching, specialized training, equipment, athletic clothing and/or travel.

Eligible Candidates

U.S. female judo players in training for national and international competition.

Criteria

Applications are evaluated and grants are awarded according to the following criteria:

1. Financial need
2. Present and potential level and ranking
3. Lack of support from traditional sources
4. Role of award in continued participation and advancement
5. Potential impact of grant on advancing women in sports
6. Contribution to greater visibility of female athletes

Priority will be given to those who present a plan for reimbursing the grant in the future, whether financially or by otherwise contributing to women's sports.

Amount of Grant

The Fund is administered by the Women's Sports Foundation. The amount available for grants shall depend on the interest and gains on the permanently restricted portion of the fund as well as any additional donations that are restricted to the purposes of the Fund.

Application Process

The application deadline is September 30. The Grant(s) will be awarded by January 31.