

## **Valley News Dispatch**

### **Caliguri receives 9th-degree black belt**

By Josh Rizzo  
FOR THE VALLEY NEWS DISPATCH  
Tuesday, July 13, 2010

Once a certain level of black belt is reached, being promoted to the highest levels of martial arts isn't based on fighting in tournaments, but on a person's contribution to the sport.

For Frank Caliguri, 60, getting promoted to a ninth-degree black belt in Shorin-Ryu, an Okinawa style of karate, took 10 years.

Caliguri was elevated to ninth degree because of his overall contribution to karate.

In addition to teaching classes four days a week, he promotes mixed martial fights — including the Kumite Classic that was held last June — in the area and has years of experience.

The promotion was awarded to Caliguri after a yearlong review process. He is one of a few hundred people in the United States who hold a ninth-degree black belt.

Caliguri's dedication to his craft helped him earn the promotion.

"It's something you hope to achieve, but you're not sure if you'll ever get there," Caliguri said. "They look at your overall karate involvement. I've always had a karate dojo and instructors and also attended training to help get the higher ranking."

Having a ninth-degree black belt is the second-highest rating, with tenth degree or grandmaster being the highest. Caliguri said he is going to try to reach that level, but said it may take 10-15 more years to reach grandmaster status.

He feels the reason so few people reach this level of expertise is the time required.

"You have to keep a dedicated, tight schedule and that's where a lot of people fail," Caliguri said. "I keep training in my schedule and it helps that four days a week I teach in my dojo. Having a dojo is also key, because if someone doesn't have a dojo they would be viewed differently."

Caliguri was always interested in martial arts and started training in 1962. Since the start of his training, Caliguri has been a national champion in fighting, kata and with weapons. At one point, Caliguri was ranked in the top 10 by the Professional Karate Magazine.