

Scholarships honour judo inspiration

BY CURTIS J. PHILLIPS

It was May 29, 2004 that Brandon's Darcy Parrott lost a close friend and mentor when Silvio Sboto died of pancreatic cancer.

To honour Sboto, age 65 at the time of his passing, Parrott and the Brandon Seikeikan Judo Club, of which Sboto was the founder, established two annual scholarships for athletes from the club to attend the prestigious summer multi-sport Legion Athletic Camp at the International Peace Garden.

"Silvio lived for judo and gave it everything and expected nothing in return," said Parrott. "As part of his



Darcy Parrott, a judo coach in Brandon, has established two athletic scholarships in honour of his friend and mentor Silvio Sboto. (Submitted)

wish he wanted people instead of donating to cancer to donate to the club with the intent of using the money to help develop kids and give them a chance to attend this camp."

Parrott, a member of the Brandon club since 1998 has also been part of the Legion Athletic Camp judo coaching staff, joining in 2005.

Not unlike Sboto, Parrott too has lived for judo and gave it everything and expected nothing in return.

Another similarity is that Parrott has also faced the challenge of discovering and then challenging cancer.

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Judo training aids cancer battle

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“I was first diagnosed with cancer Sept 28, 2007, at 8:36 a.m.,” recalls Parrott of the news which came just prior to his 51st birthday.

“What I have is multiple myeloma (IgA). It is not a very common cancer and I don’t have the most common type of it. It is a type of plasma cell leukemia.

“The oncologist said the survival timeframe is 3-10 years. If they hadn’t told me I was sick, I wouldn’t have known because I don’t feel sick, other than being tired.”

Parrott attributes his passion for sport in assisting against the physical and mental strain that cancer may impose.

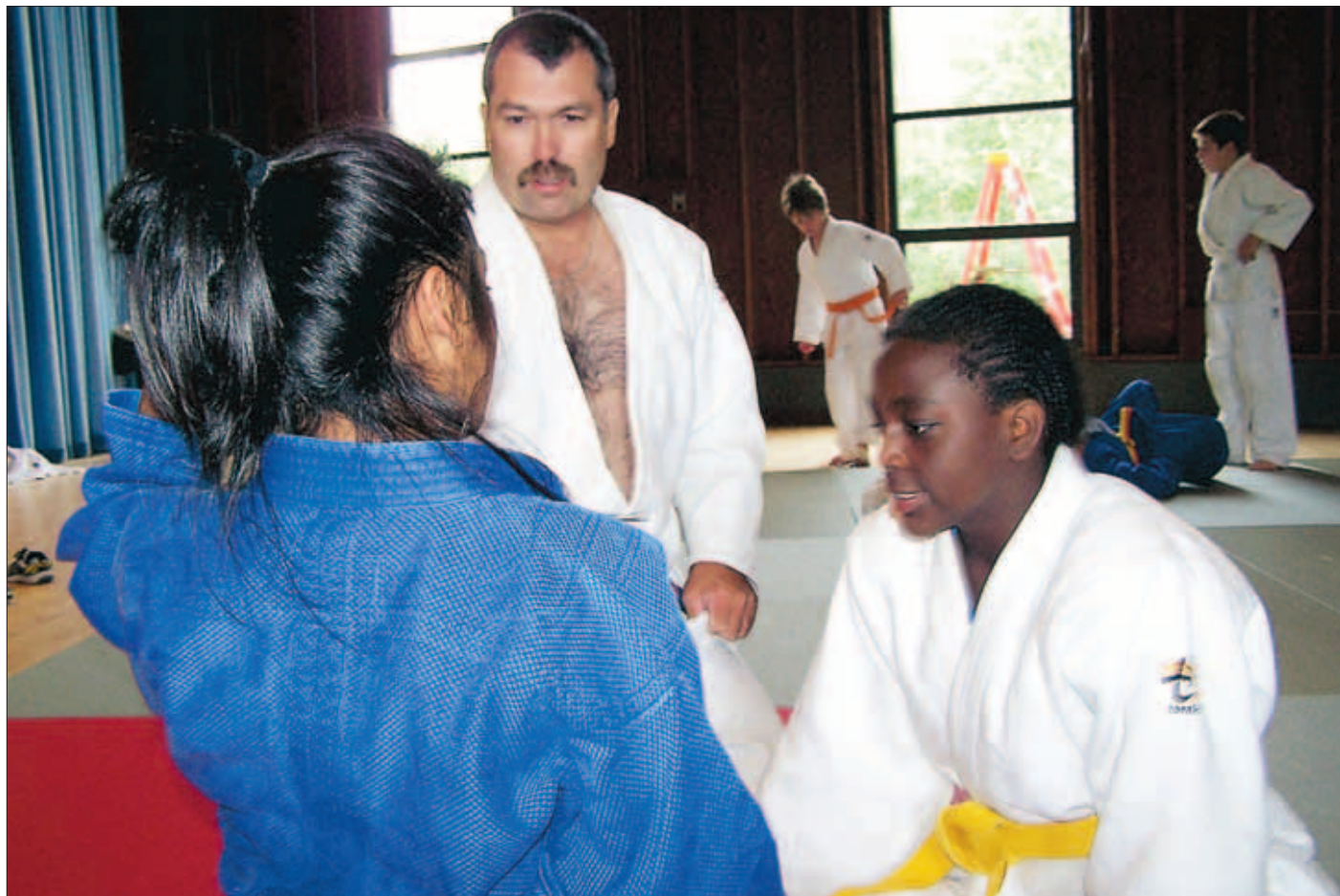
“Although I’ve led a healthy lifestyle, eat healthy, was fit and have been active all my life, I still got cancer. One thing is for sure... it is because of that that I’m in the best position to be able to fight it. Cancer shows or holds no favourites!

“Being involved in judo has helped immensely, not only because of the fitness level which it helped me to achieve and maintain but they also helped me keep my mind on positive and productive things rather than dwelling on the all the negative stuff.”

Holding a Nidan (2nd degree) black belt in judo, Parrott has participated in that sport since 1978.

He is also an avid rugby player and was a member of the 1986 Manitoba Division 2 championship team that also toured Wales and England in 1987.

Crocus Plains high school girls rugby has benefitted from his coaching talents during the last five years. He had to relin-



Diagnosed with cancer himself almost a year-and-a-half ago, Brandon judo coach Darcy Parrott has experienced both the highs and lows of the disease. Although a stem-cell transplant initially left him in “complete remission,” subsequent evaluations showed that the disease had returned. (Submitted)

quish his coaching duties last year due to on-going visits to Winnipeg for treatment.

“I had eight of the girls from the high school rugby team visit me in the hospital when I was first diagnosed. I did cry after they left. I don’t need to say more on that.”

In March 2008 he had an autologous stem cell transplant and was told on June 10, during his 100-day evaluation, that he was in complete remission.

“It was great news. I was informed me my survival time

could be 14 years or even more.”

Post-transplant care continued with medical appointments every two months and during his third appointment Parrott was informed that the cancer has returned.

“It wasn’t what I expected to say the least,” admits Parrott, a heavy duty/truck transport mechanic for the City of Brandon for 21 years. “Everything was going so well, I was doing more things, was feeling more tired but contributed it to just doing more ... or so I thought.

“I’m back in chemo and I’m on the newest “latest and greatest” experimental drug. It’s called Revlimid. It’s in pill form so is very convenient to take. A pill a day keeps the doctor away.”

Still actively involved with the local judo club, “my home away from home,” Parrott remains optimistic about the future.

“I keep as active as I can, accepting my new limitations. Judo has definitely helped the most, although if it wasn’t for my wife (Debbie), well ... I

think I married the best person in the world.

“Some people have asked me how I can stay so cheery. You know, I didn’t think it would be possible neither, but when you have no choice, well, who wants to be around someone who’s wallowing in it. It’s not so hard and you know, it’s not so bad either.

“One thing I remind myself of, is that there are lots of people worse off than me. So I’m fortunate.”

» Submitted by 48th Legion Athletic Camp