

OBITUARY

Officer, martial artist dies

By Robert Salonga

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SAN JOSE — San Jose police are mourning the death this month of a renowned law enforcement officer and martial artist who worked closely with them as he pioneered modern arrest and crowd-control techniques used by officers across the country.

Robert Koga, 83, died from the cancer mesothelioma Sept. 8 at his home in Fallbrook, north of San Diego. His arrest and self-defense instruction, dubbed the Koga Method, was developed while he was an officer with the Los Angeles Police Department and was thereafter disseminated nationally.

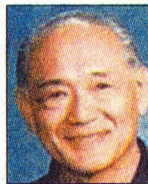
"The San Jose Police Department and other law enforcement agencies across the nation benefited from Mr. Koga's arrest control and self-defense

techniques. Mr. Koga was well-respected in the law enforcement community and his contribution to public safety is greatly appreciated," said Larry Esquivel, acting chief of the San Jose Police Department.

Koga was "hugely influential" on San Jose police, and enjoyed a close relationship with the local officers he trained, retired Sgt. Bobby Mendiola said in a statement released by police.

According to an official biography, Koga first began studying martial arts as a preteen living in a Japanese internment camp in Topaz, Utah, at the start of World War II. He went on to join the LAPD in 1955 and retired in 1979 as a training officer.

Along the way, Koga obtained black belts in several martial arts disciplines, eventually earning entry into the World Mar-



Koga

tial Arts Hall of Fame. His most notable impact was adapting Aikido, which

heavily employs joint locks, to law enforcement training in subduing and later handcuffing suspects.

He also devised a series of tactics used to control civil unrest while minimizing injury to demonstrators, which was spurred by his experiences in Los Angeles. Koga would go on to train a wide array of squads including the Secret Service, Navy SEALs and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The state Senate adjourned its Sept. 11 session in Koga's honor. He is survived by his wife, four children and six grandchildren.