

Legacy Business Registry: Review Sheet

Application number: LBR-2025-26-055
Business name: San Francisco Judo Institute
Business address: 2455 Taraval Street
District: 4
Applicant: San Francisco Judo Institute
Nomination date: August 5, 2026
Nominated by: Supervisor Alan Wong

Eligibility

Criterion 1

Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes

Criterion 2

Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes

Criterion 3

Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes

Features or traditions

Martial arts

Notes

N/A

Delivery date to the Historic Preservation Commission:

August 5, 2026

Member, Board of Supervisors
District 4



City and County of San Francisco

Alan Wong

王兆倫
第四區市參事

July 14, 2026

Office of Small Business
Attn: Legacy Business Registration Application
City Hall, Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Legacy Business Registry Nomination - San Francisco Judo Institute

Dear Director Tang,

I am writing to nominate the San Francisco Judo Institute, a longstanding and deeply valued institution in the Sunset District, for inclusion in the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Founded in 1954 by Mitsuho "Mits" Kimura, the Institute has taught Kodokan Judo to students of all ages for more than 70 years and is recognized as San Francisco's first official Judo Institute. It has served generations of families, produced notable athletes, and remained an important cultural link to the Bay Area's Japanese American community.

SFJI provides instruction in Kodokan Judo to students of all ages and skill levels and offers a children's program that comprises more than half of its membership. Over the decades, it has cultivated a safe, accessible space where students develop discipline, resilience, and physical and mental well-being.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit led by a volunteer board of directors, the Institute prioritizes community impact over commercial interests. It has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the neighborhood by offering free introductory classes at community fundraisers, providing scholarships to low-income youth, and making charitable contributions to local schools. The organization's shift from a private membership model to a public nonprofit has strengthened its ability to keep judo accessible for generations to come and to preserve its legacy in the Sunset District.

It is my honor to nominate the San Francisco Judo Institute for the Legacy Business Registry. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Alan Wong", written over a horizontal line.

Alan Wong

Supervisor, District 4

Legacy Business Registry: Application Form

Business information

Business name: San Francisco Judo Institute

Business representative name(s): William Desmole

Current business address: 2455 Taraval St, San Francisco, CA 94116

Mailing address (if different):

Business phone number: (415) 661-3436

Business email: sfjudoinstitute@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.sfji.org/>

Business Account Number: 1159487

Contact person information

Contact person name: William Desmole

Contact person title: Instructor

Business locations

San Francisco address: 2031 Bush Street

Dates at this location: 1957 - 1966

San Francisco address: 2530 Taraval Street

Dates at this location: 1966 - 2013

San Francisco address: 6300 California Street

Dates at this location: 2013 - 2022

San Francisco address: 2455 Taraval Street

Dates at this location: 2022 - Present

Legacy Business Registry: Historical Narrative

Introduction

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

San Francisco Judo Institute is an educational institution that organizes, teaches, and promotes Kodokan Judo to students of all ages (children and adults) and all technical levels (beginner and advanced). The objective is to develop individuals mentally, morally, and physically. In addition, the business has partnered with Parkside JiuJitsu to offer classes in Brazilian JiuJitsu. This extended offering gives their members an opportunity to develop new skills that are in line with the values of judo.

Whether your goals are physical and mental health, learning a martial art, or competing, San Francisco Judo Institute welcomes prospective students to get in touch, sign-up, or visit the dojo to watch a practice and chat with one of their instructors.

b. Describe whom the business serves.

San Francisco Judo Institute serves children and adults in the Sunset District as well as others in San Francisco. The program offers lessons to kids starting at four years old. The children's program represents more than 50% of their membership.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Martial arts judo and jiu jitsu.

Criterion 1:

The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years.

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

The San Francisco Judo Institute was founded in 1954 by Mitsuho “Mits” Kimura, a second-generation Japanese American who learned judo in a Japanese internment camp in 1942. When he moved to San Francisco, he established the San Francisco Judo Institute in 1957 at 2031 Bush Street. He later moved the business to 2455 Taraval Street. In 1966, Mitsuho purchased a building at 2530 Taraval Street with Heidi Yamayoshi, one of the judo instructors at that time. In 2001, Mitsuho passed away and in 2013, the property was bought out by Michael Grant.

After the building was sold, the Judo Institute did not have a permanent home and was operating out of Charles-Gracie Jujitsu gym located at 6300 California Street from 2013 to 2022. It was during this time that the Judo Institute also converted from a private members-only entity aka 501(c)7 to a publicly funded entity, aka 501(c)(3), which essentially allowed for tax deductible contributions from donors.

In April 2022, the San Francisco Judo Institute was able to secure a new location at 2455 Taraval Street. The Institute is leasing the facility for the next 10 years with the clear objective of purchasing it one day.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

Because it's a non-profit, while Kimura and Heidi Yamayoshi owned the *building* from 1957-2000, there is no individual who **officially** owns the San Francisco Judo Institute and has never had an official owner. Therefore "ownership" of the business is meant to be the Board of Directors who are elected by the Black Belt members.

1957 to 2001: Toshio Higashi; Hy Schneiden; Frank Morimoto; Allan Lopez; Edwin Lee; Tom Tsuchida; Jack Sing; Mitsuho Kimura; Heidi Yamayoshi

2001 to Present: Leonard Auerbach; Joe Loduca; Damon Keeve; William Desmole; Adriano Blanaru; Vincent Coste; Alix Desmole; Jordan Hambleton

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

Due to the COVID pandemic, the San Francisco Judo Institute has to cease its classes for a few months in 2020.

Criterion 2:

The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community.

a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.

The San Francisco Judo Institute was the first official Judo Institute in San Francisco. It has continuously served the Sunset district and the greater San Francisco since 1957 by offering Judo classes to both adults and children. They not only provide a safe and accessible learning venue for their students, but they also provide opportunities to underprivileged children and teach them skills not only in Judo but in being disciplined and resilient. Lastly, the Judo Institute provides a strong cultural bridge to the Bay Area

Japanese American culture and community through its connection and legacy with the founder Mitsuho Kimura.

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

San Francisco Judo Institute has produced numerous national champions and athletes who have participated in the Olympic games, including Damon Keeve who served as president and head coach at the Judo Institute. A 7th-Degree Black Belt, Keeve competed in the 1992 Barcelona and the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. Keeve also won two medals in judo at the Pan American Games.

c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

The San Francisco Judo Institute is committed to serving the community and has made numerous donations to neighborhood schools. The Judo Institute has participated in and offered free introduction classes at various auctions and fundraising events. It also provided scholarships to low-income participants.

Over the past 70 years, the business has become more of a community-focused, educational-based, non-profit organization. By handing control of the business over to a volunteer board of directors and stepping away from a commercial model, the Judo Institute is creating an impact in the community instead of just turning a profit. This change helped their mission to keep judo accessible to the neighborhood and secure the dojo's legacy in the Sunset District.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

No, it has not.

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

N/A

f. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

It would be a great loss for the martial arts community if the San Francisco Judo Institute were to close. Not only would it mean the loss of a long-standing judo club in the Sunset District, but the loss of one of the largest judo clubs in the Bay Area. This would result in taking away an important cultural and community space, a safe youth program, and a vital space for competitive athletes.

Criterion 3:

The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business.

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

The business has a storefront, and the San Francisco Judo Institute name appears on the windows in golden letters.

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

The San Francisco Judo Institute is committed to promoting martial arts and the Japanese Kodokan Judo.

c. What is the plan to keep the business open in the long term beyond the current ownership?

The San Francisco Judo Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a structured Board of Directors that is intent on keeping the organization going.

d. What challenges are the business facing today?

The biggest challenge for San Francisco Judo Institute is to have enough capital to be able to purchase the building one day, ideally before the 10-year lease is up.

Additional details to be completed by Legacy Business Program staff:

a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.

Martial arts training.

b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The Planning Department Historic Resource Status of the building at 2455 Taraval Street is a Category C - No Historic Resource Present. The building was surveyed and determined not eligible for the National, California, or Local registries







LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: August 5, 2026

Filing Date: July 15, 2026
Case No.: **2026-006250LBR**
Business Name: San Francisco Judo Institute
Business Address: 2455 Taraval Street
Zoning: NCD (Taraval Street Neighborhood Commercial District)
50//85-R-4 Height and Bulk District.
Cultural District: Sunset Chinese Cultural District
Block/Lot: 2391/044
Applicant: San Francisco Judo Institute
2455 Taraval Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Alan Wong
Located In: District 4
Staff Contact: Tina Tam, 628-652-7385
tina.tam@sfgov.org

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

The San Francisco Judo Institute was founded in 1954 by Mitsuho “Mits” Kimura, a second-generation Japanese American who learned Judo in a Japanese internment camp in 1942. Mits was born in San Francisco in 1916 and interned at Santa Anita and Tule Lake during World War II.

When Mits moved to San Francisco, he established the San Francisco Judo Institute in 1957 at 2031 Bush Street. In 1966, Mits purchased a building at 2530 Taraval Street with Heidi Yamayoshi, one of the Judo instructors at that time. In 2001, Mits passed away and in 2013, the ownership of the property changed

and the Judo Institute moved location. Between 2013 to 2022, the Judo Institute operated out of Charles-Gracie Jujitsu gym located at 6300 California Street. It was during this time that the Judo Institute also converted from a private members-only entity aka 501(c)7 to a publicly funded entity, aka 501(c)(3), which essentially allowed for tax deductible contributions from donors.

In April 2022, the San Francisco Judo Institute returned to the Sunset neighborhood and secured a location at 2455 Taraval Street. The Institute is currently leasing the facility at 2455 Taraval Street for the next 10 years with the clear objective of purchasing it one day.

San Francisco Judo Institute is an educational institution that organizes, teaches, and promotes Kodokan Judo to students of all ages (children and adults) and all technical levels (beginner and advanced). The objective is to develop individuals mentally, morally, and physically. In addition, the business has partnered with Parkside Jiu Jitsu to offer classes in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. This extended offering gives their members an opportunity to develop new skills that are in line with the values of Judo.

Whether the goals of the individual are physical and mental health, learning or competing in martial arts is the focus of the business. San Francisco Judo Institute welcomes prospective students to get in touch, sign-up, or visit the dojo to watch a practice and chat with one of their instructors.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1957.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. San Francisco Judo Institute qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. San Francisco Judo Institute has operated continuously in San Francisco for 69 years.
- b. San Francisco Judo Institute has contributed to the history and identity of the Sunset neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. San Francisco Judo Institute is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art / craft / cuisine / tradition?*

Yes. The business is associated with the history and practice of Judo and Jujitsu, wellbeing, physical health, and culture of martial arts.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and / or architecture?*

Yes, the San Francisco Judo Institute has produced numerous national champions and athletes who have participated in the Olympic games. For example, the president and head coach of the Judo Institute, Damon Kieve, is a 7th-Degree Black Belt and a former Olympian. He competed in the 1992 Barcelona and 1996 Atlantic Summer Games. Damon also won two medals in judo at the Pan American Games.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry*

No. The property was previously surveyed and found not eligible for listing on the local, state, or federal historic resource registry.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

No.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

On July 15, 2020 the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission adopted [Resolution No. 1127](#) centering Preservation Planning on racial and social equity. Understanding the benefits, burdens, and opportunities to advance racial and social equity that proposed Preservation Planning documents provide is part of the Department's Racial and Social Equity Initiative. This is also consistent with the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability and with the Office of Racial Equity, which required all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Legacy Business Program is deeply intertwined with these goals. One of the primary purposes of the Legacy Business Program is to maintain San Francisco's cultural fabric and to foster civic engagement and pride by assisting long-operating businesses remain in the city. The Legacy Business Registry was established to recognize longstanding, community-serving businesses that are valuable cultural assets of the city. These businesses, ranging from restaurants to art galleries to tire shops to community shelters, are key to sustaining the racial and social diversity in San Francisco and adding to the identity and character of our city and the many communities within it.

The San Francisco Judo Institute contributes heavily to the Judo and Jujitsu communities of San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. The business offers martial arts training for aspiring Judokas who practice in the Judo traditions. Today the San Francisco Judo institute continues to uphold the Kodokan Judo values taught by Mr. Kimura. The institute often participates in various Judo tournaments, sending students to compete for a chance to win medals and certificates along with collaborating with other Judo clubs in the Bay Area to strengthen their contributions to the California Judo community, and continuing their martial arts education and training in the Sunset neighborhood.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 2455 Taraval Street (1954 - Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 6300 California Street (2013 - 2022)
- 2530 Taraval Street (1966 - 2013)
- 2031 Bush Street (1957 - 1966)

Recommended by Applicant

- San Francisco Judo Seal

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

Attachments

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative

- o Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - o Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - o Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Nomination Letter
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: August 5, 2026

Case No.: **2026-006250LBR**
Business Name: San Francisco Judo Institute
Business Address: 2455 Taraval Street
Zoning: NCD (Taraval Street Neighborhood Commercial District)
50//85-R-4 Height and Bulk District.
Cultural District: Sunset Chinese Cultural District
Block/Lot: 2391/044
Applicant: San Francisco Judo Institute
2455 Taraval Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Alan Wong
Located In: District 4
Staff Contact: Tina Tam, 628-652-7385
tina.tam@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO JUDO CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2455 TARAVAL STREET (BLOCK AND LOT 2391/044).

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on August 5, 2026 the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that San Francisco Judo Institute qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby** recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for the San Francisco Judo Institute.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 2455 Taraval Street (2022 - Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 6300 California Street (2013 - 2022)
- 2530 Taraval Street (1966 - 2013)
- 2031 Bush Street (1957 - 1966)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- San Francisco Judo Institute seal on front window in gold, red door with center glass pane, traditional Judo and Jujitsu practices and culture.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: August 5, 2026

San Francisco Judo Institute



Resolution of the Small Business Commission

Resolution number:

Resolution date: August 24, 2026

Application number: LBR-2025-26-055

Business address: 2455 Taraval St.

District: 4

Applicant first name: William

Applicant last name: Desmole

Applicant title: Instructor

Resolution

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for: **San Francisco Judo Institute**

Currently located at: **2455 Taraval St.**

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on **August 24, 2026**, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes the business listed above in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Business on the Legacy Business Registry:

Martial arts

Executive Director certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on August 24, 2026

Katy Tang
Executive Director

Small Business Commission action

Ayes – Nays – Abstained – Absent –