

RAPTOR – 5th DAN RISING

This is HUGE! On Thursday, 14 December 2023, Tristan “Raptor” Ligetvoet became only the 3rd individual in Kiado-Ryu history to earn a MASTER BLACK BELT ranking! He is preceded by Kim “Cultivator” Thomas (1ST) and Christopher “Growler” Grau (2ND). So . . . a well deserved CONGRATULATIONS, RAPTOR!

The KIA officially began its life on 31 August 1979 and now, 44 years and over 3,300 students later, Raptor has risen to a “Master” ranking. This esteemed position is noted by a long red stripe on one’s black belt. Stop and think for a moment how difficult it is to achieve a 5th Degree Black Belt Master rank. It is not only challenging, it is extremely difficult . . . and demanding.

Tristan began his martial arts journey when he was only 8 years old. He is now 25. A little picture comparison tells the whole story. First is young Mr. Ligetvoet when he began his martial arts journey.



And now . . . his Master Black Belt ranking—17 years in the making!



Quite a change, right? Indeed, what an enormous change and successful journey this young man has orchestrated. And what an immense gift to his extremely proud and grateful instructor, too.

How long does it take to earn a Kiado-Ryu 5th Dan Master Ranking, you may ask? The average time to earn a 1st Dan Black Belt ranking is 6 years. Ask any of the current 65 KIA Black Belts how easy it was to achieve “that” goal. Not easy, that’s for sure. Then, generally, it is two years to 2nd Dan, 2 more years to 3rd Dan, 2 more years to 4th Dan and 2 more years to 5th Dan! In other words, it takes 8 years to achieve a Master ranking once a person achieves his/her 1st Dan Black Belt rank! No easy task but, certainly, a remarkable one.

Besides martial arts, Tristan is also successful in other areas. He is currently attending college and pursuing an IT career. He also works full time and is married to his lovely wife, Loren. They tied the knot in 2023. Plus, Raptor is helping his younger brother, Aidan (callsign, Smasher), to achieve his Black Belt. Smasher will be testing for his 1st Dan Brown Belt in early 2024. His life has been quite busy, needless to say, but he is handling it all with aplomb.

One of the greatest aspects of Tristan’s life that has allowed him to be successful is his parents—Atousa and Ed Ligtoet. They have instilled in both their sons a strong sense of ethics, hard work, perseverance, dedication, respect, dignity, self-responsibility and love. How great it would be if all parents were as wonderful as they are. Their son’s successes are a manifestation of their own intrinsic goodness.

To be sure, Tristan Ligetvoet is an extraordinary human being. He is a devoted gem of a man and most definitely a great inspiration and role model to others—young and old alike. Not only has he become a truly great martial artist, he is also an excellent teacher. It will be fun following his life as he moves farther down the road of his destiny.

In the photo below are Tristan and brother Aidan; mom-Atousa, dad-Ed; wife Lauren and visiting martial artist, Hannah, aka Hannibal. Lots of well-deserved smiles. Great people!





And some very proud Kiado-Ryu students—happy in applauding Raptor’s success.
Finally, a group photo for good measure on this significant day in Kiado-Ryu history.



Thank you, Raptor, for being such an amazing student and individual! The Karate Institute of America is blessed to have you in its legacy. Here's wishing you and Lauren a productive, healthy, successful and happy life! Now it's on to do what no one has ever done—become a 6th Dan Kiado-Ryu Black Belt!

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