

DEC.1 1996

HI PRESTON, I AM SORRY I CANNOT BE THERE FOR JIMMY. THIS IS THE LAST TIME I CAN CALL HIM JIMMY. FROM NOW ON I WILL HAVE TO CALL HIM MASTER JONES, AND I WILL BE PROUD TO CALL HIM MASTER!

AS I SIT HERE TRYING TO WRITE A LETTER, ALL I CAN THINK OF IS HOW IT ALL STARTED FOR ME. I FIRST MET JIMMY AT COUNT DANTE'S TOURNAMENT (JOHN KEEHAN). I WAS TIME KEEPER FOR THE BROWN BELT DIVISION. JIMMY WAS THE CENTER, I WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE WAY HE TREATED THE COMPETITORS.

ALTHOUGH THEY WERE BELOW HIS RANK, HE GAVE THEM ALL RESPECT AS THOUGH THEY WERE ALL BLACK BELTS. FROM THAT DAY ON, I TRY TO TREAT EVERYONE WITH RESPECT.

THE NEXT TIME I MET JIMMY I WAS AT JIM CHATMAN'S TOURNAMENT. I GOT TO TIME KEEP FOR HIM, BUT THIS TIME IT WAS THE BLACK BELT DIVISION. HE TOLD ME WHAT HE WANTED ME TO DO. THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I GOT TO COORDINATE A RING. IF YOU REMEMBER PRESTON, ONLY BLACK BELTS COULD DO THAT. I WAS SO IMPRESSED WITH WHAT JIMMY LET ME DO THAT DAY, THAT I THOUGHT I WOULD LIKE TO DO IT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!

INCIDENTLY PRESTON, THAT WAS THE FIRST TOURNAMENT THAT I GOT TO SEE MOST OF THE FIGHTING. BROWN BELT DIVISION WOULD HAVE BEEN WON BY JOE B WARD, ONLY HE GOT DISQUALIFIED FOR SPITTING ON THE CENTER REF, WHO WAS REVERAND FORSTER FROM KENOSHA. LIGHT WEIGHT BLACK BELT WAS WON BY YOU. YOU BEAT BEN PEACOCK. HEAVY WEIGHT WAS WON BY KEN KNUDSON, HE BEAT BRAD HUGHES. WE KNOW WHO WON GRAND CHAMPION. THE BLACK BELT DIVISION WAS ALL OF JIMMY'S STUDENTS, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER.

THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS JIMMY'S STUDENTS CONTINUED TO WIN. IF YOU WOULD LOOK AT THE BLACK BELTS THAT ARE STILL TEACHING IN THE CHICAGO AREA, MOST OF THEM CAME FROM JIMMY DIRECTLY OR THROUGH SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION.

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME. I FEEL THAT JIMMY HAS MADE THE BIGGEST

CONTRIBUTION TO KARATE AND HE IS WELL DESERVING OF THE TITLE GRAND MASTER!

PRESTON IF YOU WILL PLEASE TELL JIMMY HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT HE HAS HAD ON MY LIFE, AS WELL AS THE BLACK BELTS WHO ARE STILL TEACHING!

YOURS IN KARATE,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walt S. Spears". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

(I ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY THAT)