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Press Release

Trinidad and Tobago's Mark Littrean Makes Judo History in Japan

Port of Spain, Trinidad – September 06, 2024 – Mark Littrean, a dedicated judoka from Port of Spain, was recently awarded with the rank of San Dan (Third Dan) from the renowned Kodokan Judo Institute in Tokyo, Japan. He is the first national to do so. This prestigious institute, founded in 1882 by Kanō Jigorō, is the global headquarters for judo and a centre of excellence for judoka worldwide.

Littrean, 56, undertook an intensive 2-month training program in July and August at the Kodokan, during which he engaged in virtually daily *Randori* (sparring) and *Kata* (forms) training. The former national judo champion participated in mid-summer and morning trainings at the Institute and successfully completed the Kodokan's Kata Course (Summer Course 1) and Techniques Course (Summer Course 2), with each event attracting over 250 registered participants.

Littrean had the privilege of training under many of the Instructors at the Kodokan, all of whom have the distinct reputation of being some of the most knowledgeable and skilled in the world.

A significant highlight of the training was Littrean's examination for the rank of 3rd Dan on July 26th, in which he was successful. This achievement makes Littrean, an International Judo Federation Level 2 Coach, the first Trinidad and Tobago judoka in history to receive a Dan grade from the Kodokan, marking the greatest achievement of his 38-year judo career. Littrean is already the highest ranking judoka in T&T holding a Go Dan (Fifth Dan) from the national judo federation, Judo Trinidad and Tobago, but his diploma, bestowed to him by Kodokan's President, Mr. Uemura Haruki, 9th Dan and former Olympic Champion, from the Kodokan is considered to be more prestigious internationally.

The purpose of this training was to elevate Littrean's standard as a Judo Instructor. He plans to continue disseminating his skills and knowledge to as many people as possible, helping them improve their lives through judo. This includes members of his club, Queen's Park Judo Club, the community of St. Anns/Cascade, and on a national scale. Additionally, Littrean aims to spread judo through exchanges and collaboration with more people in the English-speaking Caribbean, strengthening bonds within the region.

This year marked Littrean's third visit to the Kodokan, with previous visits in 2009 and 2012. He wishes to thank the Sport and Culture Fund for their financial assistance in offsetting the cost of the trip to Japan, as well as his family members for their contributions to this venture and their faith in him. Finally, he wants to share his eternal gratitude to staff at the Kodokan for their tremendous work, and to his teacher and mentor, Mr. Shiina Kiyoshi, 8th Dan of New York whom he started judo with at St. John's University in 1986.

END OF RELEASE

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Directors: Mark Littrean (5th dan), Vishnu Ramdial (1st dan)

The Queen's Park Judo Club is a registered Non-Profit Organization and a member of Judo Trinidad and Tobago