

Tim Raftery is a leading instructor of self-defense, life skills and bullying prevention programs. He has been training in various forms of martial arts since 1964, when he studied Judo in high school. He continued his training in college, where he earned his degree in Political Science. After college, he served as a United States Air Force Intelligence Officer and then was a successful painting and wallcovering contractor for 26 years. He currently resides in Franklin County with his wife of 30 years.

Sensei Raftery continued his training at CODA Martial Arts in Fenton, Missouri, where he received his rank through The Rakkasans Martial Arts Association (a member of the United States Martial Arts Association). During this time, he started to develop Seizon Jujitsu as well as his bullying prevention program. He opened his school in 2010 and began teaching Seizon Jujitsu. He is the owner and founder of Center of Defensive Arts.

In addition to his dojo classes, Sensei Raftery has taught his system to family, friends and employees of the U.S. Justice Department, Franklin County Sheriff's Department and Missouri Highway Patrol. He has also given self-defense seminars to men and women at Lindenwood University, and has taught self-defense classes at East Central College. He has performed seminars and demonstrations for Keller Williams Real Estate, Washington High School Cheerleaders, Washington High School Dance Team, St. Francis Borgia High School Cheerleaders, service sororities, and he has donated his time and dojo for the Washington Summer Series for Kids. Additionally, he has coached at-risk kids in the community through the Foundations for Franklin County. Sensei Raftery has also presented his bullying prevention program to schools within the Archdiocese of St. Louis, the Boy Scouts of America, and Life Teen, which is a Deanery-wide group of 14 to 20 year olds.

At Center of Defensive Arts, Sensei Raftery teaches many simple, yet effective, mental and physical self-defense methods. He states that Seizon Jujitsu is an art one can grow old with and still be able to protect themselves and their loved ones. Awareness, avoidance, attitude, ability, confidence building and street-worthy techniques, taught in a safe, controlled environment are emphasized in his classes. When asked why he is not interested in tournaments, Sensei Raftery's answer is always the same: "Tournaments have rules, and there are no rules on the street! I train SURVIVORS, not champions."

Sensei Raftery had always included Small Circle Jujitsu in his Seizon Jujitsu curriculum, but in 2016, he decided to polish and perfect his Small Circle Jujitsu skills, so he began training in Small Circle Jujitsu under Professor Leon Jay, Professor Will Higginbotham and Sensei Kevin Balmer. On May 14, 2017, he was honored with the distinction of being named the only school in the State of Missouri, at that time, certified to teach Small Circle Jujitsu. All grading and promotion within Small Circle Jujitsu in Missouri must go through Sensei Raftery. In addition, he is the West Central USA Representative for Small Circle Jujitsu. He travels in the United States, teaching Small Circle Jujitsu at various locations. In June 2025, he earned his rank of Godan in Small Circle Jujitsu. At that time, Sensei Raftery also received the prestigious Professor Wally Jay Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sensei Raftery's school has grown from its humble beginning of six students in 2010 to being the premier school for self-defense in Franklin County, Missouri, and surrounding areas with an enrollment of approximately 60 students. He has also been awarded the honorific title of Kyoshi for his superior instruction skills. Center of Defensive Arts is a member in good standing with the Rakkasans organization, World Wide Martial Arts Association, Small Circle Jujitsu and International Modern Arnis Federation.

Sensei Tim Raftery holds rank in the following:

Seizon Jujitsu: 6th Dan
Small Circle Jujitsu: 5th Dan
Kodokan Judo: 3rd Dan
CODA Martial Arts: 1st Dan
Shorin-Ryu Karate: Brown 2
Modern Arnis: High Green