



Professors Lamar Fisher, Merlin "Bud" Estes and Lucille Estes, back in the early days.

## Lamar Fisher: Soldier, father, teacher. To us, he's "Prof"

By Dan Browning

*Editor's note: When I first entered the Nibukikan in late 1975 or early 1976, Prof. Lamar Fisher - then a hachidan - confronted me with skepticism. "Why do you want to study jujitsu," he asked gruffly. His tone was hardly inviting. And that may be why I stayed. At the time, I was pursuing a degree in Eastern Religious studies. I was tired of studying about zen. I wanted to practice it. I had read about students who sat outside of monasteries for months before they were admitted. I recall that one even cut off his arm to show his sincerity before the teacher would take him in. I wanted the real thing,*

*not one of those contract dojos that hands out rank in exchange for monthly dues.*

*Prof. Fisher sure seemed like the real thing. He could simultaneously terrorize me (those thumbs demonstrating the location of the sciatic nerve, for instance) and make me feel at home with his mischievous smile. Dues were just \$7.50 a month back then. If you couldn't pay, you were supposed to sweep the floors or contribute some other way. Prof. told practically everyone where the key to the dojo was kept. Anyone who behaved and wanted to study jujitsu was welcome to crash there. I was one of several vagabonds who literally lived in the dojo for weeks or months between wanderings. Prof. Fisher created a home for us, and we felt like family.*

This is "Prof's" story.

Senior Prof. Lamar Fisher was born in Chico, Calif., on April 25, 1926. His brother Melford (who now lives in San Jose, Calif.) followed 2 ½ years later. Prof. describes their childhood as "kind of hectic." The family "bounced around" between farms in Princeton and Orland, Calif.. But Prof.'s fondest memories were from the family ranch in Anderson, situated in California's Great Central Valley south of Redding.

"That's where I got the tractor stuck," he said in a recent interview. Prof. learned to drive at an early age so that he could help his dad on the farm. He was only

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