

Winner of the Edinburgh Award taught Mick Jagger

✘ Acclaimed judo veteran George Kerr, who was awarded the CBE in the recent New Year Honours list, has been announced as the fourth recipient of the prestigious Edinburgh Award.

Nicknamed Mr Judo, the 73-year-old, who once coached Rolling Stones frontman Sir Mick Jagger at the Budokwai Club in 1960s Chelsea, now continues his incredible career by following in the footsteps of Sir Chris Hoy, JK Rowling and Ian Rankin. Coincidentally, George used to coach Sir Chris back in the 1980s when he was a boy.

George's achievement of winning The Edinburgh Award comes only weeks after the British Judo Association President made history by receiving judo's highest honour, the 10th Dan, which has only been bestowed upon 15 people since it first began in the late 19th century.

Lord Provost George Grubb chaired the Edinburgh Award panel, made up of representatives from all political groups on the City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council and Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce.

He said: "George Kerr is an exemplary ambassador for Edinburgh and for Scottish sport and it is a tremendous honour to be able to present him with the Edinburgh Award for 2010, a year in which he made countless headlines in the UK and beyond through his extraordinary achievements in judo.

"As well as clocking up an awe-inspiring tally of international judo medals and accolades, both as a competitor and a coach, George is a well-respected and much-loved local hero in Scotland's Capital city, where he has coached literally thousands of youngsters – including none other than Sir Chris Hoy! – over the years at The Edinburgh Club and

Junior Judo.

“The Edinburgh Award is a way for Edinburgh’s citizens to pay a lasting tribute to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the city through their achievements. With Ian Rankin, JK Rowling and Sir Chris Hoy as past recipients and with George Kerr now joining their ranks, this is becoming a very distinguished group indeed.”

Preparations are now under way for a special presentation ceremony next month. George Kerr will be the guest of honour for the event, to be held at the City Chambers, where he will be presented with an engraved Loving Cup. He will also have a mould taken of his handprints, which will then be engraved on a flagstone in the City Chambers quadrangle.

George Kerr said: “The Lord Provost phoned me himself to tell me I’d won the Edinburgh Award and I was just thrilled. I think it’s amazing, it’s the nicest thing in the world to be honoured by your own town. You can’t get any better than that really.”

Asked what he felt about having his handprints preserved for posterity in the City Chambers quadrangle, George added: “It’ll be just like Hollywood!”

The Edinburgh Award was established in 2007 to honour an outstanding individual who has made a positive impact on the city and gained national and international recognition for Edinburgh as a result of their work.

Nominations are sought annually from communities, businesses and individuals across Edinburgh and the winner is selected by a panel chaired by the Lord Provost. Nominations for the 2010 award were invited in October and the panel reached agreement on the winner shortly before the end of the year.