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— Kim-Du Trinh’s trainer Claude Rose

Life’s a kick for medallist mom

KARATE CHAMP

Savate developed
by streetfighters

ALEX ROSLIN
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

When Kim-Du Trinh returned to Montreal with a medal from an international kickboxing competition in Bulgaria, her four children had a surprise present for her: drawings of their 37-year-old mom defeating her opponents.

“They were very excited,” Trinh said.

Trinh, a stunt actor and single mom who lives in St. Laurent

came in second in her weight division at the World Savate Championship in Plovdiv, held July 2-3.

“I’m really proud of myself because I didn’t have that much time to train,” said Trinh, who stands 5 feet, 2 inches, and weighs 114 pounds.

Savate is a form of kickboxing developed by French sailors and street fighters in the 19th century that has become a national sport in France.

The competition was organized by the Bulgarian Savate Association and involved a style of the martial art known as *assaut*.

Judges award points for light, controlled kicks, punches and leg sweeps in bouts divided into three, two-minute rounds.

Trinh paid her way to Bulgaria as part of a nine-member Canadian team – including five women – that competed against 140 high-kicking martial artists from 22 countries.

Trinh and all but one of the other team members train at the Concordia University Savate Club with instructor Michael Gregory.

Two other Montreal women, Sarah Kaderabek and Jeroo Jamaji, also won fourth-place prizes in Bulgaria, but Trinh, the oldest member of the team, was the only Canadian to make the finals.



Kim-Du Trinh shows off her medal to her kids Alexander (left), 9, Jackie, 6, Kayla, 11, and Teron Trinh-Legault, 7. Trinh recently won second place at a kickboxing tournament in Bulgaria. The former Canadian and North American karate champ trained for four hours a day, six days a week, to prepare for the competition.

One of Trinh’s trainers, Claude Rose, says she is inspiring because of her age – her competitors were mostly in their teens and 20s – and the fact that she has attained such a high skill level while raising four children on her own.

“It shows nothing is impossible,” says Rose. “When I started in martial arts, she was already a world-class fighter. You just show her something, and in five minutes she’s already doing it better than you.”

Trinh works as a professional stunt performer and actor, doing fight scenes and high-flying kicks in movies and commercials.

Her average schedule for the

tournament in Bulgaria kept her so busy – she trained four hours a day, six days a week – that she hadn’t had a chance to see her latest film, the dooms-

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day blockbuster *The Day After Tomorrow*.

Trinh was a stunt actor in the special effects extravaganza, playing the roles of several people caught in a freak hail storm

that bombards Tokyo.

While Trinh’s fellow team members extended their stay in Europe to do some sightseeing, she had to hurry home to take care of her children, one of whom has cerebral palsy.

Trinh first became involved in martial arts when she was 12 years old.

Her best friend wanted to try a karate class at the YMCA in Notre Dame de Grâce but was too shy to go alone, so she asked Trinh to come along. “I fell in love with it,” she says.

The diminutive Trinh was the Canadian karate champion in her weight division for three years running in the late 1980s, and in 1988, became the North

American karate champ.

The next year she was the Canadian taekwon do champion and traveled to Seoul for the 1989 World Tae Kwon Do Championships, where she placed fourth.

Trinh started practicing savate four years ago and also studies kung fu at Montreal’s Académie Shaolin White Crane Kung Fu and kickboxing at the Tri-Star Gym.

She said martial arts give her energy to cope with her busy schedule as a working single mom.

“I try to fill my life with things I love to do,” she said. “That’s where I get the energy to do all these things.”

DAVE SIDAWAY THE GAZETTE