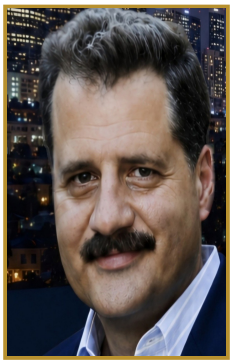
JAMES JOSEPH

Joseph Real Estate · Liberty Real Estate Services · CA DRE# 00819837 · Realtor®, Apartment Specialist

Born and raised in Japan. Present at the birth of Century 21 Japan in 1983. A bridge between two worlds for more than four decades.



James Joseph was born and raised in Japan, the son of American missionaries. His father came from Chicago and his mother from Montana; each had sailed to Japan separately, as independent missionaries, and they met in Karuizawa, where both had gone for language school. There they fell in love and married. Joseph spent his first eighteen years in Tokyo, in the Ōizumi-gakuen district, and was educated at Christian Academy in Japan in Higashikurume, where he graduated before leaving Japan for the United States at the age of eighteen.

He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from California State University, Fullerton, and obtained his California real estate license at eighteen, beginning his career with Century 21 Hastings Realty in La Mirada. At the height of his Century 21 career he co-owned eight real estate offices staffed by some four hundred agents, and he personally earned the Grand Centurion — the system's highest production honor, reserved for the top one-tenth of one percent of its agents. It was the start of a practice that now spans forty-five years, encompassing 2,913 apartment units sold and some $801 million in transaction volume across Southern California.

In 1982, at twenty years of age — fresh from reading John Naisbitt's *Megatrends* and sensing, earlier than most, the opportunity in global real estate — Joseph drove his Toyota Celica down to Century 21 headquarters in Irvine with a conviction that few at the time shared: that the Century 21 system belonged in Japan, and that he — born to the language and the culture — was the man to carry it there. Senior Vice President Mike Evans received the young agent courteously, set the proposal aside, and directed him instead to make contact with the Japanese-American Century 21 Realtors of Southern California. Joseph did precisely that. When C. Itoh & Co. — today Itochu Corporation — subsequently reached out to Century 21 International, Evans remembered the name of the young man who had come to him first, and called him back down. Evans purchased Joseph his first Century 21 gold jacket, and Joseph entered the enterprise as Evans's *kaban-mochi* (かばん持ち) — literally, the one entrusted to carry the briefcase of the principal — at his side through the negotiations that produced the Century 21–Itochu sub-franchise agreement of June 1983, the establishment of Century 21 Japan that October, and the conversion of eighteen Tokyo offices to the Century 21 banner. He was in the shadows, behind the scenes, whispering to the key decision-makers at the moments on which everything turned. His place in that founding is not a matter of recollection alone: Joseph is mentioned by name in the International Master Franchise Agreement between Century 21 International and C. Itoh & Co., designated therein as the official bilateral consultant between the two parties — the instrument that, not unlike a constitution, binds the parties together and governs the enterprise. The agreement remains one of his most cherished documents, for it constitutes the formal acknowledgment, by the executives of both Century 21 International and Century 21 Japan, of Joseph's contribution to the creation of Century 21 Japan.

For the forty-three years since, Joseph's distinctive work has been interpretation in the deepest sense: explaining the Western world to the Japanese and the Japanese world to Americans. It is, he observes, not unlike a marriage — the husband is not wrong and the wife is not right; they simply see the world differently. His own gift, he says, is the view of a man floating at the surface of the sea with a diving mask: he can see above the water and below it at once. The fish cannot see the birds, and the birds cannot see the fish — but he can see both. That dual vision has been his vocation, and his pleasure, for a lifetime. Since graduating from high school, he has made eighty-six round-trip journeys between Japan and the United States.

His work in Japan began early and never really stopped. During his college summers, Joseph returned to Tokyo and went from independent brokerage to independent brokerage through the hot Tokyo summers in his gold jacket, persuading independent Realtors to join the system; for years afterward, the more difficult candidates were deliberately held for Joseph's visits. For many years he wrote *Joseph Reports*, a regular column in the Century 21 Japan magazine distributed to every brokerage in the network. He conducted dozens of seminars for the system's top producers at national events convened in their honor, and he spoke at countless franchise sales presentations across the country, bringing independent brokers into the system one office at a time. His confidence predates the company's existence: interviewed by the housing-industry newspaper *Jutaku Shimpo* on July 29, 1983 — three months before Century 21 Japan was established — he answered skeptics who doubted an American franchise could succeed in Japan:

> *"The same things were said when McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken landed here, but they succeeded. I think it will work out well." — J. Joseph, Jutaku Shimpo, July 29, 1983*

Joseph is the proud father of six grown children, with three children-in-law and nine grandchildren. The family business continues into the next generation: his sons Christopher Joseph and Jase Joseph work alongside him in the apartment brokerage business.

A WORD FROM JAMES JOSEPH

“This week marks another milestone in that journey, as I have the privilege of sharing with my Japanese real estate friends, through the 2026 AI US Tour, what is happening in American real estate today. I have always found American real estate company owners and managers to be gracious and welcoming to my Japanese friends — and I have always found the Japanese people more than accommodating to me, on every visit, without exception.”