

IE COMMUNITY

Christopher Togawa Insurance Agency Celebrates 25 Years

BY JESSICA DAVIS
IE Contributor

Serving the Seattle area for 25 years, the Christopher Togawa Insurance Agency (CTIA) has been a mainstay of Seattle's greater community.

A proud Seattle native who grew up on Beacon Hill, Christopher Togawa started the company as an independent agent representing PEMCO in February of 1988.

"I really turned to the Asian community to get my business off the ground," he said, adding that he is now insuring the children and sometimes grandchildren of a large percentage of those clients who were with him from the beginning. "Their continued support — that, to me, is priceless."

At the start of CTIA, Togawa was one of about 40 self-employed agents building the agency one client and policy at a time. Having the office space and employee support in the PEMCO Financial Center was key to developing a strong foundation, cultivating the knowledge and experience to grow a quality agency, Togawa noted.

"I have been a customer of Christopher Togawa since the mid-1980s when he was an agent with PEMCO Insurance Company," said client Rudy Caluza, director of accounting and financial reporting for the Port of Seattle. "Christopher Togawa Insurance Agency has consistently provided our family with excellent personalized customer care, timely service and valuable insurance advice."

In 2005, Togawa was given the oppor-

tunity to branch out on his own, which allowed him to move the business to CTIA's current space in lower Queen Anne, hire additional staff and broaden his insurance offerings to include Safeco Insurance.

"The culture and success of our agency is based on the chemistry and camaraderie of our team," said Togawa. "As an agency, we strive to stay transparent to our clients while building lasting and trusted relationships."

The CTIA team currently consists of Togawa, Erwin Eykel (who Togawa met in 1990 while working together as PEMCO agents), and Diane Yuen-Ginnett (who joined CTIA in 2007).

"Christopher Togawa and his staff have been very responsive in addressing our needs," said Larry Wong, a longtime client and friend. "I'm totally satisfied with the service that they have provided for me and my family in home and auto insurance, and I wouldn't hesitate to refer them to other friends and family members, which I have done."

Later, in 2009, Progressive was added to the agency's offerings.

"The insurance industry and offerings continually evolve," noted Caluza. "It is important to align with a reputable insurance agency that has the expertise and insight by which to make such important life decisions."

Over time, technology has also become more integrated into the business than when it started. But the strong and immediate connection that CTIA staff have with



Christopher Togawa. Photo credit: Jennifer Richard. Website: www.togawa-insurance.com.

their clients remains.

"The next 25 years looks very much the same, except for, instead of looking back, we're just looking forward," said Togawa. "Our goal is to stay small enough to always be accessible to our clients, unlike the experience many people have with larger companies."

CTIA strives to find their clients the best insurance coverage to fit their needs and budget.

"Christopher is first rate: always helpful and responsive and mindful on making sure we had the right coverage — not too much or too little," said Gary Locke, U.S. Ambassador to China, and former Washington state governor.

Togawa undoubtedly prioritizes the

safety of his clients.

"Protecting our clients fuels us in a way that keeps us driven and passionate about doing what we do," said Togawa. "When the unfortunate happens, such as a car accident, what crosses (peoples') minds is not how much they pay for premiums every year, but that the wall of protection is high enough to cover the situation."

On Feb. 23, CTIA will be hosting an appreciation event for clients, family, friends and referral partners for their 25th anniversary.

"Not only are we celebrating 25 years in business, but we're also honoring each and every referral we've had in 25 years," said Togawa. ■

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