



<Toshiaki Toyoshima>

Country/Region: America (Los Angeles)

Age: 72 years old

Current Position: Sushi Gen Sushi Restaurant Owner

○ Long-standing contribution to the popularization and enlightenment of Japanese food ingredients including ingredients for sushi

- For over a half century, Toshiaki Toyoshima has worked on the popularization of Japanese cuisine and Japanese food culture in Los Angeles through sushi. Toyoshima is strongly committed to *Edomae* sushi which is devoted to quality ingredients. Toyoshima also imports seafood used for sushi and Japanese sake and proactively uses Japanese ingredients.
- Toyoshima contributed to the establishment of the Japanese Restaurant Association of America. His contributions extend to the further growth of Japanese restaurants and refinement of skills of chefs at Japanese restaurants in the U.S.

Toshiaki Toyoshima moved to Los Angeles, U.S. in 1973 and contributed to improving the sushi culture in the city through a 6-year career at a local Japanese restaurant Tokyo Kaikan.

It was around this time that the sushi boom started, and Toyoshima opened the Sushi Gen sushi restaurant in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles in 1980. Since moving to Los Angeles, Toyoshima has resided in the city for 46 years.

In addition to running his own restaurant, Toyoshima held discussions with the Department of Environmental Health and the Labor Department as a founding member of the Japanese Restaurant Association of Southern California (currently the Japanese Restaurant Association of America (JRA)) regarding establishment of the association. With support from the Consulate-General of Japan in Los Angeles, the official establishment of the association was approved in 1999 from the understanding that the further growth of Japanese restaurants was considered useful for interchange between the U.S. and Japan and introduction of Japanese culture. Toyoshima also served as Chairman of the association in 2003 and contributed to the popularization of Japanese cuisine in American society. In the association, Toyoshima led food safety seminars for member restaurants and supported efforts by local Japanese restaurants. In addition, Toyoshima and other board members of the association have played a pivotal role in the 20-year long JRA activity of visiting a senior home for Japanese American citizens to serve sushi treats.

Apart from creative sushi, Toyoshima's sushi restaurant offers traditional Japanese flavor by strictly adhering to the traditions of *Edomae* sushi where special attention is paid to ingredients. The restaurant is also known for the lines of customers prior to opening and is often introduced in media outlets including the Los Angeles Times in regards to Japanese cuisine related topics. In 2015, Toyoshima received the Commendation of the Consul General by the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles for his contribution to popularizing Japanese cuisine and carrying on Japanese traditional food culture.