Palisadian-Post REAL ESTATE Q&A

Robert Radcliffe

Robert Radcliffe of The Radcliffe Group at Sotheby's International Realty. The Radcliffe Group has been ranked by The Wall Street Journal as one of the top 250 sales teams in the U.S.

Photo: Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

ROBERT RADCLIFFE

5 Things I Love About the Palisades

1. The trees.
2. The Village.
3. The beautiful homes.
4. The proximity to the ocean and mountains.
5. The people.

The following interview by Editor-in-Chief Frances Sharpe Robert Radcliffe, a real estate agent with Sotheby's International Realty continues our series of monthly Q & A columns with leading realtors and local real estate professionals.

Palisadian-Post: Tell us about your upbringing. What was your family life like as a child?

Radcliffe: On the surface, it would have appeared that we were the perfect American family. My father was an attorney who graduated from both UCLA and then USC with two kids and zero financial support, I learned a strong work-ethic.

Palisadian-Post: What were your favorite hobbies and activities growing up?

Radcliffe: Sports! I loved playing baseball, football and basketball as a kid. I played football in high school and then I got into surfing while I was in college. I'd also been paying a lot of attention to girls ever since elementary school.

Palisadian-Post: What was your first paid job?

Radcliffe: My first paying job so the combination of being young, having no experience and being in the midst of a terrible market made it very difficult to succeed.

An encouraging meeting with my manager who assured me that he thought that I had what it takes to be successful is what kept me going. And I thank God that I did.

Palisadian-Post: What has been your proudest moment as a real estate professional?

Radcliffe: Said humbly, there have been many. Some of my proudest moments include being recognized with awards, managing buyers and sellers. The rest of the day is spent overlooking escrows, negotiating deals, networking with agents, previewing properties and meeting with my staff, tracking leads or working on marketing. My workday typically ends at 6 p.m.

Palisadian-Post: How has the real estate business changed in the last 5-10 years?

Radcliffe: The Internet has made the public more knowledgeable of the inventory of homes for sale, which is beneficial. Agents are not necessarily the sole providers of information as they once were and now are more of a guide with assessing the information. Important note: information online via some of the sites can be misleading due to inaccurate data.

Palisadian-Post: Where do you see the business heading in the future?

Radcliffe: I am excited to see how the Internet will inevitably create changes in how we all do business and in the transfer of information. The good news for us agents is that there is always a need to counsel people in making smart decisions, especially with significantly expensive ones.

Palisadian-Post: What are the top reasons your clients give for wanting to purchase homes in the Palisades?

Radcliffe: Most of my clients say it's the charm and the small-neighborhood feeling that draws them to the Palisades.

Palisadian-Post: What are some of the things you enjoy about working in the Palisades?

Radcliffe: The beauty. I am one of those agents who has most likely knocked on your door (more than once) to inquire if you would like to move. When I am walking the neighborhood I typically pause and take a deep breath of gratitude recognizing how lucky I am to be working in such a beautiful neighborhood.

Palisadian-Post: Are you involved with any charities?

Giving back is very important to me. I started the first of a series of tennis tournaments held at the Palisades Riviera Country Club benefitting Spinal Muscular Atrophy and Chrysalis. I was also a member of the Butterfly Ball Committee for Chrysalis. I have also co-sponsored a golf tournament held at the Malibu Country Club benefitting Habitat for Humanity and have been a financial contributor and speaker at the Claire Foundation in Santa Monica.

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age. My brother and I were both dedicated to getting straight As in school and playing sports.

In reality, however, our family wasn't so perfect. My father physically abused my brother and me. Additionally, he was not an ideal husband to our mom, frequently taking "business trips." It wasn't until I was about nine years old that everything came to a dramatic change.

My father had lost all his wealth and during this economic crisis there was an incident from his beatings that left me unconscious. It was then that the child abuse authorities arrived, and my father packed his belongings and left. My mom, brother and I did not see him again for several years.

Palisadian-Post: Your honesty and candor in talking about your upbringing is admirable. What makes you so open about it?

Radcliffe: Easy. Honesty is the best policy, and I am not ashamed about my past. I would hope everyone would feel the same way about theirs. I learned years ago that living a life of transparency is much easier than not. Allowing people to see who we really are offers a lot of spiritual freedom.

I wrote an autobiography (titled "180 Degrees" www.180book.com), and my childhood is only the tip of the iceberg as to the real me. Who I was then and who I am today has been a 180 Degrees turn... for the better!

Especially now that I am a father of three boys, I would never make my boys feel like I did – afraid of their dad. I learned how important it is to always make sure my boys feel safe and know that I am here to support and love them and hopefully to guide them to be the best people they can be in this world – just like any good father would.

Palisadian-Post: What did you learn from your traumatic upbringing that helped you later in life?

Radcliffe: By watching my mom "survive" as a single mom

Palisadian-Post: Did you have a business mind from an early age?

Radcliffe: Yes. When my parents were still together and were losing all their money, I overhead their conversations and became aware of the importance of money and the security that it can provide.

Palisadian-Post: Where did you go to college? What did you study?

Radcliffe: I attended both Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo and Santa Monica College; both towards a degree in real estate.

Palisadian-Post: What was your first job out of college?

Radcliffe: Waiting tables.

Palisadian-Post: How did you get into your career in real estate?

Radcliffe: I was visiting with a friend of mine at his parents' home in the Palisades in the Riviera. I was so impressed with his parents' home, and when I asked what his father did for a living, the answer was "real estate." I immediately went to my school counselor and informed her I was switching my major from small business management to real estate.

Palisadian-Post: What do you remember about your first transaction?

Radcliffe: I needed to climb a high fence to get into the vacant house. It was for a lower-end lease price, but at the time I was broke and living with three people in a one-bedroom apartment. I was also happy to do it because the clients – Neil and Téa – were really nice. Téa later changed her name to her maiden name of Leoni. Téa and I have shared a laugh more than once when reminiscing about their lease and my very first deal.

Palisadian-Post: How did your career progress from there?

Radcliffe: When I was first starting out, I almost quit real estate because of a series of failures. I started in a terrible market (1991) and at the time I was 23 years old,

and seeing the happiness on a client's face when I successfully represent them with their sale or purchase. Also, my autobiography 180 Degrees was included in Palisades High School's reading list and the feedback from some of the students as to how the book inspired them warmed my heart.

Palisadian-Post: How do you deal with the inevitable ups and downs of the real estate market?

Radcliffe: I stay incredibly focused and lean on my determined work ethic.

Palisadian-Post: What's the most exciting thing happening in real estate in the Palisades right now?

Radcliffe: I'm really looking forward to the upcoming completion of the pathway from the park to the beach. I hope it will happen soon.

Palisadian-Post: Who have been some of your most important mentors in the real estate business?

Radcliffe: I learned a lot from Mike Ferry of The Mike Ferry Organization, which is a leading real estate coaching and training organization.

Palisadian-Post: What's your philosophy about selling real estate?

Radcliffe: It's all about taking care of my clients. I try to think about their needs before mine, and I want to lead them into decisions that are in their best interest.

Palisadian-Post: What are some of the most important traits needed in today's real estate market?

Radcliffe: In today's market, you have to know home values and understand contracts, and you always have to think of your client's best interest first.

Palisadian-Post: What's a typical day like for you?

Radcliffe: Monday to Friday, I start my day at 7 a.m. From 9 to 11 a.m. I proactively search for home-