

Biography of  
Jim La Belle, MA

Aqpaiyuq, James William LaBelle, Sr., Jim was born at St. Joseph's Hospital in Fairbanks, Alaska April 25, 1947. Of mixed heritage, his father was of French/Irish ancestry and his mother, Clara Hensley, was an Inupiaq from Kotzebue/Noorvik.

Jim is currently an Adjunct Faculty member for the University of Alaska Anchorage, College of Arts and Sciences, Alaska Native Studies Department, '03 – to present. Classes taught: History of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), Native Perspectives, Leadership in Contemporary Native Organizations; Tribes, Nations and Peoples; Alaska Native Politics, Violence in Intimate Relationships (Sociology Department) and Community Development in Rural Alaska. He has also taught classes for the University of Alaska Fairbanks on Cultural Values and Communication in the Rural Human Services Department. Jim is also employed half-time as a Research Professional III for the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Elders on the UAA campus, College of Health and Social Welfare. Please see <http://elders.uaa.alaska.edu>. Jim has written about and spoken on historical trauma of indigenous peoples in Alaska on the current generation in various media.

Jim has more than twenty years experience as a board member and in executive management in ANCSA corporations: Port Graham Corporation (President) and Chugach Alaska Corporation (Chairman, Vice-President/Operations and Village Coordinator); 9 years experience working in State government; with 4+ years as the governor-appointed Rural Affairs Coordinator for the Department of Corrections. Jim has many years of management, consulting and training experience in the private sector. He is familiar with the oil and gas industry; employed with ARCO Alaska and consulting for ARCO Marine, Conoco-Phillips and Exxon Corporation. Jim consulted for numerous nonprofit groups.

Jim spent his formative years in BIA-run boarding schools: Wrangell Institute in Wrangell, Alaska and Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka, Alaska, 1955-1965. A Viet Nam Era veteran, Jim served in the United State Navy for 3 ½ years, in aviation related fields. He was honorably discharged in June of 1970. He received a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from Alaska Methodist University (AMU) in the spring of 1973, majoring in History with a minor in Literature. It is now called Alaska Pacific University. Jim recently earned a Master of Arts (MA) degree in Rural Development from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in December of 2006.

Jim has served on numerous boards and commissions over the years, including the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN). Past member and chairman of AFN's Wellness (Sobriety) Movement. He is currently serving on the board of directors of Bridge Builders and the Alaska School of Law. Jim has been married to Susan Tabios for 39 years and they have three adult children and 5 grandchildren. Jim is an enrolled member of the Native Village of Port Graham, a Suqpiq tribe and a shareholder in the Chugach Alaska Corporation.