

PsychRights®

Law Project for
Psychiatric Rights

James B. (Jim) Gottstein
(President)



Jim Gottstein grew up in Anchorage, Alaska. After graduating from West Anchorage High School in 1971, he attended the University of Oregon and graduated with honors (BS, Finance) in 1974. From there he attended Harvard Law School graduating in 1978 with a J.D. degree. Mr. Gottstein's career has evolved from emphasizing business matters and public land law, with mental health representation and advocacy as an adjunct, to increasing emphasis on mental health advocacy and representation.

Since late 2002, Mr. Gottstein has devoted the bulk of his time *pro bono* to the Law Project for Psychiatric Rights (PsychRights) whose mission is to mount a strategic litigation campaign against forced psychiatric drugging and electroshock across the United States. In June of 2006, the Alaska Supreme Court decided [*Myers v. Alaska Psychiatric Institute*](#), which ruled Alaska's forced drugging procedures unconstitutional. [*Myers*](#) has been called "[the most important State Supreme Court decision](#)" on forced drugging in 20 years.

Mr. Gottstein has won two other Alaska Supreme Court decisions since then, [*Wetherhorn v. Alaska Psychiatric Institute*](#) in 2007, which held Alaska's involuntary commitment statute unconstitutional to the extent that someone could be committed as gravely disabled without the state proving the person was unable to survive safely in freedom, and [*Wayne B. v. Alaska Psychiatric Institute*](#) in 2008, ruling the State could not dispense with the requirement of a transcript when involuntary commitment and forced drugging cases are referred to a master for hearing and recommendations.

Mr. Gottstein is most known around the US and internationally for subpoenaing and releasing the [Zyprexa Papers](#), resulting in a series of [New York Times articles](#) and an [editorial](#) calling for a Congressional investigation.

Mr. Gottstein has also devoted considerable time trying to make alternatives to psychiatric drugs available in Alaska through [Soteria-Alaska](#), and [CHOICES, Inc.](#) See, [Report on Multi-Faceted Grass-Roots Efforts To Bring About Meaningful Change To Alaska's Mental Health Program](#) for a description of these efforts.

Jim's mental health work has included:

- Co-founding the [Law Project for Psychiatric Rights \(PsychRights\)](#) in 2002. Jim is currently president.
- Serving on the board of directors of the National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy ([NARPA](#)) since 2005, including as president in 2006 and 2007 and currently as treasurer.
- Serving on the board of directors of the International Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology ([ICSPP](#)) since 2006.
- Co-founding [Soteria-Alaska, Inc.](#), in 2003, to provide a non-coercive and mainly non-drug alternative to psychiatric hospitalization, serving as president until November, 2007.
- Co-founding [CHOICES, Inc.](#) (Consumers Having Ownership in Creating Effective Services) in 2003 to provide peer-run, alternative services, especially the right to choose not to take psychiatric drugs, serving as president until November, 2007.
- Co-founding [Peer Properties, Inc.](#), in 2002, to provide peer (mental health consumer) run housing for people diagnosed or diagnosable with serious mental illness who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or living in bad situations. Jim is currently president.
- Serving on the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB), the statewide planning board for Alaska's mental health program from 1998 to 2004, where, at various times, he served as chair of its Program Evaluation Committee and its Budget Committee, which made statutorily required recommendations regarding the state's mental health program budget.
- Co-founding in 1998 and serving until 2002 on the board of directors of the [Alaska Mental Health Consumer Web](#) which provides peer-support and a drop in center for mental health consumers in Anchorage.
- Co-founding Mental Health Consumers of Alaska in 1986 and serving on its board of directors for almost ten years.
- Serving as plaintiffs' counsel on behalf of people diagnosed with mental disorders in Alaska in the billion dollar litigation over the state of Alaska's misappropriation of a one million acre trust granted for Alaska's mental health program. See, [Weiss v. State](#), 939 P 2d 380 (Alaska 1997).