

BIO: Jim Gottstein

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. Subsequently enrolling in Harvard Law School, Jim completed his formal legal studies in 1978, graduating with a J.D. degree.

In addition to 25 years of private practice, emphasizing business matters and public land law, Jim has been an attorney advocate for people diagnosed with serious mental illness for over 20 years:



- Member of the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB), the statewide planning board for Alaska's mental health program for five years. While a member, he served as chair of its Program Evaluation and Committee and its Budget Committee at different times. The Budget Committee makes formal recommendations regarding the state's mental health program budget.
- Served as plaintiffs' counsel on behalf of the mentally ill 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).
- Co-founded Mental Health Consumers of Alaska in 1986 and served on its board of directors for almost ten years.
- Co-founded the Alaska Mental Health Consumer Web in 1998. The Alaska Mental Health Consumer Web provides peer-support and a drop in center for mental health consumers in Anchorage.
- Co-founded Peer Properties, Inc., in 2002, to provide peer (mental health consumer) run housing for people diagnosable with serious mental illness who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or living in bad situations.
- Co-founded Soteria-Alaska in 2003, to provide a non-medication alternative to acute hospitalization
- Co-founded CHOICES, Inc., (Consumers Having Ownership In Creating Effective Services) in 2003, to provide alternative mental health services in the community.
- Supervising Attorney for Consumers Counsel, a project of the Alaska Mental Health Consumer Web that provided legal representation to mental health consumers.
- Provided *pro bono* legal services to mental health consumers in various matters throughout his almost 25 years in the active practice of law.

Currently, Mr. Gottstein is spending the bulk of his time on the Law Project for Psychiatric Rights on a volunteer basis. The Law Project for Psychiatric Rights' mission is to organize a serious, coordinated legal effort against forced psychiatric medication.