

# Baama Pii, Negee ~ Vice Chair Bob LaPoint



Ahneen, Boozo, Negee:

I have some sad news this month. On Nov. 5, 2015,

we lost my former Vice-Chairperson Bob LaPoint. He was born April 20, 1930. Bob was first elected to the Tribal Board of Directors in 1998, and was re-elected in 2002 and 2006 with significant margins. He also ran for Chairperson in 2000 under the "Straight Arrow" slogan and nearly defeated a 13-year incumbent.

I owe my Chairpersonship to Bob LaPoint as he ran in 2004 as I was not sure the time was right for me to run. He encouraged me to run and

in his "straight talk" way, he told me, "I'll run until you can figure out if the time is right." As it turns out, the time was right; I did run in '04 and was endorsed by Bob LaPoint after winning the primary.

After I was re-elected in '12, Bob then 83 years old, drove from Drummond Island to the Sault to greet me at my office on my first day back. I count Bob as a friend and will miss him but his spirit of activism and change lives on.

~ Chi McGwitch, Bob.



Vice-Chair Bob LaPoint with Tribal Members Bonnie and Ron McKerchie at my 2004 Tribal Victor Party picnic. Bob enjoyed himself but got right to business to make change.

## REPRESENTATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS: TRIBAL LEADERSHIP STALLED AT HOME

As I think of the various reforms that have permeated board and chair campaigns since 2000 when Bob LaPoint first ran, I can't help but be disappointed. While, undoubtedly, we have made great strides, there are some reforms that Bob and others brought to light that have been entirely ignored by the governing body. One item for example is that of becoming a real government and a true representative democracy by divesting the central and

oligarchical power structure that is the Tribal Board of Directors and creating a true separation of powers. Clearly, given the board is the judge, jury and executioner that writes the laws, interprets the laws and enjoys a judicial branch that serves at their benevolence, they do not want let go of a power structure that supports and reinforces arbitrary and capricious decision making.

While I do believe it is a corruption of power, to

Please see my welcome at 1:06 time index at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=axLO4ebKoyc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=axLO4ebKoyc)



Far Left, White House Tribal Leaders Conference agenda where I had the distinction of being the Tribal Leader selected to do the welcome. In the middle with US Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell just before going on stage. To the right, giving my address. I dedicated my presentation to Bob LaPoint and our Tribal Leaders who paved the way who are now deceased. I was humbled to do so.

Guess what, he lost his seat. Pay close attention to those who are stalling while sitting back and enjoying their unfettered and unchecked exercise of dominion over the lives of our people.

### WHITE HOUSE VISIT 2015

While our efforts at home have stalled due in large part of inside squabbling and power struggles at the power level including various camps who refuse to work together and backbiting and clique like behavior, I have chosen to do my best to manage the budgets and lead the team members to ensure quality services and fiscal integrity, I have not given up on reform efforts back home, I am merely putting in the

effort where I can effectuate positive change including at the national level.

This past year, I have worked hard to create a greater focus on improving the lot of our members' lives with emphasis on addressing the worst of the worst statistics our people experience like: the lowest high school and college graduation rates. On the next page, you will see that Native students lag behind "white" students at a rate of nearly 20 percent. This disparity is unacceptable and is the at the heart of both my dissertation research, as well as, my professional contribution. Based on my efforts in Education, as well as, leadership roles in Health, Contract Support Costs, and data related committees to improve the

**WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS CONFERENCE**  
Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Amphitheater  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC 20004

**Pre-Conference Activities:**  
**Wednesday November 4, 2015**  
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Early Registration – Ronald Reagan Building Amphitheater Foyer  
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm Pre-Conference Breakout Sessions

**White House Tribal Nations Conference:**  
**Thursday November 5, 2015**  
6:30am – 8:30am Registration – Ronald Reagan Building Amphitheater Foyer  
8:30am – 9:20am Morning Plenary – Ronald Reagan Building Amphitheater  
Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama  
Secretary Sally Jewell, Department of the Interior  
Chairman Aaron Payment, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe  
Rory Taylor, Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma  
Deputy Secretary Heather Higginbottom, Department of State

9:45am – 10:45am Cabinet Town Halls  
Secretary Sally Jewell, Department of the Interior  
Secretary Julián Castro, Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Secretary Tom Vilsack, Department of Agriculture  
Secretary Sylvia Burwell, Department of Health and Human Services  
Breakout Sessions

11:00am – 12:30pm Closing Session—Ronald Reagan Building Amphitheater  
First Arm Chair Session  
Participants: Secretary Sally Jewell, Department of the Interior  
Deputy Attorney General Sally Quillian Yates, Department of Justice  
Deputy Secretary John King, Department of Education  
Director Cecilia Muñoz, White House Domestic Policy Council

Second Arm Chair Session  
Participants: Acting Director Beth Cobert, Office of Personnel Management  
Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet, Small Business Administration  
Deputy Secretary Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Department of Energy  
Secretary Thomas Perez, Department of Labor

Third Arm Chair Session  
Participants: Director Dr. John Holdren, Office of Science & Technology Policy  
Director Christy Goldfuss, Council on Environmental Quality  
Deputy Secretary Mike Connor, Department of the Interior

President Barack Obama

hold so tightly onto such power, I believe it is simply the nature of the beast. After all, if you had complete dominion over your surroundings, would you also hold on to such power? If we truly followed the Seven Grandfather Teachings rather than put on a little show like some, we would respect the inherent sovereignty of our people and immediately move to put the draft new constitution to a vote of the people. In 2012, my opponent for chair acknowledged that the felt our people were not smart enough to vote on comprehensive constitutional reform.

