

DENNIS BANKS BIO

Dennis Banks, American Indian leader, teacher, lecturer, activist, and author, was born in 1932 on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in northern Minnesota. At age five he was separated from his family and placed at Pipestone Indian Boarding School. He left boarding school at age 17 and went on to serve in the U.S. Military and was stationed in Japan.

In 1968, he helped found the American Indian Movement (AIM), which was established to address racism and police brutality and protect the traditional ways of Indian people and to engage in legal cases protecting treaty rights of Native Americans, such as treaty and aboriginal rights to hunting and fishing, trapping, and gathering wild rice.

As one of the founders of the American Indian Movement (AIM), Dennis Banks (born 1932) has spent much of his life protecting the traditional ways of Indian people and engaging in legal cases protecting treaty rights of Native Americans. He travels the globe lecturing, teaching Native American customs, and sharing his experiences.

Between 1976 and 1983, Banks earned an associate of arts degree at the University of California, Davis, and taught at Deganawidah-Quetzecotl (DQ) University (an all-Indian controlled institution), where he became the first American Indian university chancellor. In the spring of 1979, he taught at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.

In 1987, Banks was active in convincing the states of Kentucky and Indiana to pass laws against desecration of Indian graves and human remains. He organized reburial ceremonies for over 1,200 Indian grave sites that were disturbed by graverobbers in Uniontown, Kentucky.

In 1988, Banks organized and led a spiritual run called the Sacred Run from New York to San Francisco, and then across Japan from Hiroshima to Hokkaido. Also in 1988, his autobiography *Sacred Soul* was published in Japan, and won the 1988 Non-fiction Book of the Year Award.

In addition to leading and organizing sacred runs (1988, 1990, 1991), Banks stays involved in American Indian issues, including AIM, and travels the globe lecturing, teaching Native American traditions, and sharing his experiences. He had key roles in the films *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992), *Thunderheart* (1992) and Academy Award nominated film *A Good Day to Die* (2010). In 2004, Banks co-authored *Ojibwa Warrior: Dennis Banks and the Rise of the American Indian*.

Currently, Banks is leading the Longest Walk III, across the nation to raise awareness and prevent Diabetes. The walk culminates in Washington DC on July 8th 2011.