

APA AWARD

Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Applied
Research: Joseph Patrick Gone**Citation**

“Joseph P. Gone has made extraordinary contributions to the application of psychological knowledge for American Indian peoples. A central problem defining his scholarship is the (post)colonial predicament of psychological services in ‘Indian Country.’ On one hand, enduring mental health disparities underscore the need for more and better mental health services. On the other, conventional psychosocial approaches to professional treatment depend on concepts, categories, principles, and practices routinely identified by community authorities and formal research as culturally foreign and experientially irrelevant for many American Indians. In response, Gone has elaborated promising new approaches to making mental health services more accessible, culturally appropriate, and demonstrably effective for alleviating debilitating distress among American Indians through three lines of research. He has documented how Indigenous peoples locally construe various facets of mind, self, identity, emotion, social relations, communication, wellness, dysfunction, and healing (i.e., ethnopsychological

investigations). He has demonstrated ways in which these local construals converge with and diverge from standard approaches in professional mental health practice (i.e., assessments of cultural commensurability). And he has formulated ways that applied psychologists can use these understandings to partner with Indigenous communities to implement and evaluate alternative interventions that remain culturally consonant and robustly therapeutic (i.e., therapeutic innovations).”

Biography

Joseph Patrick Gone was born at St. John’s Hospital in Helena, Montana, in February of 1967. His mother, Rowena Marie Gone, was unable to keep and care for him, and so his first months were spent in foster care before his adoption by Sharon L. (Daniel) Juelfs, a homemaker, and Larry D. Juelfs, a legal services attorney for the state of Montana. The couple separated when Gone was aged 5, and he was reared by his adoptive mother for the remainder of his youth. Except for 6 months in southern California, Gone resided in Montana throughout his entire childhood. He graduated from Flathead High School in Kalispell in 1985.

During adolescence, Gone converted to evangelical Christianity. Believing that God had called him to Christian ministry, he left Montana for Oral Roberts University—the only college to which he applied—where he studied theology and government. That year, Reverend Roberts announced that if the faithful did not contribute \$8 million to his ministry, God would kill him. Thus, after one academic year at ORU, Gone departed in May of 1986 for Fort Knox to train as an M1A1 Abrams tank crewman for a 3-year enlistment in the U.S. Army. Four months later, he shipped overseas to serve in the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment in Amberg, West Germany. Created by Andrew Jackson to run Seminole Indians out of Florida, the unit’s current mission was to patrol the Iron Curtain along the Czechoslovakian border.

For the next 22 months, Gone rose to the enlisted rank of Specialist (E-4), and came to admire a handful of officers in his unit. They had trained at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and encouraged Gone to do so as well. During tank exercises at a gunnery range, Gone penned a letter to Montana Congressman Pat Williams, explaining his interest

and requesting a nomination to USMA. Soon he received this nomination and so submitted his application to become a West Point cadet. He was honorably discharged early from his enlistment in June of 1988 to begin his 4-year training at West Point for eventual commission as an Army officer. Plebe year is memorable for every cadet but Gone was stunned to learn during that year that he had been ranked first in his class.

As a plebe, Gone also completed a course in introductory psychology. After reading Chaim Potok's novel, *The Chosen*—which features a character who is desperate to study psychology—Gone began to explore a career in the profession. He realized that the pathway to a doctorate in the military was circuitous, and so consulted two mentors, COL Larry Donnithorne and COL James McEliece, about leaving USMA. As part of an extracurricular club, Gone had briefly visited Harvard University and felt intoxicated by the intellectual atmosphere. He proposed to transfer after his third summer to Harvard College to study psychology. Without his knowledge, during a subsequent trip to Boston, his mentors visited the Harvard admissions office to advocate for Gone's transfer. Donnithorne relocated Gone from West Point to Cambridge, MA, in August of 1990.

At Harvard on a Pell grant, Gone pursued a concentration in psychology, during which he was inspired by the developmental psychologist, Sheldon H. White, and psychology lecturer George W. Goethals. He participated in the Harvard/Radcliffe Christian Fellowship and the Council of Native American Students at Harvard. Beyond this, he availed himself of a civilian's control over his own schedule, recalling that (as a cadet) his extracurricular club had met with Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI). As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Inouye had championed the importance of Indian rights. Now at Harvard, Gone prepared to visit his home reservation in Montana in March of 1991, reconnecting with his Indian family (including his father, Joseph William Azure, and nine siblings). He spent that summer on the reservation, volunteering to organize the community archives at the tribal college. Back at Harvard, during his senior year, he met his future life partner, Tiya Miles.

After graduating in June of 1992, Gone again returned to the Fort Belknap Indian reservation in north-central Montana to live and work among his *Aaniiih*-Gros Ventre people. Jobs were scarce on this impoverished reservation, but even though he never held a permanent job, he never missed a day's work. First, he served as a volunteer staff member for the reservation's Constitution revision project, then he worked as a counselor for students in the tribe's vocational education program. Next, he was contracted to write policies and procedures for the tribe's chemical dependency treatment center, and finally he was hired to do the same for the entire tribal government. Miles joined him at Fort Belknap, teaching at the tribal college, as they applied for

graduate school, with Gone considering doctoral study in clinical-community psychology, cultural anthropology, or psychiatry.

In August of 1993 Gone began his doctoral studies in clinical-community psychology at the University of Illinois in Champaign. Mentored by community psychologist Julian Rappaport, cultural psychologist Peggy J. Miller, and behavioral neuroscientist Gregory A. Miller, Gone sought to integrate clinical, community, and cultural psychology for addressing American Indian mental health problems. While on campus, he campaigned for the elimination of the university's sports team mascot, Chief Illiniwek. Gone's 1996 Master's thesis was a case study of thematically analyzed interviews with his own grandmother, Bertha (Gone) Snow, about Gros Ventre cultural identity (which won the Ed Scheiderer Award from the program). Also in 1996, Gone embarked on a practicum on the Fort Belknap reservation, during which he was appointed by his tribal council as Chief Administrative Officer, overseeing 200 staff in 50 tribal programs.

Gone's dissertation research, undertaken in 1997–1998 on the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota, entailed analysis of clinical diagnostic interviews with Lakota tribal members. Specifically, he explored the cultural dynamics associated with local communicative norms, which shaped interview responses about symptoms of clinical depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. Gone analyzed these interview data as the Charles Eastman Dissertation Fellow at Dartmouth College in 1998–1999 and as a psychology predoctoral intern at McLean Hospital in 1999–2000. Although Gone had never imagined pursuing an academic post, in the Fall of 2000 he commenced an assistant professorship in the interdisciplinary Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago.

Gone's 2 years in Human Development at UC were among the most intellectually stimulating of his life. There he was fortunate to collaborate with exceptionally creative colleagues, including social scientists such as Richard Shweder, David Orlinsky, Tanya Luhrmann, Bertram Cohler, John Lucy, and Richard Taub. And yet, his partner held a faculty appointment in California, leading to a challenging commuter relationship. In 2002 the University of Michigan offered them both tenure-track appointments as assistant professors. Gone was jointly appointed in the clinical science area of the Department of Psychology (a social sciences unit) and the Native American Studies program in the Department of American Culture (a humanities unit). Once again, Gone found this interdisciplinary arrangement to be fruitful as he commenced a series of collaborative research partnerships with American Indian community members to reenvision more accessible and relevant helping services.

For example, in partnership with staff at the Blackfeet Nation's substance abuse treatment program between 2009 and 2012, Gone undertook a collaborative formulation of a

culturally grounded alternative to substance abuse treatment-as-usual on their Montana reservation. The resultant intervention—a seasonal cultural immersion camp designed to approximate the day-to-day experiences of prereservation ancestors (e.g., living in tepees, harvesting local materials, visiting sacred sites, and practicing traditional spirituality)—was implemented in the summer of 2012 with a small number of clients from the community (Gone & Calf Looking, 2015). The intervention activities resembled nothing like mainstream psychosocial treatments, reflecting instead less psychologically minded cultural orientations. The intent was to evaluate this singular grass-roots intervention, but an important lesson of the project was that formal outcome assessment under such conditions—while plausible in theory—remained frustratingly elusive in practice.

An additional partnership with the Detroit American Indian health center between 2009 and 2016 arose as local decision-makers charged Gone with developing a program that would introduce and orient their urban constituents to Indigenous traditional spirituality. The rationale for the program was that novel participation in Indigenous spirituality for urban American Indians without access to these sacred traditions would yield beneficial wellness outcomes. Drawing on sustained consultation with a regional Indian ceremonial leader, the team finalized and pilot-tested a curriculum for this Urban American Indian Traditional Spirituality Program, facilitating a group experience comprised of 12 weekly sessions based on the sweat lodge ceremony (Gone et al., 2020). As piloted, the program partook minimally of conventional medical or public health messaging, and instead emphasized socialization into multitribal religious practice, supportive communal interaction, and robust cultural identity.

Gone was tenured in both departments at U-M in 2010 and promoted to Full Professor in 2016. During this time, he and his partner became parents to twins, Nali Azure and Noa Alice, in 2003 and a son, Sylvan David, in 2008. While at U-M he received two early career awards for emerging leadership in ethnic minority psychology, as well as the Stanley Sue Award for Distinguished Contributions to Diversity in Clinical Psychology. In 2010 he was selected as a residential Fellow at the Center for Advanced study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. In 2014 he was recognized with a Guggenheim fellowship. That same year, Gone occupied the Katz Family Endowed Chair in Native American Studies as a faculty visitor at Montana State University in Bozeman. He is also a Fellow in seven divisions of the American Psychological Association, and in the Association for Psychological Science.

In 2018, Gone accepted a tenured appointment at Harvard University, where he is Professor of Anthropology (in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences) and Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine (in the Faculty of Medicine). In

2019 he was appointed the Faculty Director of the Harvard University Native American Program. As an “accidental academic,” Gone has endeavored throughout his career to cultivate a distinctive scholarly vision that is anchored in psychology even while remaining robustly interdisciplinary, engaged with broad theoretical currents even while remaining resolutely relevant and practical, and addressed to the broad intersection of culture and mental health even while remaining focused on postcolonial American Indian well-being. It is his ambition to continue this pursuit of culturally attuned, empirically grounded, practical innovation in psychology, in which *disciplinary* attention to the mental health problems of American Indian populations promises also to engage far-reaching questions of *interdisciplinary* interest to scholars throughout the humanities, behavioral, and health sciences.

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