

Biography for Mel Tonasket

Mel Tonasket is the Vice-Chairman of the Colville Business Council, the governing body of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation, located in north central Washington state. Mr. Tonasket has served as an elected official for the Colville Tribes at various times since 1970 and has served as the Colville Tribes' Chairman and other leadership positions during his years serving as an elected official.

From 1973-1976, Mr. Tonasket served as President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). Mr. Tonasket led the Colville Tribes' fight against termination and as President of NCAI mobilized national support for major tribal legislation, including the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act. He was a member of the American Indian Policy Review Commission for two years and has represented United States tribal governments at the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and at the Inter-American Indigenous Conference in Brazil.