

JAMES M. BYRNE
Attorney at Law

James “Jim” Byrne was born in San Francisco, CA to Irish immigrants. He was raised in San Francisco’s Excelsior District and attended Cleveland Elementary School, Epiphany Grammar School, and Saint Ignatius High School in San Francisco. He graduated from UC Davis in 1977, receiving two bachelor’s degrees, one in history and the other in agricultural economics and business management. In 1980, Jim received his Juris Doctor from the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, CA.

After graduating from law school, Jim established his own law practice in San Francisco in 1983. His office is currently located in the Russian Hill neighborhood of San Francisco and is mostly confined to immigration law. His practice of immigration law includes deportation defense, family-based immigration, and employment-based immigration. When he first set up his practice, Jim travelled often to Fresno, CA to represent Mexican immigrants applying for green cards in federal immigration court. This was done on a low-cost basis through a non-profit organization called El Concilio de Fresno.

Jim was the lead attorney in the landmark case *Wauchope v US Department of State* (9th Circuit) which declared a law which discriminated against women in derivative citizenship cases unconstitutional. He has represented many clients in asylum proceedings, including nationals from Afghanistan, Iran, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and other countries. He has also represented several Irish nationals, arrested and convicted for their involvement in the armed conflict in Northern Ireland, in deportation proceedings. He has cross-examined U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Officers and members of the Northern Ireland Police Force in immigration court during these proceedings.

Jim has volunteered once a month for the last 22 years at Irish Immigration Pastoral Center Immigration Clinic, advising clients from all over the world on their immigration cases. He also does pro bono work, including currently representing Mexican and Guatemalan nationals in immigration court.

Jim served on the San Francisco Police Commission from to March 2021 to April 2024.

Jim is married to Maureen O’Neill from Fresno, CA, is the father of four adult children, and is a grandfather of one. He has lived in the same house in the Sunset District for over 36 years.