



James J. Blanchard

Partner

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Governor James Blanchard joined DLA Piper upon the conclusion of his duties as United States ambassador to Canada in April 1996. In recognition of his outstanding performance as ambassador, Secretary of State Warren Christopher presented Governor Blanchard with the Foreign Affairs Award for Public Service in a ceremony at the Department of State, making him one of only a handful of ambassadors to receive this prestigious award.

James was named ambassador to Canada in May 1993, after serving two terms as governor of Michigan (1983 – 1991) and four terms as a member of the United States Congress (1975 – 1983). In 1992, he chaired President Bill Clinton's successful campaign in Michigan. Governor Blanchard is also former chairman of the Democratic Governors Association and the National Democratic Platform Committee, as well as a former member of the National Governors Association's executive committee.

During his tenure as ambassador, James managed a broad range of trade, natural resources, environmental and national security issues between the United States and Canada, providing support critical to the passage of both NAFTA and the Open Skies Agreement. Commenting on James's role in the Open Skies Agreement, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien said, "Tomorrow, we will show the world that even the sky is not the limit for our relationship as we sign an open skies agreement. It will enhance what is already the largest bilateral air relationship in the world. Ambassador Blanchard has played a key role in these negotiations, and he has done a fantastic job here in Ottawa. I want to take this opportunity to salute him."

Governor Blanchard's eight years as Michigan's chief executive were notable for his success in turning around Michigan's finances, working with the private sector to attract business investment and trade from around the world. He won national acclaim for his innovative approaches to economic development, education, crime fighting, environmental protection and helping children and families.

On January 1, 1983, he took over what was described as "the toughest governor's job in America." His state faced a US\$1.7 billion deficit, the threat of bankruptcy, record high unemployment of more than 17 percent and the worst credit rating in America. Working with leaders of business, labor, education and local government, the governor put together a strategy for Michigan's future and made the tough decisions necessary to keep it on track. James Blanchard completed his work as Michigan's 45th governor having balanced eight consecutive state budgets, boosted the state's credit rating to AA, established a US\$422 million "rainy-day fund" and produced a solvency dividend of more than US\$1 billion in savings from reduced borrowing costs. His aggressive small business and economic

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development efforts helped create more than 751,000 new jobs, improve the business climate, increase companies' global competitiveness and make Michigan's economy 35 percent more diversified than it had been a decade earlier. He was reelected 1986 by the largest margin of any governor in Michigan history.

Newsweek credited Governor Blanchard with leading "one of the most dramatic economic turnabouts in the recent history of state government," and national publications such as *US News and World Report* listed him among the best governors in America, one of the innovators and energizers who made things work in an era of declining federal aid.

Before running for governor, he served in Congress. During his four terms in Congress, he distinguished himself for his work to save the Chrysler Corporation, restore America's economic competitiveness, and oversee financial, monetary, trade and energy issues. Major assignments included the House Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee, including its subcommittees on Economic Stabilization, Housing and Urban Development, International Trade and Domestic Monetary Policy, and the Science and Technology Committee. He performed oversight of the Federal Reserve Board and participated in meetings of the International Monetary Fund.

Prior to his election to Congress, from 1969 to 1974 Governor Blanchard was assistant attorney general of Michigan.

Jim Blanchard remains active in Michigan, US-Canada relations and diplomatic affairs generally. He is currently co-chair of the Ambassadors Circle of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and co-chair of the Canada US Law Institute. Previously, he was chairman of the Meridian International Center in Washington, DC. In 2010, he was named co-chair of the Canada-United States Law Institute, a forum where the two countries' governments, business communities, legal professionals, academics, non-governmental organizations and the media address issues confronting US-Canada relations. In 2008, at the invitation of former Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, he was a special guest at the InterAction Council's 26th Annual Plenary Meeting in Stockholm. The InterAction Council brings together former world leaders who look beyond the immediacy of current issues and the limitations of national interests to focus on the long-term structural factors driving the global agenda. Its three priority areas are peace and security, world economic revitalization and universal ethical standards.

A lover of history, Jim Blanchard serves as chair and president of the National Archives Foundation in Washington DC. In 1997, Governor Blanchard authored *Behind the Embassy Door*, a book highlighting his experiences as ambassador.

CREDENTIALS

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- Michigan

Recognitions

The respected English research publisher Chambers & Partners has repeatedly recognized him in *Chambers USA*, and has commented that he is a "fine lawyer" and "heavy hitter" who "is noted for his calm demeanor when handling federal law and policy matters." He "[offers] clients a breadth of expertise in federal law, policy and regulatory matters." Clients have called him "hugely dependable, very helpful with high-level strategy and extremely efficient" with "keen strategic insight" and "an exhaustive knowledge of governmental processes." Observers have noted he is "'very execution oriented,' as he engages in an action plan and carries out the elements required." Governor Blanchard is "a well-known practitioner who earns client praise for his strong network: 'Jim knows everybody everywhere. I have never met a person better connected.'"

Recognized by Carleton University expert on history of US-Canada relations, as one of the two best US Ambassadors to Canada in more than half a century.

Education

- J.D., University of Minnesota 1968
- M.B.A., Michigan State University 1965
- B.A., Michigan State University 1964

Courts

- Supreme Court of the United States
- United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
- United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan

Memberships

Current

- National Archives Foundation (Chair and President)
- Co-Chair Canada-US Law Institute
- Co-Chair of the Ambassadors Circle, National Democratic Institute (NDI)
- Board of Directors, International Spy Museum
- Founder, Governor Jim Blanchard Public Forum at Michigan State University

Previous

- Meridian International Center (Former Chairman of the Board of Trustees)
- Democratic Governor's Association (Former Chairman, 1988 – 1989)

INSIGHTS

Publications

COVID-19 and the 2020 US elections

27 July 2020

COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses in the US healthcare system, education system and economy. The same is true, unfortunately, for US electoral systems and procedures, and the biggest test is still to come.

Events

- Speaker, "Canada-US Energy and Trade Policy: Cooperation or Confrontation," Plenary Session of Canadian Corporate Counsel Association's World Summit and National Spring Conference, Montreal, April 17, 2012 (with William Minor and Kiera Gans)
- Panelist, "*Caperton v. Massey Coal and Citizens United*," Georgetown Law-Aspen Institute Symposium Series, January 26, 2010
- Panelist, "The North American Leaders' Summit," panel discussion hosted by the Americas Society and Council of the Americas, July 24, 2009