

The International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking (ICGRT) and Dr. Bill Eadington have become synonymous, representing innovation, creativity, and excellence. In the great swirl of gaming and gambling related conferences that now span the globe, the ICGRT stands apart as the one gathering that unites us all. The event always brings the latest and greatest developments to the podium, and attracts both the early pioneers and the next generation of thinkers – as well as everyone in between. On a personal level, the conference has always been my favorite networking event, largely due to the diversity of the participants and of course the cutting edge information they possess.

I suppose I could be considered a relative “old timer” in the gaming industry with 19 years of service, 12 of those in the responsible gambling field. Throughout that experience, Dr. Bill Eadington has become one of my most trusted sages when seeking answers to almost anything gambling related. He can inform you of the latest developments on gambling in Siberia (and no, that’s not a euphemism), he knows who

served as the most prominent architect of the responsible gaming programs in South Africa, and he will generously provide you with the best governmental resources in Singapore. In sum, his brain (and his conference) can provide you with almost anything you might want to know about a jurisdiction’s relationship with legalized gambling. Indeed, Bill is the “go-to guy” and the ICGRT is the “go-to conference” when it comes to gaming on a global scale.

To speak to my own work for a moment, Bill’s pragmatic approach to responsible gaming has led to many animated discussions between him and me over the role of the gaming machine manufacturer in designing a “safer” product. I don’t think we ever fully agree on the subject, but I love our exchanges, and I always learn something new. As with any great professor, Bill thinks “out of the box” – and his critical, questioning approach to gaming and to life is one of the reasons that I believe the ICGRT is such a resounding success.

I observed these skills much more closely when I had the privilege of serving with Bill on the Board of Directors of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG). In this setting, Bill’s leadership abilities really shone, and when the NCPG adopted a new strategic plan to entirely reshape the organization’s structure, I quickly nominated Bill to be our first President of the new era – as I was certain there was no one more able to guide the Council through these uncharted waters. Of course he was elected unanimously, and he did not disappoint. Today the NCPG is bigger and better than ever, in great part due to Bill’s dedicated efforts. And it is no coincidence that this same leadership shepherded the ICGRT to its current status, as the most important conference of its kind in the world.

As we engage in the brave new world of interactive and social gaming, I look forward to the 15th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking, and its perspectives from the best and brightest. This event mirrors the ever curious and engaging mind of Dr. Bill Eadington. He is brilliant, articulate, engaging and one of the hardest working people I have ever met. I cannot wait to hear his thoughts on how the new forms of gambling

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will impact our industry, our society, our economies, and our ever evolving global gaming culture.

Connie Jones
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