

It was through my good friend Andrew MacDonald that I got introduced to Bill Eadington, who promptly invited me to submit an abstract for the 12th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking to be held in Vancouver in 2003. Up until then, I had known Professor Eadington by reputation only. At first, I thought, “Why should I submit a paper to this conference? For sure, all participants will be talking about the ills associated with gambling and how to rid ourselves of this plague!” Let me clarify... While I have always believed that problem and responsible gambling constitute important research areas, my interests at that time were squarely aligned with casino marketing and with the mathematics underlying various casino games. Now, a decade later, I am actively involved in studying problem and pathological gambling. But I digress.

*For gambling buffs like me, the Gambling and Risk Taking Conference has always offered a smorgasbord of juicy ideas laid out with logic and flair, open to discussion and dissection, always on the cutting edge of gambling research. You can never tell what friendly faces you will encounter at the conference lunches or what lifelong associations you will make, or what directions your own research might take after your ideas are vetted and guided by luminaries at the Conference.*

For sure, there was a lot of erudite discussion on problem gambling at the Vancouver Conference, but I also got to meet industry giants and practitioners like Phil Satre, Chairman of the Board of Harrah’s Entertainment, and Olaf Vancura, Bob Hannum and Hal Marcus, all gifted mathematicians whose work and ability I greatly admired. Based on Bob Hannum’s presentation, he and I subsequently co-authored a paper on the mathematics and management of dead chip programs.

The best outcome from this Conference for me was to get to know Bill Eadington personally, a relationship that I have treasured for over a decade. What Bill has done for the gaming industry from all perspectives is truly prodigious, and the First National (later International) Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking in 1974 was but one, albeit very important facet of his enormous contribution.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man.” Nowhere is this truer than in the institution of the Gambling and Risk Taking Conference and Bill Eadington. The Conference is without exception a star-studded gathering of distinguished scholars investigating the multifaceted phenomenon of gambling from diverse yet equally powerful lenses—public policy, addiction, treatment, social impact, business prospects, underlying mathematics, etiology, and economic development—to name but a few. Bill is one academic who has

conducted high quality research in most, if not all areas associated with gambling. Several papers incubated at the past fourteen conferences have since metamorphosed as landmark articles in respected journals or as highly cited pieces in books that Bill Eadington and Judy Cornelius subsequently edited.

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offers a never-ending array of surprises.

To me, what creates the magic and the stimulation of the Gambling and Risk Taking Conference is the enormous enthusiasm of Bill Eadington. Having seen him in action—create and perform different roles—is to see unbounded enthusiasm in motion. Be it the Gambling and Risk Taking Conference or the Executive Development Program for Senior Gaming Executives, Bill contributes wholeheartedly, pouring his passion and his enthusiasm to create a heady cocktail of knowledge potent enough to satisfy that contagious thirst for curiosity. To return to Emerson and to paraphrase him, Bill's enthusiasm is the leaping lightning, not to be measured by the horse-power of understanding.

I, like most of my fellow scholars, look forward to the 2013 International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking. And thank you, Bill, for making it all happen.

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