

So, just how is it one describes the eminent and distinguished Dr. Bill Eadington – admired academic; acclaimed author; accomplished, astute, adroit, brilliant, champion, discerning, expert, engaged and enlightened, a veritable icon? The answer, quite simply, is “yes.”

From the time Bill developed the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming in 1989 and for 15 years before, when in 1974, he organized the International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking, Bill has been the go-to guy for the media and anyone else interested in the past, present or future economic perspectives of the commercial gaming industry.

The International Conference has not only been truly “International,” having heard research from New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, United Kingdom, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and many other locations in Europe, Peking and other parts of the Pacific Rim, but has also been host to among the most esteemed and celebrated personages in the problem gambling field. The list of presenters is, at once, legion and legendary and includes Drs. Robert Ladouceur and Jeff Derevensky of Canada, Dr. Alex Blaszczynski of Australia; Dr. Gerhard Meyer of Germany and our country’s Drs. Rachel Volberg, Durand Jacobs, Henry Lesieur, Howard Shaffer, and Mr. I Nelson

Rose, to name just a few. Many trend setting and field shaping ideas have had their seminal consideration at this Conference and persons from the gaming industry have included unrivalled leaders in responsible gaming, like Phil Satre and Gary Loveman. The legacy of those no longer with us also lingers with the memories of the late Drs. Rena Nora and Julian Taber. And, as if that were not sufficient, many persons prominent in the field today received their career enhancing inaugural exposure at The International Conference, including the editor of this volume, Dr. Bo Bernhard. Dr. Bill Eadington is so closely identified with this meeting that it is often referred to simply as “Bill’s Conference.” Only held triennially, some say that it is so good it takes three years to get ready for it!

My acquaintance with and appreciation for Bill came at an entirely different level, however. Whereas it is true that responsible gaming and problem gambling have an economic facet, there is much, much more to it than that.

I came really to know Bill when he was President of the National Council on Problem Gambling. I served as his Vice President and was at once inspired and moved by his commitment and leadership. But most of all I was touched by what I saw to be compassion and a real heart for problem gamblers and their families. Bill neither ignored, violated nor circumvented Council policy, he was much too organized and efficient a leader for that, but he brought a fresh new perspective, a contemporary and energetic motivation to help those folks who had a problem with gambling, which was both timely and efficacious. It even included serious initiatives to bring about awareness and legislation at the federal level, recognizing problem gambling as a major public health problem. Much has been accomplished since, as a result of his direction and inspiration.

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In the fashion of a true champion of his field, Dr. Eadington continues to work with other agencies both within and without the University of Nevada System, for the good of others by co-developing programs and establishing new ones. He is, truly, our icon and our champion.

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