

I have known Bill Eadington for about thirty years. His scholarly work and teaching activities first came to my attention because, unlike much of the emotional scholarship that sheds more heat than light, Bill's work was considerate, honest, and very smart. It should be no surprise then to learn that the man behind the scholarship provided the guidance for educational activities that also have been thoughtful, collegial, supportive, and collaborative. Bill's contributions to the field are many; it is difficult to work in the area of gambling studies and be unaware of Bill's considerable contributions. What might not be as well-known, however, is that his contributions – especially the *International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking* – have been a special kind of scholarly glue that holds together a foundation upon which a youthful, energetic and growing field rests.

The International Conference is a place that brings the field together; it offers a place for experienced workers to meet and consider the intellectual, practical, and methodological issues that challenge our collective understanding of gambling.

As if that were not sufficiently important, the International Conference provides the setting that plants and nourishes collaborations between senior and young scholars.

Bill and I first met during 1988 at a Harvard University colloquium that brought together the leading thinkers, researchers, and clinicians for a “think tank” about compulsive gambling. In the midst of pioneers, Bill's contributions were enormous and his influence helped to bring together workers of every stripe who were interested in gambling-related problems. Soon after our colloquium, Bill became the first visiting professor at the Norman E. Zinberg Center for Addiction Studies at Harvard Medical School's Cambridge Hospital. He brought his teaching and educational resources to Harvard's Kennedy School. His passion for education and networking were evident and allowed me to gain a unique insight into his commitment and dedication to the *International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking*.

Throughout our relationship, I have admired Bill's wisdom for understanding the areas that he could influence, those he could not, and for always being aware of the difference. His ability to bring people together in a thoughtful way to serve the greater good has been remarkable. The *International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking* is but one of the many fruits of his labor. This conference represents one of the most important settings for international stakeholders to come together to work on important issues related to gambling and gambling-related problems. During his stewarding of this conference, Bill and his colleagues were very smart to recognize that gambling and problem gambling are not the same. Consequently, they provided faculty and participants with the opportunity to learn about the full range of issues

associated with gambling activities. As a result, this conference is one of the educational and networking staples of the field of gambling studies; in many ways, it defines gambling studies.

Convening conferences is no easy task. Nevertheless, Bill has remained steadfastly dedicated to the cause; he has demonstrated the special characteristics of a leader that could bring people together for the greater good. Now, the *International Conference* is a place that brings the field together; it offers a place for experienced workers to meet and consider the intellectual, practical, and methodological issues that challenge our

collective understanding of gambling. As if that were not sufficiently important, the *International Conference* provides the setting that plants and nourishes collaborations between senior and young scholars; ultimately, it provides a place where the field can exchange ideas, challenge old models, and give birth to new ideas that will flourish and shape the direction of gambling studies.

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