

When I started working in the gambling studies field in 1985 (not that the field had a formal title, yet), Bill Eadington's international conference was one of only a few intellectual gatherings focused on the topic of gambling that were held anywhere in the world. I first attended the International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking in 1987 when it was held at Bally's Grand Hotel and Casino in Reno, Nevada. The conference was already large, well-known and well-attended, but I received personal help from Bill in organizing a session titled "Commercial Gaming and Problem Gambling: Opening the Dialogue" that brought together John Rosecrance, Nelson Rose,

Marvin Steinberg and Shannon Bybee. The session sought to foster communication between researchers, treatment professionals, and the gaming industry and to explore how research could contribute to a rational and balanced policy debate.

I still have the program from that conference and it is an experience to read through it and recognize a pantheon of names; I met more gambling researchers at that conference than I had met in the entire two years I had spent in the field by then. The conference took place over four days and was organized into four tracks, including Business and Economic Issues, Public Policy and Social Science Issues, Math and Quantitative Analysis, and Pathological Gambling Issues. Many of the papers from the conference were published the following year in a large volume titled *Gambling Research* that still sits on my shelf.

I attended all but one of the International Conferences since that first one in 1987; in 1990 in London; in 1994 in Las Vegas; in 1997 in Montreal; in 2000 in Las Vegas; and in 2006 and 2009 at Lake Tahoe. I missed the 2003 conference in Vancouver, unfortunately, but heard that it was as stimulating and enjoyable as all the others.

Some of my favorite memories of the International Conference come not from the conference presentations – although I still have copious notes from every session that I attended – but from interactions with colleagues and friends that lent color and flavor to the sometimes bland hotel corridors and rooms where we gathered. In London in 1990, Bill introduced me to José Guirao who was then head of Casinos Catalunya and the two of them persuaded me to take a train from Paris, where I had planned to stop on my way home, to Barcelona where I spent several days being pampered by Señor Guirao and his staff. In 1997, I brought my two-year-old daughter, Calyx, on the last trip that she was

eligible to take on my lap (no airfare required) to Montreal, along with my husband and mother to act as babysitters. I wasn't surprised to be upstaged by my daughter but was utterly astounded when my mother befriended Robert Ladouceur and Alex Blaszczynski and went off with them for an evening! And who could forget 2006 at Lake Tahoe when six inches of snow fell on the last day of the conference and utterly confounded Max Abbott, who thought he had come well-prepared (with a coat but without boots or hat)

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for a summer week in Nevada.

As others will surely agree, the International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking has been an incubator of relationships as well as a showcase for intellectual advances in the now well-established field of gambling studies. Bill, Judy and all of their staff who worked so hard to make these conferences happen deserve our appreciation for creating an important early foundation for a field that was taking baby steps when they began but will undoubtedly continue to grow, diversify and prosper in the years to come. Let's hear it for all of the future International Conferences on Gambling and Risk Taking!

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