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The International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking was the first prominent academic event to feature presentations on problem gambling. Dr. Bill Eadington's decision to accept papers about "the downside" was seen as quite noteworthy at the time. But it was very much in line with his longtime interest in gambling addiction as a real and consequential externality of gaming. In fact, Bill has been one of the most persistent and effective advocates for responsible gaming in the field. He served on the National Council on Problem Gambling Board of Directors for 30 years and helped found the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling. But it was his work as the leading gambling economist, his reputation for objectivity and dispassionate analysis, and his deep understanding of and relationships with gaming industry that made him so quietly effective.

Over the years, government regulators and gaming companies have given great heed to his counsel on the need for measures to mitigate the social costs of gambling. Indeed, for many in the gaming industry their first exposure to responsible gaming may have through Bill's conferences and courses. Bill, and Judy Cornelius, a significant contributor to the success of the conference in her own right, nurtured and introduced many problem gambling researchers to the broader gambling studies field – and vice versa, improving both in the process. The conference began and remains as THE place the gambling field comes together. No other event brings such a broad array of stakeholders. The atmosphere is egalitarian and convivial, a tone set by Bill. In spite of, or now perhaps because of the global reach of gaming, the International Conference serves as a reunion for those of us who have been working in this field. Every three years we approach it with a sense of anticipation. We appreciate the opportunity to come together to see old friends and to make new ones; to hear the latest research and developments. But most importantly we come to learn from and honor the unquestioned Dean of the gambling studies field. No one has done more to legitimize the study of gambling, and of problem gambling.

Keith Whyte
Executive Director
National Council on Problem Gambling