

THE ORAL HISTORY OF A.J. “BUD” HICKS

A.J. “Bud” Hicks is known to be one of Nevada’s most experienced gaming law practitioners. He formerly served as the Chief Deputy Attorney General, representing the Nevada Gaming Control Board and the Nevada Gaming Commission. Today, Hicks continues to practice gaming law, working with clients that include publicly traded gaming companies, lenders of gaming operators, and others who seek to enter the gaming industry.

I. HISTORY OF PRACTICE

Will you give a brief history of your practice, and how you got into gaming law?

My current practice is primarily focused on the gaming industry. I typically represent gaming companies and people owning or seeking to acquire gaming companies or to expand gaming operations. My practice therefore includes representation of principals in gaming businesses, including boards of directors and officers of gaming companies. I also represent a number of financial institutions that loan money to gaming operators. For example, if I don’t represent the property, I may represent the investment banker or the consortium of banks that are loaning money to it. That’s typically what I do. I help them get licenses and approvals, and I help them avoid problems with the gaming regulators. When they get in trouble with the regulators, I help them correct their problems and address the relevant issues. I do a lot of compliance work for gaming operators — compliance being compliance with gaming laws, regulations and requirements. I currently serve on the gaming compliance committees for three different publicly traded entities that have gaming operations in Nevada, or significant investments in licensed Nevada gaming companies.

How I got into this practice explains what I’m doing now. In college, I studied accounting and finance, and after a bit of army time, I graduated from law school in 1972, and came back to Reno and took a job in the Washoe County District Attorney’s Office. Both my wife and I grew up in Reno, and our families lived in Reno. I had clerked for Washoe County District Attorney Bill Raggio while I was in law school and my older brother, Larry, worked in

the district attorney's office so I asked whether they had any openings. That led to me being hired as a criminal trial deputy. In 1973, my brother told me that he was going to run for district attorney when the current district attorney left office in 1974. I realized that if he was elected, it would be awkward for me to continue on in the district attorney's office. So, I started looking for another job and, just coincidentally, I had prosecuted several gambling cheating cases at the time because nobody else in the office wanted them, and I was the junior guy. The cases got some press coverage and, lo and behold, it also turned out the attorney general at the time, Robert List, needed to hire a full-time deputy for his gaming division. I was asked to come down to the attorney general's office to interview for the job and he hired me on the spot. Actually, the proposed job was very attractive to me because my father and mother owned and operated the Holiday Hotel and Casino in Reno during the 1960s. The Holiday is now the Renaissance, and at one point it became the Siena, but in its early days it was the Holiday Hotel. The gaming business put me and my brother through college and law school. I therefore had some exposure to gaming after graduating from law school and I think that was attractive to attorney general List because I knew something about the gambling business.

I then started at the Attorney General's Gaming Division serving as counsel to the Gaming Control Board and the Nevada Gaming Commission. I attended my first Gaming Control Board and Gaming Commission meetings in January 1974. I was with Attorney General Bob List through the end of his term as attorney general, and I left the office in January 1979. During that period of time, I became the Chief Deputy Attorney General for the Gaming Division, and represented the Gaming Control Board and Gaming Commission in many, many ways — on regulatory matters, enforcement matters, in litigation when they got sued, and with fellow Deputy Attorney General Mike Sloan, I handled their legislative packages during those years. Also, thanks to my experience as a prosecutor and my background in accounting and finance, I also worked on several of the Gaming Control Board's heavy-duty casino investigations that related to organized crime matters. I never intended to be a full-time state employee, but I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Gaming Control Board and the Gaming Commission. The experience was invaluable. When I left in 1979, I was offered a job at the McDonald Carano law firm and have been here ever since. I was the seventh lawyer in the firm, and now it has over fifty lawyers.

Was there a defining point in which you decided you wanted to practice gaming law?

Well, a lot of things were going on in the gaming industry when I started working at the attorney general's office. Gaming in Nevada was going through a really amazing transition at that time. My time at the Attorney General's Gaming Division afforded me a great opportunity to participate in an industry

at a time when it was exploding — not only in the state, but nationally and internationally. I always say I was in the right spot at the right time. But I must admit, I recognized that this was a real opportunity to build an interesting and lucrative law practice. There were not many lawyers in the state that did gaming law on a consistent basis at that time, and they were typically the grey-haired, senior partners at the law firms, primarily led by Grant Sawyer who had been the governor when I was in school. Along with Governor Sawyer, the big names in gaming practice at the time were: Tom Bell, Herb Jones, Bob McDonald, and Don Carano. All of these men were great lawyers, and they also understood the political side of the gaming industry. They were all deeply involved in the politics, business, and legal communities of Nevada, and I thought well, that's a pretty good way to go if I can do it.

II. A CHANGING INDUSTRY

Would you comment a little bit more about that huge transition you saw — what was the industry like before then?

I'm a historian by nature, and having been around the business for years I have seen quite a lot of changes. Let's see, I must have been twelve years old when my dad went into the business at the Holiday Hotel. He was a real estate developer and not a gambler by trade, but he saw a business opportunity in gambling. At the time he bought into the Holiday Hotel, it was one of the nicest hotels in Northern Nevada. During the ten years or so that my parents operated the Holiday, I saw what my mom and dad went through owning and operating a casino and hotel. Back in those days the slot machines were single-coin, three-reel, mechanical slots. Newer, electro-mechanical machines were replacing the older mechanical machines during this time. By the time I got down to the Gaming Control Board in the 1970s, the industry was moving into the new multi-coin and video poker machines that were based on the very early computer technology of the time. The newer, multi-coin machines were really an improvement for operators because they greatly increased slot handle.

Since that time, the equipment used on casino floors has gone from the old, one-armed bandits to the computer-driven systems that we have today that are just phenomenal. And no one could have told you back then that's where we'd be today. Computers were just coming in at that time and the Internet was totally unknown. The growth of technology used by the gaming industry is perhaps the biggest contributor to changes in the industry over the years. Another big thing is the growth and development of the gaming industry itself and the change of its products. It has evolved from gambling halls with \$1 steak and egg breakfasts and \$3 buffets, to an industry offering amazing food variations, top-notch entertainment, and five-star hotel operations.

But, these changes didn't just happen overnight — before the legal gaming industry could evolve into what it is today, it was necessary to clean up the

problems of its past. When I went to work for Attorney General List, I immediately got involved representing the state in the last decade of its clean-up of the mob — getting organized crime out of Nevada’s primary industry. Nevada’s problems with the mob had started earlier, but the State had recognized the problem in the late fifties and sixties, and Governors Russell, Sawyer, and Laxalt had all greatly moved the ball forward to establish real gaming control in the state. Starting with Governor Russell, they created the Gaming Control Board, moved licensing authority from the Tax Commission to the Gaming Commission, and put in place laws that strengthened the state’s authority over gaming matters. Equally important, they put in strict suitability requirements for gaming operators and required implementation of licensing requirements designed to weed out and keep out unsuitable persons. Governor Mike O’Callaghan, Nevada’s governor during the time I worked for Attorney General List, was a tough Irishman who had little patience with the mob guys and their activities. His Gaming Control Board and Commission members were also very tough, talented, and focused on cleaning up the industry.

As I mentioned, I’m a historian by nature and saw parts of it up close and personal, so I have a pretty good understanding of the story. The state had tremendous pressure put on it by the federal government to get the mob out and, at one time, it was even believed that the Feds were considering making casino gambling illegal on a nation-wide basis because of the mob’s involvement in it. The mobs were very firmly entrenched in Southern Nevada, and their activities had clearly gotten the attention of the federal government. The mobs were not a unified organization. Instead, they were an odd assortment of criminal gangs from St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, New York and other big cities that had gained foot-holds in Nevada after the war. All of these people had their own connections and their own interests — I’m sure you’ve seen the movies.

In the late sixties, the state opened the door to allow publicly traded companies to come in, buy, and operate gaming establishments. Before that time, there were some corporations that owned gaming operations, but every stockholder in the corporation had to be licensed — at least since the early sixties. This requirement made it impossible to bring in the big money that publicly traded companies could provide. Some gambling businesses in the early days were owned by partnerships that had “silent partners,” or partners who went through very little scrutiny by the licensing authorities. Only the real rich, like Howard Hughes, or persons who could amalgamate groups of investors through such private business arrangements, could afford to operate the hotel casino properties that were starting to develop in Las Vegas. Howard Hughes bought up a number of the existing properties from the bad guys in the sixties, but that did not totally solve the problem for the state. The state’s leaders finally recognized the value of opening the doors of the legitimate gaming industry to Wall Street and, in the late sixties, finally adopted significant amendments to the Nevada Gaming Control Act to allow public

companies to buy, own, develop and operate gaming establishments in Nevada. When I arrived at the Gaming Control Board and Commission in 1974, the benefit of opening the door to public companies was apparent and the modern gaming industry as we know it today was on its way, but there were still weeds in the garden.

What were some of the problems at the time?

Like I said, the federal government was very active at that time, and the Justice Department had federal strike forces set up across the country whose sole job was to come down hard on organized crime wherever it existed — including Nevada. And it wasn't just organized crime in gambling. It was organized crime in all elements of business across America — public corruption, drugs and everything else that they were doing. Several strike forces worked on matters relevant to Nevada's problems, and they interacted with several of the law enforcement agencies in Nevada including the Gaming Control Board and the Clark County Sheriff's Office. All of these elements were working, maybe not perfectly, together, but they were cooperating in addressing the problems caused by the mob's presence in the state. It was an exciting time to see all of this happening from the inside. To differing degrees, the state's gaming agencies worked with the federal and local law enforcement authorities on these matters.

It was a real eye-opening experience for me. I could never have dreamed what was going on in the state when I first joined the Attorney General's Gaming Division, but it didn't take long before I realized that even though the good guys were on the right track, there were still some very tough battles to be fought. Have you ever seen the movie *Casino* with Robert DeNiro as Ace Rothstein, the casino manager, and Joe Pesci as his friend, the mob enforcer? That movie was inspired by actual events that involved a Strip casino that was essentially controlled by organized crime interests from out-of-state. The lead character, Ace Rothstein, was based on a man by the name of Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal who, earlier in his career working with the mob, had been convicted of bribery of college basketball players to throw national championship basketball games. At the time, it was not unusual that some of the executives working in the industry had prior problems with the law, but if they moved into positions of influence over gaming operations, they were required to comply with the state's gaming laws that had been toughened up over previous years. When Rosenthal was identified as being in a licensable position at the casino, he was ordered by the Nevada Gaming Commission to submit a gaming application to be found suitable for the position he held in the casino operation.

Having no choice but to comply with the Commission's order, Rosenthal reluctantly came forward and filed an application for licensing. He was represented in the licensing process and subsequent litigation by his lawyer, Oscar Goodman. A lengthy investigation was conducted by the Gaming

Control Board and hearings were held on his application by the Control Board and the Commission. At the conclusion of the Commission's hearing on the matter, Rosenthal was found unsuitable for licensing and was turned down. After this occurred, he tried to stay in control of the casino by changing his title from "Casino Manager" to "Entertainment Director" and other titles, but the Gaming Commission saw through his ruse, and insisted he disassociate completely from the casino and that's when the real fight started. Through his counsel, Rosenthal filed a lawsuit in State District Court in Las Vegas that attacked the constitutionality of Nevada's gaming laws. Attorney General Bob List, Deputy Attorney General Mike Sloan, and I represented the Gaming Control Board and the Commission in the litigation that followed. After extensive proceedings, the District Court Judge held that Nevada's gaming licensing laws were unconstitutional and, therefore, unenforceable. We immediately took the case up to the Nevada Supreme Court on behalf of the state.

Mike and I handled all the briefing on the appeal, and prepared our boss, Bob List, to handle the oral arguments scheduled before the Nevada Supreme Court. Oscar and his co-counsel appeared on behalf of Lefty. His co-counsel was a very distinguished grey-haired, senior lawyer by the name of Erwin Griswold. Erwin Griswold was the former Dean of the Harvard Law School, the former Solicitor General of the United States during the Johnson and Nixon presidencies, and past President of the American Bar Association — about as heavy duty as could have been imagined. This gentleman was a spectacular lawyer and did an extraordinary job for his ex-felon client, Lefty Rosenthal. The repartee between Dean Griswold and Supreme Court Justice Gordon Thompson during the arguments was truly amazing and enlightening. And, my boss, Bob List held his own, too.

I'm proud to say that we won the case for the state, and through a unanimous decision, the Justices of the Nevada Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Nevada Gaming Control Act as being validly adopted under the powers reserved to the States by the Tenth Amendment. After losing in the Nevada Supreme Court, Rosenthal's lawyers filed a petition for writ of certiorari with the U.S. Supreme Court seeking reversal of the Nevada Supreme Court's decision. That was about the time I left the attorney general's office, but I was asked by the attorney general to assist as a Special Deputy Attorney General to help with the response to the petition. We were successful in getting Rosenthal's petition turned down by the Supreme Court. Since that time, Nevada's gaming laws have been copied and built upon by virtually every other State in the United States as the base for their gaming regulatory systems. Of course, the movie doesn't mention any of this. We had a number of other significant administrative and litigated cases during this time that established rules and procedures that are still followed to this day, but the Rosenthal decision stands as a precedent for the state's authority to control and regulate gaming activities of all kinds.

That's my story of what happened in the seventies. In fact, I've written a book about it with my co-author who is also a lawyer and a former law partner, Kaaran Thomas. Actually, it's two books — it started out as a single book but it was too big of a story. The books are fiction, but the stories were inspired by real events and by real persons. The first one is called *Fortune's Trail*, and the second book is called *The Count Room*. *The Count Room* is based on the multi-million dollar slots skim at the casino that occurred when Rosenthal was in charge of the casino. The stories told in *Fortune's Trail* lead up to the story of the slots skim, and were inspired by experiences of some of the people who helped build the gaming industry in Nevada after World War II. Through my time in the state, and in representing people in the industry over the last forty years, I have learned that the people who really built the industry into what it is today were not the gangsters, but were real people who worked hard, took chances, assembled loyal teams, and built meaningful and lasting businesses. Many of the characters in the two books are based on the lives and stories of various friends and clients, politicians and regulators I've known, and other lawyers and professionals I have worked with.

III. INSIGHTS ON THE GAMING REGULATORY SYSTEM

You mentioned the cooperation between law enforcement and the regulatory agencies — between the FBI and the locals — have you noticed an improvement in that cooperation?

Yes, very much so. In the seventies, there was a lot of distrust between the agencies, but they had to work together. So, it was basically done on a man-to-man basis as trust was earned. Everyone knew they all had a common goal, but they were coming at it in different ways. Nevada from the licensing and control side, the Feds from the federal, criminal side, and then the local law enforcement guys, too, because they didn't like people getting killed, and the other stuff that the mob guys do wherever they're found.

As a result of these efforts, the industry changed for the better. As the public companies came in, information about the business and the profitability of the business went out to the financial world that Nevada and the gaming industry were safe and profitable places to invest. The financial world and other states saw the golden goose that Nevada had developed. They saw that this was a profitable and legitimate business when controlled properly. Once the financial community accepted gaming as a legitimate industry, the other states that had long castigated Nevada for its gambling operations saw the revenue potential of the legal gaming market and jumped in.

New Jersey was the first one that did it. If you happened to watch *Boardwalk Empire* on T.V., you saw that New Jersey had all sorts of illegal gambling and booze operations going on in the early part of the last century. Once they cleaned up these businesses following the repeal of prohibition,

Atlantic City was left to decay. When the New Jersey politicians finally realized that those cowboys out in Nevada had built a real, honest, and legitimate industry out of what earlier made Atlantic City profitable, they jumped in. The New Jersey legislators took a lot from Nevada in framing up their legislation and improved on the system as they saw necessary. Our office and the Nevada Gaming Control Board's representatives assisted the New Jersey politicians and legislators by providing advice and assistance as to what worked and what didn't, and New Jersey finally adopted its initial set of gaming laws in 1978. The expansion of legal gaming to the East Coast really put the gaming industry on Wall Street's radar and got the attention of a lot of people with the money and skills necessary to build and operate hotel casino resorts — including a certain real estate developer from New York named Trump.

Based on their own experiences with the people and companies in the lawful gaming industry as legal gaming came into their jurisdictions, local and state law enforcement agencies have overcome old stereotypes of Nevada's gaming industry and the people who are part of it. From that has come the spread of the legal gaming industry across the United States into virtually every state in one form or another — except in Hawaii and Utah. This has opened huge opportunities for gaming operators. Today, Nevada's most successful gaming operators are those that have diversified their gaming businesses across the United States and, in some cases, outside of the country. Additionally, the practice of gaming law is no longer reserved to a few lawyers in a single state — there are now thousands of lawyers involved in the gaming industry across the country, working for regulatory authorities, in big national law firms, in the industry as in-house counsel, and working at top levels of management of the gaming companies.

I'm proud to have played a small part in all of this — like I said, I was in the right place at the right time!

IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND REGULATION

You've written an article that's fairly similar to what we've just discussed, in regard to cooperation between international agencies — have you seen any movement towards more cooperative regulation?

Yes and no. The realities of the business have forced cooperation between the regulators as the companies that were initially licensed in Nevada have spread out across the United States and internationally. Other states and countries that open the door to legal gambling operations are all protective of their own turf. In the article, I wrote about Internet gaming operators in Europe, it was noted that some of the countries have been reluctant to work together to facilitate pooling of players across international borders. In addition to having a negative impact on gaming like Internet poker that requires a large player pool

to be successful, these home-centric policies inevitably result in multiple layers of governmental regulation and, therefore, additional expenses to the operators. These policies make it very difficult for these businesses to grow, and can, therefore, be counter-productive to the home jurisdiction in terms of job creation and tax generation capabilities. Nevada tried to do this in the seventies when it tried to stop its casino operators from going into other jurisdictions that were then legalizing casino gaming operations, but found it didn't work.

Jurisdictions new to legalized casino gaming have historically been skeptical of Nevada and the gaming industry largely due to movies like *Casino*. I can't really speak to specific interactions between the various jurisdictions' regulatory authorities because I haven't been on the regulatory side since 1979, but I have witnessed the other side of these perceptions on behalf of clients as they have expanded into other states and gone overseas. As new jurisdictions commence regulatory operations and gain experience with the established operators, they generally become more open and respectful towards Nevada's gaming operators and its regulatory system. Over the past twenty years, Nevada's gaming operators and regulators have been really successful in turning these old perceptions around.

The levels of cooperation vary from one jurisdiction to the next but, to their credit, the regulators have formed their own cooperative association, the International Association of Gaming Regulators, and they hold frequent meetings between themselves. Over the years, they have opened the door of cooperation and mutual assistance in many productive ways, and in ways that have made many of the procedures followed by the various jurisdictions more uniform and user-friendly.

What issues or concerns do regulatory authorities have about "their" gaming companies going elsewhere, especially overseas?

There are always concerns regarding tax rates and collections of gambling obligations owed to the casino. For example, the tax rates on gaming operations in some of the other jurisdictions are much higher than Nevada's gross gaming revenue fee. Jurisdictions with higher tax rates are typically concerned that their taxes might be evaded or compromised through improper transactions with an affiliated company in a place like Nevada where the gaming taxes are lower. The problem is exacerbated when the gaming company has gaming operations in foreign countries where auditing standards are different or more difficult to confirm. Another area of concern are problems relating to the issuance of gaming credit. Problems relating to the issuance and collection of gaming credit have always been a concern to domestic regulators when dealing with their licensees that expand overseas.

Also, compliance with requirements of the Bank Secrecy Act and the implementation of appropriate compliance procedures to prevent money laundering is a big issue with the Nevada regulators, especially with gaming

operators that have overseas operations. The federal authorities have levied some big fines against some of the largest gaming operators through settlements of money-laundering complaints. Gaming operators are expected to comply strictly with all laws, so any violation of these provisions has ramifications within every American gaming jurisdiction where the operator may be licensed when they occur.

Another thing that worries gaming regulators here in the U.S. is that they've built these tough regulatory structures in their own jurisdictions, but many are skeptical of regulatory conditions in some foreign jurisdictions where bribery of government officials is reputed to be a problem and where business ethics and accounting procedures aren't up to American standards. Asian gaming operations pose many such issues to American regulators in this regard. You hear stories of the involvement of Asian gangs in some areas of casino operations — sort of like the bad old days in Vegas. I'm not saying that's true, but perceptions count in the gaming industry, and realities — at least bad ones — can be disastrous to otherwise legitimate business operators. Participation in illegal activities in one jurisdiction constitutes grounds for license revocations in other jurisdictions. It's a problem that must be addressed by every American gaming operator that goes into such jurisdictions.

International gaming operations pose all sorts of concerns to domestic gaming regulators. It's a tough job being a gambling regulator today given the spread of the industry and the different systems and laws under which gaming companies now operate. Gaming regulators need to protect their state's interests, the integrity of their own laws and regulatory system, assure that their gaming taxes are being properly accounted for and collected, and that their licensees are following lawful business practices in their overseas gaming operations.

V. OPINIONS ON EMERGING eSPORTS INDUSTRY

What are your opinions on eSports?

Like I was saying earlier when I spoke about slot machines and changes in technology that dramatically affect the gaming industry, eSports is just one of latest technological marvels to hit the gaming industry. A related phenomenon is the fact the typical casino player today is vastly different from casino players of earlier years. While the World War II generation and Baby Boomers bought into the core casino games like blackjack and craps, the subsequent Gen-X'ers and the Millennials have much different perspectives on gaming. ESports clearly represents this change.

Some of the eSports operators claim that eSports are not a form of gambling. Sorry, but I don't buy that and, apparently, neither do Nevada's and many other states' gaming authorities. Money is wagered on an event, the outcome of which is not known — that's gambling. With that said, there is no

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reason why it can't be regulated, licensed, and from any authorizing jurisdiction's perspective, taxed.

Do eSports have any impediments to being authorized by law and licensed as necessary?

Yes — eSports must face a number of issues before being accepted as a licensable form of gambling. One of the biggest obstacles is getting around the federal laws that prohibit interstate forms of gambling. This is currently an issue being addressed by those who want to allow interstate bookmaking on sporting events, and other forms of interstate gambling. The Internet has opened up a whole new world for such activities, and the existing federal statutes addressing such interstate activities pose all sorts of questions that must be answered. If the federal government opens the way for interstate sports wagering, this should solve this problem for the eSports operators.

Another big issue that confronts the eSports industry is assuring fairness in the play of their games. Running a crooked game or one that favors insiders is a quick way to kill your own operation and, in many jurisdictions, an invitation to criminal prosecution. One of Nevada's great strengths is that the state ran all the crossroaders out of the gambling business years ago, and thereby assured the fairness of the games offered to casino patrons. Monitoring of the operations of such games and of the technology that supports them to assure fairness is critical.

The eSports industry should be proactive in figuring out how to set up a functional and credible system of regulatory oversight. This could be done through a state-by-state model, such as the casino gaming industry has today, or possibly through a newer, more unified model. Self-regulation is important for all gaming operators, but it is doubtful this will be sufficient for nation-wide eSports operations. However it is done, a regulatory oversight system must be developed that assures the integrity of the games offered and the financial viability and suitability of the operators conducting such activities so that winners are guaranteed payment of their winning wagers.

Another challenge these operators need to address relates to taxes. States and possibly the federal government will be looking for tax revenues from this industry, so this inevitability must be addressed. Obviously, the operators of these systems should have input into this issue before it is decided for them.

As a practitioner, what kinds of challenges do you see arising out of eSports in terms of challenges for you and your practice?

I don't see challenges to me or my practice, but I do see opportunities. Based on the opinion I just stated about this business, I believe any of the current eSports operators who are trying to get state courts to hold that eSports

are not a form of gambling are wasting their money. Lawyers and, in particular, those with expertise in gaming law matters and operations, will obviously be in demand if this new part of the gaming industry is prepared to address the challenges I've previously identified. Knowledgeable lawyers will be needed and, I am sure are already being used, to lobby state and federal legislative bodies to address the legal questions needed to be resolved in order to create the structures through which such business activities can lawfully operate and thrive. Similarly, it is not too early to give serious thought and resources to coming up with a credible regulatory oversight system that can address the honesty and financial viability of the industry. Part of this will undoubtedly be a system that assures that unsuitable persons are not involved in such operations or benefit from the profits of such businesses, much like the requirements of Nevada and the other states for persons involved in the casino gaming industry.

Once these questions are addressed and regulatory systems are set up, the eSports industry will have a continuous need for lawyers having expertise in licensing and compliance to help guide them through the initial licensing process and to keep them within the boundaries of lawful operations. A big part of this will involve the engagement of lawyers who can help with setting up and implementing self-compliance systems for these operations.

VI. FINAL THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE

The gaming industry has been a great place to work for me for over forty years. I've been fortunate because I came into the gaming business when it was growing in size, scope, and sophistication. Since then, I've had the good fortune to be associated with some really great people in the business. For example, I've represented Bill Boyd and his company for many years. Boyd Gaming is now one of the biggest gaming operators in the United States. I've also had the privilege of working with my former law partner, Don Carano, and his family since leaving employment with the State in 1979. Starting with a single hotel casino in Reno in 1973, Don and his family developed and now control Eldorado Resorts, a publicly traded company that has twenty casinos in ten different states. Bill Boyd and Don Carano were both lawyers in their early careers, and both are among the most respected men in the gaming industry. They have been friends and mentors to me for many years. I've also had the pleasure of working with many dedicated men and women who have served as gaming regulators in Nevada or other states who I have greatly admired for the quality of their work and their service to the gaming industry. I've had many really great clients, ranging from single location bar operators out in rural Nevada, to people serving as officers, directors and owners of some of America's most respected gaming companies. For a boy from Reno, it has been quite a ride.