THE ORAL HISTORY OF SANDRA DOUGLASS MORGAN*

Sandra Douglass Morgan has held a series of notable roles throughout her career. She started as a defense attorney before becoming a litigation attorney at MGM Mirage from 2005 to 2008. In 2008, she served as the city attorney for North Las Vegas, a position she held until 2016. From 2016 to 2019, she worked as the director of external affairs for AT&T Services. Subsequently, she served on the Nevada State Athletic Commission, the Nevada Gaming Commission, and eventually became chair of the Nevada Gaming Control Board. Furthermore, she was named vice chair of Las Vegas’ host committee for Super Bowl LVIII in December 2021. Most recently, in July 2022, she shattered barriers by being appointed as the President of the Las Vegas Raiders, making her the first black female team president in the National Football League and the third woman and third African-American to hold such a position in NFL history, opening the door for other exceptional individuals of diverse backgrounds to aspire to similar prestigious roles.

_Diving right in, for people not familiar with yourself and your career, can you provide us with some background on who you are, your career history, and how it relates to gaming law?_

My name is Sandra Douglass Morgan, and I’ve been practicing law for roughly twenty years. I graduated UNLV Law in 2003 and passed the bar that year. I began my legal career in private practice and later joined MGM Mirage as an in-house litigation attorney shortly after its merger with Mandalay Bay.¹ As a young lawyer at a large gaming company, I learned the importance of understanding a gaming company’s operations when defending it in various legal proceedings.

* Our sincerest thanks for Mrs. Douglass Morgan for taking the time to speak with us in the middle of the NFL season, and for her team for making this interview happen. This interview was led by Lead Articles Editor Charles Cahillane and was conducted alongside Managing Editor Brianna Dougherty. Articles Editors Feliz Arana, Nathan Grubin, and Kathryn Hayes along with Editor-in-Chief Emily Espinosa helped draft questions for and research this Oral History. Business Editor Sam Vanillo provided edits. This was truly a team effort for the UNLV Gaming Law Journal.

matters. Understanding a company’s business operations, including supply chain, procurement processes, security and operational policies and procedures is important when addressing legal issues such as breach of contract, slip and fall incidents, personal injury claims, or product liability matters. I was there for about three years, and it was a wonderful, eye-opening experience and helped me understand corporate culture early on in my career.

Afterward, I moved on to the City of North Las Vegas where I ultimately became the city attorney. I worked with the mayor, city council, and various city departments, including police, fire, public works, utilities, and parks and recreation.

I then moved on to AT&T, where my focus shifted to telecommunications, and it was around the time of its merger with Time Warner. 2 My responsibilities expanded to include matters related to Internet of Things technologies, 3 smart cities, 4 and content and communicating the company’s positions on those issues to business and government stakeholders.

During my time at AT&T working in their external affairs department, I unexpectedly had the opportunity to serve on the Nevada State Athletic Commission. This was my first role as a regulator, 5 and it was a part-time role. The athletic commission met monthly, and it was the first time I focused on understanding what the role of a regulator is—to enact regulation, policies, and

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3 The term “Internet of Things” refers to the collective network of connected devices and the technology that facilitates communication between devices and the cloud, as well as between the devices themselves. *What is IoT? (Internet of Things)?*, AMAZON, https://aws.amazon.com/what-is/iot/#:~:text=The%20term%20IoT%2C%20or%20Internet,as%20between%20the %20devices%20themselves (last visited Nov. 22, 2023).


make sure that Nevada’s booming, boxing and MMA industry that has thrived in Las Vegas\(^6\) would continue to do so.

However, my tenure with the Nevada State Athletic Commission was relatively brief, as I was appointed to the Nevada Gaming Commission by Governor Sandoval in 2018. This was a dream come true for me, allowing me to play a significant role in regulating Nevada’s gaming industry. In Nevada, we have a two-pronged regulatory system with the Nevada State Gaming Control Board and the Nevada Gaming Commission. In disciplinary matters, the Board acts as the prosecutor, investigating and presenting cases against individuals or companies facing allegations in the gaming industry. The Commission, on the other hand, serves as both judge and jury, making final decisions regarding guilt, innocence, and appropriate sanctions.

I served as a commissioner while maintaining my full-time role at AT&T. This period coincided with significant changes in the gaming industry, including the licensing of private investment companies and the repeal of PASPA,\(^7\) which reshaped the sports betting landscape. There was also growth in well-established gaming companies partnering with data companies and international sports betting operators that have been operating in other jurisdictions outside the United States. So, it was really a changing time for the gaming industry in 2018 and 2019.

In January 2019, Governor Sisolak appointed me as the chair of the Nevada Gaming Control Board. This role required my full dedication and no other outside employment, so I had to resign from my position at AT&T. The Chair of the Nevada Gaming Control Board also serves as Executive Director, and I oversaw 400 employees across five cities in Nevada and was responsible for regulating various aspects of the gaming industry, including investigations, audits, tax & licensing, enforcement, and technology. My time as chair aligned with a transformative period in the industry marked by evolving partnerships, joint ventures, and the integration of sports betting.

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\(^7\) The Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA), a 1992 federal law, restricted all but a handful of states from legalizing sports gambling. 28 U.S.C. §§ 3701–3704 (2006). However, the Supreme Court held that PASPA violated the anticommandeering principle by a 7–2 vote, and declared the entire law unconstitutional by a 6–3 vote. Murphy v. NCAA, 138 S.Ct. 1461 (2018).
Your career has been an incredible story, spanning from MGM to AT&T and your appointments by both Governor Sandoval and Governor Sisolak to the Gaming Commission and later the Gaming Control Board. Can you share some personal stories, challenges you faced, and pivotal moments, particularly during your time on the Gaming Commission, that you consider significant in your career?

Coming onto the Commission, there were some high-profile matters involving Wynn Resorts, consideration of regulations involving harassment and discrimination, and an overall policy discussion of the Board’s role in preserving public confidence and trust in the gaming industry. Although we knew there was an investigation, as commissioners, we weren’t conducting it ourselves; we were responsible for reviewing the Board’s investigation and recommendations, and ultimately considering a settlement if one was reached between the Board and the gaming licensee. This raised a lot of questions at the time.

I also want to mention sports wagering. Back then, sports betting revenue accounted for about 3% of the total gaming revenue, which was relatively small. However, sports betting was getting a lot of attention because legislation was quickly being introduced in states across the country. In Nevada, we saw sports wagering as more of an amenity, given its relatively small share of revenue compared to other gaming activities. I think people were saying, “Why isn’t Nevada paying more attention to it?” Well, we had been offering sports betting for a long time, and we had confidence in how our sportsbooks and licensees handled integrity concerns. We know the Nevada gaming industry had a longer and experienced record in this regard.

During the pandemic, we faced the challenge of interpreting the governor’s executive orders and enforcing them. We had to establish policies that had real consequences for the industry, something we could cite and hold licensees accountable for. That was a dark time for our state and for the nation—having to regulate the gaming industry during unforeseen circumstances—but it was definitely a defining moment.

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8 In 2019, Wynn Resorts was assessed a $20 million fine by the Nevada Gaming Commission to settle a 10-count complaint that detailed years of failure by former company executives to “report and/or investigate” numerous allegations of sexual assault, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct by former CEO Steve Wynn. Howard Stutz, *Nevada Gaming Commission Fines Wynn Resorts a Record 20 Million to Settle a 10-Count Complaint*, CDC GAMING REP. (Feb. 27, 2019, 5:01 AM), https://cdcgaming.com/nevada-gaming-commission-fines-wynn-resorts-a-record-20-million-to-settle-a-10-count-complaint/.

9 On March 12, 2020, Governor Sisolak issued a Declaration of Emergency requiring the closures of all non-essential businesses. Nev. Exec. Order No. 2023-001, § 3.
Absolutely. Going off of that you’re the inaugural black city attorney in Nevada in North Las Vegas and your role has undoubtedly had a major impact on the community here. Can you discuss how that shaped how you conducted your role as the attorney in Nevada and any challenges you’ve encountered in that respect?

There’s definitely added pressure and increased exposure when you’re the first to hold a position. But I tried not to really focus on that, and I’ve shared especially in my new role, being the first isn’t something that necessarily should be celebrated. What should be celebrated is making sure you’re not the last. It’s important to make sure that these opportunities are opening doors for people of all different backgrounds to have the opportunity to hold these esteemed positions. It’s an incredible privilege and an honor, but I believe being the first isn’t necessarily something to be celebrated. I think it should be celebrated when you’re not the last—when there is a second, a third, and reaching a point where people are no longer the first.

Now, when it comes to the job itself, I don’t let this affect my approach. I’ve always enjoyed being part of teams and value working in a team environment. I love sports, and I loved the team at the gaming control board. Despite the many different divisions and various roles, there was a general desire to collaborate to maintain Nevada’s gold standard with respect to commercial casino gaming. I don’t think about being the first when I’m coming to work. I just want to make sure that everyone understands they are part of a larger team and share a common goal that is our primary focus.

Sure, when I joined, there was an effort to address sexual harassment and gender discrimination issues within the gaming industry. Unfortunately, there hasn’t been much progress regarding the Commission’s approval of regulations in this regard. To pass a regulation, we needed three out of five votes from the Commission, and during my tenure as Gaming Control Board Chair, there appeared to be no clear path forward for a previously drafted regulation. When I first started, I had a lot of conversations with people within the Gaming Control Board and in the gaming industry and heard a combination of concerns and frustration.

The complaints ranged from transgender individuals facing challenges in accessing certain facilities to concerned employees who wore traditional religious attire and experienced negative comments hurled at them. Obviously, these were serious issues. Additionally, we were aware of historical racial discrimination problems, exemplified by a consent decree from the 1970s related to the intentional non-hiring of people of color. Employees should not be

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10 In signing the consent decree, hotels and unions agreed that 12% of all jobs within the resorts industry would go to blacks. Documenting the African American Experience in Las Vegas: 1971 Consent Decree, UNLV UNIV. LIBR., https://special.library.unlv.edu/aae/consent%20decree (last visited Nov. 14, 2023). See also Consent Decree, Civil Action LV1645 (1971).
subject to this type of behavior and if they are, they should be protected, not only
from employee to employee but guest from employee. That’s why I decided to
introduce a regulation specifically addressing discrimination and harassment.11

I know that some people have said, “Oh, that’s already in state law.”12 A lot of things are in state law, but that doesn’t mean people comply with it. However, having a Gaming Commission regulation in place carries significant weight. In disciplinary matters, we can cite both state and federal laws, and there’s also a regulation stating unequivocally that compliance with state and federal law is mandatory. However, having a clear Gaming Commission regulation strengthens our enforcement toolkit. It provides yet another basis for potential actions, including suspension or revocation of gaming licenses and imposing fines for non-compliance.

This wasn’t without its challenges, especially because when people think of the gaming industry, they often associate it with the Las Vegas Strip. However, gaming licenses aren’t limited to the Strip; they extend to various places, including those with only a handful of slot machines in a city with small populations. There are slot route operators who provide gaming machines to convenience stores, truck stops, and rural areas across the state. Those people were saying, “Hold on, all I do is provide slot machines. Now I have to be responsible for how this place is being is being operated?” However, when they obtain a slot route operator license it’s still a gaming license and it’s a privileged license.

It became essential to ensure that these gaming businesses were operating in compliance with the new regulation. If an establishment had fifteen or more employees, they had to acknowledge and address these concerns and provide us with their plan for training employees on compliance with the new regulation.

Considering the significant impact of the gaming industry on Nevada, both as a tourism magnet and an economic powerhouse, what, in your view, should be Nevada’s next steps in terms of strengthening our gaming industry for the future?

Nevada has undoubtedly done a great job in creating an overall experience centered around gaming. This experience encompasses integrated resorts offering top-notch hospitality, exceptional service, a diverse range of dining options, fine restaurants, entertainment, events, and now, sports. To be able to come to Las Vegas and experience all of those things, in a really small footprint, is what I think makes Las Vegas special.

12 It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate “on basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, national origin.” NRS § 613.330.
The dedication of gaming operators and local businesses is noteworthy because Las Vegas’ success has been built on being a tourist economy. Ensuring that visitors have a fantastic experience from the moment they land or when they drive in until they depart is paramount. With the addition of the Raiders, Las Vegas has also become a hub for sports, which has been an additional driver for the city outside of gaming. Visitors know that when they come here, there’s no shortage of things that they can experience when they’re here.

That’s something I want to follow up on. Reflecting on the challenges Nevada has faced in the past two decades, notably the 2008 Recession and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, both of which had profound effects on the state’s economy, including the tourism industry, as a Nevada native, can you elaborate on the role of the sports industry during these crises?

I think what we’ve seen is the incredible resilience of Las Vegas as a community, not only among our residents but also in our economy. Time and again, we’ve managed to welcome visitors back shortly after overcoming a recession and a global pandemic. We’ve found new ways to offer positive experiences even when faced with restrictions. We’ve been able to provide experiences for people at a certain price point, regardless of what their price point is, and ensure that they are continuing to come back to the destination.

And the thing about sports is that the connection between sports and gaming is quite significant. With sports, in particular, it is something that uplifts people, bringing joy in both good and challenging times. I’ve observed this.

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firsthand with Raiders fans and our dedicated season ticket holders; their commitment to the team is truly commendable, and we don’t take it for granted. But I’m hopeful that this commitment, along with our diversification efforts, including sports, will help us weather any future storms that may come if there is another dip in the economy. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, when occupancy restrictions were in place, people continued to visit Las Vegas for events at Allegiant Stadium.16

Having grown up in Nevada, did you always have a sense that you would eventually pursue a career in gaming law? Additionally, how did your experiences, both within and outside the realm of gaming law, influence your approach to navigating the intersection between gaming law and Nevada’s economy?

What’s interesting is that my mother worked in the gaming industry while I was growing up.17 When I was an undergraduate, I debated working at a casino to earn some extra money while in college. However, observing my mother’s experience, which often involved working holidays and nights, made me think it wasn’t necessarily a glamorous job. She dedicated long hours, and part of her sacrifice was to ensure I wouldn’t have to do the same. As a child, my association with working in the gaming industry was that it was rigid. And for my mother, it was a requirement. We would celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve because she worked on Christmas—so the industry was rigid in that respect.

So, to put it simply, I didn’t initially plan on entering the gaming industry. When I attended law school in 2000, the school’s focus wasn’t on gaming. I remember at the time there were rumblings about not focusing on gaming because we want students from all over the country to attend and don’t necessarily want people to see UNLV as a gaming school. They wanted to attract students from across the country and avoid being labeled as a gaming-centric institution. So even then when I went to law school, the question was “Should I do something outside of the industry to make myself more marketable?”

It really wasn’t until about ten years later that the law school reconsidered and said, “You know what? Why are we doing this? This is a


gaming industry. We have executives here; they know how to run this industry better than anyone else. We really need to lean into it.” UNLV began developing the LLM Program\textsuperscript{18} to embrace the gaming industry. Initially, I got the impression that the school aimed to encourage students to explore other business sectors.

When I worked at MGM as a young lawyer, I gained a different perspective on the gaming industry. I was assisting the company in safeguarding and protecting its resources, which meant I didn't experience the same rigid work schedules that my mother had. And it was great—it was great to understand the inner workings of these resorts that are like small cities in and of themselves and how they run and operate. Although gaming wasn’t necessarily my goal when I was coming in as a young attorney, I didn’t shy away from it either after I left MGM.

But, gaming wasn’t something I was necessarily seeking. Even between my time at the Gaming Control Board and joining the Raiders, I was doing regulatory work at an international law firm.\textsuperscript{19} This was a skill set that international law firms weren’t looking for, but I had some gaming expertise. They never had anyone in that field. This presented a unique opportunity, as they often represented leagues and teams but lacked someone well-versed in gaming. I believe this is a great opportunity for Nevadans and those interested in gaming law, providing broader opportunities at different types of firms. It’s a relatively new and evolving field for most people, and I find it to be a great prospect for Nevada students.

That actually transitions a little bit to my next question which goes back to your first in-house job at MGM Mirage. It’s a two-part question. So first, you started as a litigator which is a little bit unique for in-house counsel. Can you speak on that experience a little bit? Can you also speak on your experience on how having that in-house counsel job helped prepare you for becoming a commissioner and board member?

Initially, my role as in-house counsel was quite small. I was a new lawyer, primarily involved in arbitrations with judgment caps usually set at a hundred thousand dollars. These cases included a significant number of workers’ compensation hearings and administrative appeals. These cases involved employees and guests, but they typically dealt with lower dollar amounts. Now, if there was a higher dollar amount, I would obviously work with a vice president

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\footnote{\textsuperscript{18} William S. Boyd School of Law offers a Masters of Law in Gaming Law and Regulation, a degree that can be pursued after a student has obtained a Juris Doctor degree. \textit{See generally LL.M. in Gaming Law}, UNLV \textsc{William S. Boyd School of Law}, https://law.unlv.edu/admissions/llm-gaming-law (last visited Oct. 6, 2023).}
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or high-ranking executive and work very closely with different people in risk management or operations at different properties. But the volume was there, I was actively in courtrooms and hearing rooms about 3 to 4 times a week. What I learned from this experience was an understanding of the broader corporate culture. This was an experience in my late twenties that a lot of people don’t get—understanding what the role of a president is, what the role of a COO is, how the General Counsel advises them, the properties relationship with the corporate office, who creates the policies, who implements them, whether or not something is breached, and how that is communicated. This knowledge proved invaluable, particularly when two very large companies were merging, like at the time I was joining. I believe this experience helped me at a young age understand how companies are structured, how they operate, and what pitfalls there are serving as a solid foundation for my later role as a regulator and dealing with the licensing process.

It helped me understand who holds decision-making authority in gaming matters, who oversees casino cages, determines machine placements, and makes ultimate judgments on disputes, such as employee hirings and disciplinary matters. Understanding how decisions are reached on issues like work hours and grievances was vital. My background in the gaming industry’s operational aspects, gained during my time in-house, provided valuable insights into what the Gaming Control Board and Commission evaluate when granting licenses and regulating industry operations. It definitely helped understanding the operational background about the gaming industry and working there.

Where do you see other states aside from Nevada going forward with legalizing sports betting? Do you think that we’ll ever get to a point where there’s going to be uniform federal rules? Do you think states will continue to move towards legalization or do you think there’s always going to be some holdouts?

At this point, we have nearly 60% of the United States population residing in states where sports betting has been legalized. To see such a significant shift from less than 10% in 2019 to nearly 60% now reflects a substantial expansion in accessibility to legalized sports betting. For sports betting, I would be surprised if there was federal legislation, but things are changing. Previous attempts at federal legislation occurred before the repeal of PASPA and before such a large portion of the population had access to legalized sports betting.

When you are looking at issues surrounding integrity, basic licensing requirements, and mandates such as “know your customer” and geolocation,

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20 “Know Your Customer” (KYC) is a due diligence process financial companies use to verify customer identity and assess and monitor customer risk. Jennifer Lowe, What is KYC? Financial Regulations to Reduce Fraud, PLAI (Nov. 2, 2022); see also 15 C.F.R. § 732, Supp. 3 (2014).
it’s my belief that these are fundamental standards that all states should have in place, if they haven’t already implemented them. I haven’t been closely monitoring these developments since I joined the Raiders, so my information might not be entirely up-to-date. However, it’s clear that the statutory and regulations landscape varies significantly from state to state.

For example, let’s say you can only have five licensees in one state and three in another and then another state is unlimited and in another state there’s a bidding process and it’s not necessarily tied to a licensing process. It’s all over the place. The tax rates are all over the place, which is not uncommon within the industry. Companies are going to continue to merge and adapt to the evolving landscape. In the next few years, it wouldn’t surprise me if there were discussions and potential actions at the federal level to address these complexities and bring about a more standardized approach to sports betting regulation.

*We’ve seen over the past year this massive blowup in terms of Artificial Intelligence predictive technology like ChatGPT. How do you foresee AI having a role in the industry, if any at all?*

I do not feel even qualified to answer that right now because since the growth and emergence of ChatGPT, I have been thinking about it from a customer and a fan experience at the stadium. I have not really thought about it in gaming context. But, gaming is all about odds outside of the random number generators of slot machines, for example in table games and online games. In the realm of online gaming, it’s my understanding that only four to five states currently allow it.

But with sports betting it’s all about predictive technology. I’m sure there’s going to be fantasy leagues where you’re going to have to sign something saying you’re not using ChatGPT or other AI in order to play.²¹ I co-authored an article about AI but it was from a different lens.²² My paper was about using facial recognition, which we know some of our properties do have but are using it for non-gaming purposes. I think that people believe that when they walk onto a gaming floor that they know that there are robust surveillance systems. It’s


essential to consider how this technology is employed elsewhere and ensure that it isn’t used for discriminatory purposes. However, regarding the specific implications of AI in playing games, I haven’t thoroughly researched that subject.

With cryptocurrency now allowed for slot play in Nevada, there’s growing attention to issues like problem gambling and mental health, especially as online gaming becomes more accessible. Do you anticipate the possibility of new regulations or the creation of a federal oversight committee to address these concerns?

I assume so only because when you look at the regulations and the concerns about, not just teens, but people and screen time and what they’re doing with their free time. If you look at everything from what people have done with social media, TikTok, and Amazon, there has been a challenge in implementing federal regulations to control how these platforms use people’s data and prevent abusive consumer practices. This is just normal customer consumer spending; this isn’t even something involving a historic vice like gaming.

But there has been an inability to have federal regulation on how people are using and monetizing people’s data and prevent abusive consumer practices there. It’s likely that there will be a need to address similar issues in the gaming and social gaming sphere, including setting limits and restrictions to combat addiction. It at some point will have to be addressed. They have dealt with this in other countries. The United Kingdom has attempted to regulate betting and social games like Candy Crush due to addiction concerns. Notably, many of these services are offered by entities that are not registered gaming licensees. So, while it’s certain that some form of regulation will come, the speed of its implementation remains uncertain due to the broader challenges of regulating consumer practices beyond gambling. It is a long way to say, yes, but I think it is coming. I just don’t know how quickly it will be considering the inability to regulate even basic consumer practices of what people are doing now outside of gambling.

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You mentioned Candy Crush. A lot of these mobile games are specifically targeted at children. Do you have any personal opinions on how some of these things on social media could lead to problem gambling habits?

Absolutely. I’ve previously addressed this topic at a conference, focusing on loot boxes and how Belgium banned them. Washington also considered a resolution to ban loot boxes due to concerns about their addictive nature—players spending money without knowing the contents of the box. The research indicates that loot boxes, gamification, and purchasing in-game items like video game skins trigger the same emotions that you get when gambling. Problem gambling initiatives typically target those over twenty-one playing traditional slot machines, but now, there are numerous options available on smartphones that people use at home. People are losing substantial sums of money because they bet on specific games within apps like Candy Crush, spending extra money to gain an edge, even though it’s not direct gambling but it functions as the same thing. In the United States, Washington was the only state, at the time, to address this issue with the Federal Trade Commission holding hearings. Based on conversations I’ve had with the Attorney General’s Office most states currently treat it as a consumer protection matter.

You were talking a little bit about taking policies from the United Kingdom and looking at other states—how often when Nevada is looking to enact a new regulation with their gaming board and commission do they look toward at what other states have done?

I must say that in 2022, our focus was on dealing with the challenges brought about by COVID. Before that I was like, “We’re not the only people in town anymore.” New Jersey has done an incredible job with sports betting and online gaming. The state has adopted laws that Nevada might never consider, such as permitting credit cards for gambling. But they’ve done a great job being a leader in the industry not only because of their bigger population but also due to their innovative approach to sports betting and online gaming.

As a self-described lifelong learner, I always think that we should remain open to learning from other states and even other countries. Nevada can’t afford to sit back and simply say, “We’ve done this for an incredibly long time.” I still think we are the best when it comes to integrated resorts, commercial casino gambling, hospitality, and service, but we must also acknowledge that we have room for growth in the tech sector, especially when it comes to emerging gaming.

24 S. 1629, A bill to regulate certain pay-to-win microtransactions and sales of loot boxes in interactive digital entertainment products, and for other purposes, 116th Cong. (2019).
technologies. It’s important for us to explore, engage with other jurisdictions, and study best practices while gaining a deep understanding of consumer preferences. For a long time, we had the luxury of saying, “This is the way it’s going to be” and we’ve established and created an incredible model we know that many other states are using. But I don’t think any person, company, or state should ever be above looking to others for best practices.

In my role related to the UK, with the emergence of new gaming companies and the convergence of existing ones, it was important for me to understand what these companies were accustomed to in Europe. What were they doing? How were they regulated? What were their practices? Even though we impose our Nevada standards when entering the market, it’s always beneficial to understand the expectations and norms of the entities we are interacting with. Whether it’s a meeting or a regulatory process, having insight into their world can foster better communication and cooperation.

So you’ve been a trailblazer since the beginning of your career and now you’re at a place where you’re the first black female president of an NFL team which is incredible. So how do you ensure that you’re not the last and you get to build this for future generations?

Prior to taking on this role with the Raiders, I was definitely more behind the scenes. However, I’ve been pretty open in saying “It’s not an accomplishment to be the first, but you shouldn’t be the last.” So, with respect to being the City Attorney, I’m really proud of the fact that my successor at the City of North Las Vegas was a woman of color, she’s Filipina.26 Since then, there has also been another black City Attorney at the City of Las Vegas, who has recently retired.27 Yes, I was the first in 2013, but there have certainly been people with diverse backgrounds who have held the position of City Attorney in Nevada.

With respect to the Gaming Control Board, Brittanie Watkins served as interim chair for a period, and there have been other women who have joined the Commission. When I was on the Gaming Commission, I was the third ever to hold that role as a woman. There was Sue Wagner, who I remember serving as

27 Bryan Scott was the City Attorney for Las Vegas for 3 years and was “the first black person to hold the position in city of Las Vegas history.” He retired on August 10, 2023. Ricardo Torres-Cortez, Las Vegas City Attorney Set to Retire, LAS VEGAS REV. J., https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/politics-and-government/las-vegas/las-vegas-city-attorney-set-to-retire-2787833/ (June 2, 2023, 8:22 PM).
lieutenant governor when I was in my undergraduate years. Deborah Fuetsch was a commissioner when I joined, and then there was me. Now, we have Jennifer Togliatti and Ogonna Brown. Ogonna Brown is also a woman of color. So, there’s been progress in terms of diversity on the Commission and Board. Tony Alamo is Cuban and served as the chair for a significant period. George Assad is currently a member.

And this is a good thing. That’s a good thing for the state. It’s a shame honestly that even in the late 2000s, there were still “firsts” in different roles. With my role at the NFL, there are now five black presidents, and there has been a female president Kristi Coleman at the Carolina Panthers. Kristi and I have had the opportunity to connect and celebrate International Women’s Day together. I believe that when capable, competent individuals are willing to learn and understand their roles, they should be given the opportunity to lead.

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28 Sue Wagner was first elected to the Nevada State Assembly in 1975 and the Nevada State Senate in 1979. She then went on to be the first woman to be elected Lieutenant Governor in 1989 and she held that position for 4 years. Wagner, Sue – Reno, Washoe, NWHP (May 10, 2018), https://nevadawomen.org/wagner-sue-renowashoe/.


30 Tony Alamo, a practicing physician, was placed on the Nevada Gaming Commission in 2008 and was then appointed Chairman in 2014. He served in this role for 3 terms and stepped away to “devote his attention in fighting COVID-19.” Bryan Horwath, Tony Alamo Resigns from Nevada Gaming Commission, LAS VEGAS SUN, https://vegasinc.lasvegassun.com/business/gaming/2020/apr/07/tony-alamo-resigns-from-nevada-gaming-commission/ (Apr. 7, 2020, 8:35 PM).


32 Kristi Coleman was names as President of the Carolina Panthers in February 2022. She previously held the roles of CFO for Tepper Sports and Entertainment. This promotion made Coleman one of the highest-ranking women in the entirety of the NFL. Kristi Coleman, PANTHERS.COM, https://www.panthers.com/team/ownership_business/kristi-coleman#:~:text=Kristi%20Coleman%20was%20promoted%20to,of%20organizational%20priorities%20and%20initiatives (last visited Oct. 10, 2023).
This is the year that Las Vegas will be hosting the Super Bowl. So your time with the Nevada Gaming Control Board was obviously a role that dealt with the tourism industry here in Vegas. How does that relate to preparing for this year and hosting the Super Bowl?

Yeah, it’s definitely helped! We have world-class operators up and down the Strip, and in downtown, and all over southern Nevada, so all of these properties work closely together to make the case that we have the best convention space, hotel rooms, and amenities to convince the NFL this is why you should host the biggest game on earth here. The Raiders are working hand-in-hand with the Super Bowl Host Committee and the NFL and the Convention and Visitors Authority. These groups are going to be at every game that we have this season, monitoring and looking at the stadium. They’re going to be constantly looking at ballrooms, showrooms, and different places to host these events so it’s going to be an incredible weekend for Las Vegas when it’s Super Bowl week. And every Raider Game!

Can you talk about the process of working with the NFL to get the Super Bowl to get hosted in Vegas?

It was a joint effort. Truly a joint effort. It was led by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority and that’s why Steve Hill is such an integral part of the host committee. It was more than two years ago when I was asked to serve as vice chair—so it was before I was with the Raiders—alongside Maurice Gallagher, the CEO and Chairman of Allegiant Airlines on what we can do.

33 On December 15, 2021, NFL owners awarded Super Bowl LVIII to Las Vegas. The Super Bowl will take place at Allegiant Stadium and will mark the first Las Vegas and the state of Nevada will welcome the Super Bowl. Las Vegas, in previous years has hosted the Pro Bowl, but this will mark the first time the Super Bowl will be hosted in Sin City. Vincent Bonsignore, ‘The Super Bowl is Coming’: Las Vegas Awarded 2024 Game, LAS VEGAS REV. J. (Dec. 15, 2021, 10:42 AM), https://www.reviewjournal.com/sports/football/super-bowl/the-super-bowl-is-coming-las-vegas-awarded-2024-game-2497080/.


35 Steve Hill is the CEO and President of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (“LVCVA”). The LVCVA is a marketing organization that promotes and attracts tourism, conventions, meeting, and special events to Las Vegas and throughout Southern Nevada. Steve Hill: Chief Executive Officer/President, LVCVA.COM, https://www.lvcva.com/who-we-are/leadership-team/steven-hill/ (last visited Oct. 10, 2023).

We both approached this from a neutral standpoint, particularly in terms of the gaming companies. We asked, “What are we going to do to come together and make sure we make the best pitch ever for the NFL?” We collectively wanted the NFL to be comfortable with Las Vegas. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority again did a great job. Southern Nevada successfully hosted the NFL draft and hosted a Pro Bowl here, demonstrating that we have the infrastructure and the tools ready to kind of execute an incredible Super Bowl. Now that I’m with the Raiders, knowing that we have people in every single division of our organization kind of in lockstep with the region’s vision has been great.

One last question, what advice would you give someone interested in pursuing a career in gaming law?

Understand the history to know why some of these regulations and protections were created in the first place. With the proliferation, acceptance, and growth of sports betting so quickly, some might be tempted to think, “Well, it’s become so commonplace, do we really need all these rules?” However, all it takes is one unfortunate crisis, right? Take a look at what happened with the White Sox and ASU, to remind us why these regulations exist. We’ve seen a similar pattern in the UK, where betting shops are closing, and more regulations are emerging.

So, my advice would be to explore technology and prioritize integrity and compliance. Understand the industry’s expansion and its global aspects, but never lose sight of the original reasons behind these regulations. When we talk about gaming law, it’s not just about gaming regulation; it’s also about respecting the fact that you’re handling people’s money, and you should do so responsibly.

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37 In 1919, the Chicago White Sox allegedly threw the World Series. The now dubbed “Black Sox” are an infamous team when it comes to gambling and sports. Many of the players were at one point or another approached to being a part of the deal and many of those players on that team were then banned for life from playing in the MLB. Evan Andrews, What Was the 1919 ‘Black Sox’ Baseball Scandal?, HISTORY.COM, https://www.history.com/news/black-sox-baseball-scandal-1919-world-series-chicago (Aug. 24, 2023). Similar to the “Black Sox” of 1919, from the years of 1978 and 1995, multiple NCAA basketball teams were caught shaving points. These teams included ASU, Boston College, Northwestern, and Tulane. Pauly McGuire, Point Shaving Scandals at Arizona State, Boston College, Northwestern, Tulane, CASINO.ORG, https://www.casino.org/news/scandals-point-shaving-arizona-state-boston-college/#:~:text=Stevin%20%E2%80%9CHedake%E2%80%9D%20Smith%2C%20the,used%20Silman%20as%20a%20bookie (May 12, 2023, 4:57 AM).