



INTRODUCTION TO RECENT LEADERSHIP AND POSITION CHANGES WITHIN THE NEVADA GAMING CONTROL BOARD

By Kelci S. Binau and Greg Giordano

The Nevada Gaming Control Board ("Board") has had to adapt to the domino effect of retirements, the movement of positions, and new hires. In addition, the volume of applications, both nonrestricted and restricted, has continued to grow. In response, within the past year, the Board has announced many new appointments and promotions, and has undergone a number of staffing changes. We had the pleasure of speaking with many of these individuals regarding their new and past roles, childhoods, backgrounds, and families. Amongst these individuals are decades of combined experience at the Board. It is our honor to introduce you to them in their new roles.

Carl Hoffman, Chief of the Investigations Division, Carson City

Carl Hoffman has been with the Board for almost 30 years. Carl was officially appointed Chief of the Investigations Division in January 2022; however, he began covering the position upon former Chief Mike LaBadie's retirement in December 2021. As Chief, Carl's role has greatly expanded. He now oversees multiple departments: nonrestricted, restricted, and corporate securities/compliance in Carson City and nonrestricted in Las Vegas. Carl still provides guidance and is available for questions from Deputy Chiefs, Supervisors, and Agents; however, he no longer finalizes the investigative reports but receives them after they have been distributed. In Carl's previous role as Deputy Chief of Investigations, Carl oversaw three nonrestricted investigative teams in Carson City, assisted with investigations, answered applicants' questions, completed the final review, and edited all investigative reports, approved workplans and budgets, and provided guidance regarding the scope/methodology of investigations. Carl really enjoys working with those around him and said his colleagues "make going to work fun." As Carl continues to transition into his new role, he tries to remind himself and his teammates to remain mindful of a work-life balance. He believes it is important to not lose perspective or lose track of your life and priorities outside of work.

Carl grew up in Southern California and Washington state. He spent a year in England as his father, a doctor, received additional training. Carl attended Stanford University for his undergraduate degree with plans to become a geologist. After graduation, Carl went to work on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA") ships; however, he came to find the work "felt like about 13 months a year out at sea." Carl returned to Washington state and worked for the Department of Fisheries as a field tech. Interested in a new career path, he moved to Las Vegas and attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas ("UNLV"), where he earned an MBA. One of Carl's classmates worked in the Investigations Division of the Board. Carl was intrigued and applied with the Board, but there was a hiring freeze. Two years later, in 1993, Carl was hired and came on board as an Agent, and just like that, Nevada became home. Although Carl's family is spread throughout the country, Olympia, WA; Louisiana; New Mexico; and Maine; Carl is proud to say he lives in Silver Springs, Nevada. When he is not traveling to Las Vegas for Board and Nevada Commission ("Commission") meetings, Carl enjoys spending time with his girlfriend and puppy.

Thomasina Fremont, Chief of the Audit Division, Las Vegas

Chair J. Brin Gibson appointed Thomasina Fremont as the next Chief of the Audit Division on July 11, 2022. With 27 years of experience at the Board, Thomasina Fremont transitioned from Supervisor to Chief of the Audit Division at that time. As a Supervisor, Thomasina was responsible for managing two special agents, two senior agents, and a staff of fifteen field agents. Thomasina provided direction and oversight of her team to ensure the successful completion of its goals. As the new Chief of the Audit Division, Thomasina is responsible for the statewide management of the Audit Division, which includes being responsible for the overall quality of work performed, implementing Board policies, developing and authorizing Division policies, recommending and participating in the formulation of regulations and statutes, advising the Board of problem areas, and suggesting possible remedies.



When we spoke with Thomasina, she was training to transition into her new role. One of Thomasina's largest discoveries in her new role is that she is now at the top: while she previously could utilize handbooks or resource materials or escalate a question to those in positions above her to "find the answer," now, she must reason through, using her 27 years of experience, and offer solutions. In her new role, Thomasina looks forward to continuing what past generations have worked hard to achieve, striking a balance between maintaining the Board's reputation as the "gold standard" of regulatory bodies and maintaining a strong working relationship with the industry.



As a young girl growing up in a small town in Pennsylvania, Thomasina's passion was theatre and music. Following her father's advice to get a degree in "something that paid a living wage," Thomasina attended Penn State University and majored in accounting. She liked accounting because it was like "solving puzzles." Thomasina later transferred and graduated from UNLV. Again following her father's advice to get a job with the government due to the benefits and retirement, Thomasina applied to the Board when she heard there was an opening in the Audit Division, and she has been there ever since. Thomasina's promotion could not have come at a better time. Thomasina's son started college at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University the same day that Thomasina stepped into her new role as Chief, giving her a new challenge to focus on as her son leaves the nest.

Chan Lengsavath, Chief of the Tax and License Division, Las Vegas

Chan Lengsavath's Board career started in 2004. Upon a friend's comment that there was an opening with the Board, Chan applied and has never looked back. Chan has now been with the Board for over eighteen years. Chan worked for twelve years in the Audit Division. In

2017, Chan was appointed as a Hearings Officer for the Board. He was a Hearings Officer for over five years for Southern Nevada and conducted hearings for appeals of gaming employee registration objections and patron disputes. As a Hearings Officer, he worked to change and expand the structure of the position to better serve industry employees and patrons. Throughout the COVID pandemic, when safe, Chan made every effort to hold in-person hearings because he felt that he "owed it" to those appearing in front of him to be more accessible when making potentially life-altering decisions. Chan was appointed Chief of the Tax and License Division effective May 16, 2022. As Chief, Chan oversees a division that maintains all gaming licenses, collects all gaming taxes and fees for the Board, and conducts compliance audits of group II licensees (annual gross revenue of less than \$6,936,000, as of July 1, 2021).

Chan was born in Laos. His parents escaped the aftermath of the Vietnam War in 1980 and after finding safe harbor at a refugee camp, relocated to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Chan went into accounting and later acquired a J.D. from the UNLV Boyd School of Law. Chan attributes his research and writing abilities to his time at Boyd, a writing program that is consistently ranked as one of the top legal writing programs in the nation.



Matt Wilcks, Deputy Chief of the Tax and License Division, Carson City

Matt Wilcks has over 16 years of experience with the Board. In June 2022, Matt was promoted from Supervisor of the Compliance Unit of the Tax and License Division to Deputy Chief of the Tax and License Division. As Supervisor, Matt was responsible for the management and development of the annual audit schedules for the Northern Nevada Compliance Agents and performing the final review of reports and workpapers from staff. Matt

was also responsible for monitoring all Native American Gaming Compacts within the State of Nevada. In Matt's new role as Deputy Chief, Matt oversees the Collections and Licensing Unit, which handles the collection of all tax forms and their associated fees, as well as the issuance of gaming licenses and the maintenance of the licensing database. Matt also supervises the Compliance Unit, which audits Group II nonrestricted casinos, manufacturers, distributors and operators of slot machine route licenses. Having spent his entire career with the Board in the Tax and License Division, Matt has had the unique opportunity to become very familiar with the day-to-day operations and processes that best support and service the Board and the gaming industry. Matt feels fortunate to have worked under some great leaders who imparted their wisdom and mentored him along the way. Although many of his mentors have since retired, Matt believes they laid a great foundation for not only his, but the Tax and License Division's success. As Matt embarks on this new journey, he keeps one piece of advice in mind — "take care of the little things, and the big things will take care of themselves."

Raised in Minden, Nevada, Matt is a proud fifth generation Nevadan. Matt attended and graduated from Douglas High School. Growing up, Matt planned to join the fire service, but he also knew he wanted to get a Bachelor's Degree. Matt attended and graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno ("UNR") with a major in Information Systems. Matt's career with the Board began during his final semester at UNR when he applied for and began interning with the Board in its IT department. When Matt graduated from UNR, an Agent position in the Tax and License Division opened and the rest is history. While growing up, Matt knew a handful of people who worked with the Board in various capacities; however, it wasn't until he began his career with the Board that he

came to learn and appreciate the high standards that the Board maintains. As Matt transitions into his new role, he feels lucky to have the support of his wife and family.

Luke Rippee, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, Carson City

In January 2022, with over 13 years' experience with the Board, Luke Rippee was promoted from Supervisor of Compliance in the Corporate Securities Section to Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division. As Deputy Chief, Luke oversees the Board's Carson City Investigations Division team, which includes approximately eighteen agents and three supervisors. Under the administrative direction of the Chief of the Investigations Division, Carl Hoffman, Luke is responsible for the daily operation of the Investigations Division, ensuring investigative missions are accomplished and administrative requirements are met, and he provides leadership and review of investigative reports. In his previous role as the Corporate Securities Section Compliance Unit Supervisor, Luke oversaw four agents. He conducted compliance reviews and attended licensee compliance committee meetings, worked closely with the Corporate Securities Section, assisted with applications for publicly-traded corporations, and handled special investigations that were assigned to the Investigations Division. Prior to that, Luke was a Senior Agent and then Special Agent with the Compliance Unit and prior to that, served as an Agent in the Corporate Securities Section. As Deputy Chief, Luke pulls inspiration and guidance from valuable lessons he has learned from his mentors and those who came before him, including, but not limited to, former Board and Commission Chairs Dennis Neilander, Pete Bernhard, A.G. Burnett, and Sandra Morgan, Corporate Securities Section former



Deputy Chief Marc Warren and current Deputy Chief Russell Tegio, Special Agent Cliff Bricker, current Special Agent David Mueller, former Special Agent and Supervisor of Compliance Dave Staley, former Investigations Division Chief Mike LaBadie, and former Board Member Shawn Reid.

Luke is a Nevada native. He was born in Carson City and raised in Douglas County. From a very young age, Luke loved sports. Like most kids, he wanted to become a professional athlete. When he realized he may not be the #1 NFL draft pick, he decided to attend college and at the suggestion of his mother, he applied for an open Board position. After thinking he bombed the initial interview due to the lack of experience, Luke received a call and was offered a position. He currently enjoys working a hybrid schedule that allows him to make his three children breakfast and see them a bit more throughout the day. With the support of his wife and mother, he looks forward to assisting Senior Agent Nishizawa with developing training modules for new agents and continuing to develop new talent and working to find ways to improve upon the Investigation Division's application process, timing, billing, and case management.

Nathan Allen, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, Las Vegas

Nathan Allen has been with the Board since 2000. In April 2022, Nathan was promoted to Deputy Chief of the Investigation Division in Las Vegas. As Deputy Chief, Nathan leads the Las Vegas Nonrestricted Investigations teams in conducting in-depth background and financial investigations of individuals and companies seeking a Nevada gaming license. This includes the collection and analysis of background and financial information and intelligence using resources in the office and in the field. In conjunction with these investigations, Nathan supports the supervisors who are on the front lines, providing team leadership, development, and training.

Through the years, Nathan worked his way through the ranks of Agent, Senior Agent, Special Agent and Supervisor. Many of his cases received local, national, and international media coverage. He has a repertoire of experience, including uncovering complex financial schemes and investigating domestic and transnational organized crime and criminal networks. During the middle portion of his tenure, he was assigned to the Investigations Intelligence Unit where he worked with federal agencies to gather intelligence and analysis of Asian organized crime groups. During that time, Nathan was asked to meet with U.S. federal agents and foreign counterparts, and conducted numerous instructional briefings to various task forces in Washington, D.C., and U.S. Embassies and Consulates throughout the world. With the worldwide expansion of gaming, Nathan has

played a crucial role in meeting with officials from foreign governments and assisting them in establishing their own gaming regulatory systems.

A native Nevadan, Nathan was born in Boulder City, Nevada and raised in Henderson. He attended UNLV where he earned a Bachelors in Business Administration, cum laude, as well as an MBA. Fresh out of school, and prior to his career at the Board, he was an advisor and analyst in the financial services industry, holding NASD Series 7, 63, and 65 licenses. As he worked in the financial sector, he came to realize that the financial industry, if not properly navigated, presents several notable risks and uncertainty drivers that will impact and have the potential to damage organizations and individuals. As Nathan's interests began to change, he felt called to a career in law enforcement/regulation where he could work to help protect organizations and people from certain vulnerabilities. After exploring opportunities, from the FBI to banking regulation, he ultimately joined the Board's Investigations Division in 2000. More recently, in 2015, Nathan graduated with a second master's degree, and in 2018, he graduated from the Las Vegas FBI Citizen's Academy. He is a regular guest teacher and presenter at UNLV for undergraduate hospitality and graduate law school courses, as well as various gaming regulatory conferences.

Nicole Rupert, Executive Secretary

Nicole Rupert has been with the Board for eight years. At a June 23, 2022 Special Meeting of the Board, Nicole was appointed as the new Executive Secretary of the Board and the Commission, succeeding Marie Bell. In her new role, Nicole will conduct the Commission's administrative matters, serve as parliamentarian for public meetings for both the Board and Commission, research and prepare reports on gaming and gaming related issues, and perform various other duties. Before her recent promotion, Nicole served as assistant to Board



Member Phil Katsaros and before that, assistant to former Board Member Shawn Reid. As an assistant, Nicole handled a variety of administrative matters, arranged meetings, prepared meeting materials, and assisted with the accurate historical preservation of internal documents. Nicole attributes much of her excitement and comfort in transitioning into her new role to former Executive Secretary Marie Bell. Nicole explained that Ms. Bell went “above and beyond” to help set herself up for success. Nicole is grateful to Ms. Bell for her time and patience and for leaving her with the tools and information needed to be successful. As Nicole continues to transition into her new role, she tries to keep in mind that it is okay to step into a new role and not immediately have the answer to everything. Nicole tries to make the most of every day and believes that each new day is a new opportunity to learn.

As a native Nevadan, Nicole grew up in Carson Valley and attended college at UNR. She had dreams of being an English teacher or a psychologist and majored in Psychology and minored in English Literature. As time went on, neither path felt like an authentic choice. After graduating and hearing glowing recommendations from family friends who had worked at the Board, Nicole jumped on the opportunity to apply when a position opened. Nicole feels very lucky and grateful to have the support of her husband, Michael, as she transitions into her new position. “Change is never seamless, but having someone on your side, working with you to make the best of every opportunity, makes it a lot easier.”

Pam Brown, Supervisor of the Compliance Unit of the Investigations Division’s Corporate Securities Section, Las Vegas

Pam has been with the Board for over 25 years. Pam was recently promoted to Supervisor of the Compliance Unit of the Investigations Division’s

Corporate Securities Section. As Supervisor, she will manage and provide leadership to the Compliance team, a unit that oversees gaming industry compliance practices such as compliance reviews, audits, and special investigations. In her previous role, Pam was a Special Agent in the Restricted License program of the Investigations Division. The Restricted License program investigates applicants with 15 or fewer slot machines and no other games/gambling devices. With the support of those around her, the transition into the new position has been positive; proof to Pam that skills once learned do come back, like “riding a bike.”

Growing up with a father in the FBI, Pam moved around until finally landing in Las Vegas. As a child, Pam wanted to be a pilot and learned to fly solo. Pam followed cooler weather and moved to Reno to attend college and graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. After college, Pam applied and began working with the Board as an Administrative Assistant in its Audit Division. Pam was initially interested in accounting, but as other divisions at the Board sparked her interest, she continued to build upon her skills and eventually became an Agent in Corporate Securities Section.

Additional Positions to Announce

Despite our best efforts to provide a more in-depth introduction to all recent Board leadership and staffing changes, there are a few additional changes that should be noted. First, David Bradford is now a Supervisor with the Investigations Division in Las Vegas. In addition, Alexandra Hardy is the new Professional Standards Officer in Carson City. Finally, Tricia Bookhart was hired as Manager of Human Resources in Las Vegas.



Kelci S. Binau is an attorney in the Reno office of McDonald Carano LLP and is a member of the Gaming & Administrative Law Practice and Business Entities & Transactions Practice. Her gaming practice is concentrated in the areas of licensing, regulation, approval, and compliance for land-based and online markets and her comprehensive range of clients includes owners, operators, manufacturers, distributors, eSports entities and service providers. She has experience assisting state, national and international gaming industry entities and her expertise is recognized in the Administrative & Regulatory Law category by the Best Lawyers in America. Kelci is a member of the International Association of Gaming Advisors, the Nevada and California Bar Associations, and Global Gaming Women (GGW). She serves as Communications and Content Liaison for Global Gaming Women’s Marketing Committee and Moderator of a GGW professional mentorship and career development Lean-In Circle. At McDonald Carano she serves as Co-Chair of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee and Associates’ Committee. Kelci is a graduate of the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law and the University of Nevada, Reno.

