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## Focus on Asia: Remembering Michael Gore – A Legend in Asian Gaming

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In September of 2022, the Asian gaming industry lost one of its true pioneers. Michael Gore, MBA, J.D., passed away. Michael's impact on the Asian gaming industry was profound. He

brought the rule of law and the foundation of gaming regulation to markets across the Mekong region. He risked his life, working in places where few westerners dared to venture, and at a time when casinos were governed with few, if any regulations.

After earning a law degree from Rutgers University, Michael began his career in the early 1980s as a New Jersey state trooper, working for the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement in the areas of surveillance and security. New Jersey was one of the world's most tightly regulated markets for casino gaming. It was there that he developed the skills necessary for his future endeavors.

In the mid-1980s, Michael was recruited by the Genting Group as the company sought to grow its brand across the world. He helped the company establish a casino in the Bahamas and was instrumental in the company's bid to receive a gaming license for a casino in Burswood, Australia. He then moved to Malaysia, where he continued to work at Genting Highlands.

In the 1990s he moved to Poipet, Cambodia, where he opened the Golden Crown Casino, only the second casino to open in that market. At the time, Poipet was nothing more than a dusty border town, adjacent to Aranyaprathet, Thailand. Still suffering from the after-effects of the Khmer Rouge regime, Poipet was an impoverished and lawless region. Land mines still dotted the landscape, and poverty was rampant.

Over the last twenty years, the Poipet gaming market grew to fourteen properties, collectively generating over a half billion dollars a year in gaming revenue, while employing thousands of Cambodians. Michael's understanding of gaming regulations and the rule of law brought legitimacy to a market that was once considered lawless. Today, Poipet is a vibrant and successful gaming market that has attracted investment from public gaming companies.

Michael eventually returned to the Genting Group, where he helped the company in its bid to build and operate a casino in Singapore. His efforts led to Genting being awarded a coveted gaming license, and to the construction of Resorts World Sentosa, one of the most successful integrated resorts in the world.

After the opening of Resorts World Sentosa, Michael returned to the Mekong region. Just over a decade ago, Michael attended a meeting in Bangkok to discuss casino development in the region. When the meeting concluded and he was about to get into a taxi, one of the attendees offered to have his driver take him home in his limousine. Michael and his business partner accepted. In a case of mistaken identity, the car was approached by gunmen on motorbikes who sprayed the car with bullets. The driver took a bullet in the head and Michael was shot in the elbow. The incident did not deter him and he remained the region for another ten years.

Michael continued to consult and work for casino companies in the region, including properties in Bavet, Cambodia and Laos. He ultimately took a position at Savan Vegas in Laos near the border of Thailand, where he served as General Manager.

Michael returned to the United States in 2021, and became the Assistant District Attorney for Elko County in Nevada.

Perhaps it was his education in law, his training as a state trooper, his experience working for the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement, or his understanding and respect for the rule of law that gave him the necessary skills to shape casino gaming in southeast Asia. Regardless, Michael helped develop an industry that once bordered on lawlessness to one that now commands the respect and investment from some of the world's most recognized gaming companies. His legacy lives on in the casinos and markets he helped develop, the legitimacy and regulation that he brought to those markets, and the thousands of lives he improved by bringing casino gaming and the jobs they provide to some of the more remote and impoverished regions in Southeast Asia.

The outpouring of messages of condolence on various social media platforms from former employees after his passing serves as a testament to the contributions he made to gaming in Asia. This man will long be remembered, and he will be missed.

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