



Rebuilding
Communities
Through Indian
Self-Reliance

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NIGA CHAIRMAN NAMED 2008 GAMING EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR BY THE INTERNATIONAL MASTERS OF GAMING LAW

Washington, D.C., June 6, 2008 – Ernest L. Stevens, Jr., chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), was recently named a 2008 Gaming Executive of the Year by the International Masters of Gaming Law (IMGL). Awarded by the IMGL since 2006, the Gaming Executive of the Year recognizes prominent figures who dedicate their careers to protecting and expanding the interests of the gaming industry.

For 20 years, Chairman Stevens, a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, has advocated on behalf of tribal governments and is a staunch defender of tribal sovereignty. His passion was passed from his father, Ernest Stevens Sr., who taught him the value of participating in government while his mother taught him the value of community and cultural activism.

“I am honored to receive this recognition on behalf of the National Indian Gaming Association and all of Indian country,” said Stevens. “When I joined NIGA as a tribal representative in 1993, I participated in the strategies and initiatives implemented by early NIGA leaders. As the current chairman, I am committed to carrying on the tradition of responsible and successful growth of our industry because I know that in doing so, we will bridge the gap between tribes who thrive economically, and those who still struggle to recover from decades of poverty and destitution.”

Chairman Stevens shares this year’s IMGL award with his friend, American Gaming Association (AGA) president and CEO, Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. Fahrenkopf has led the AGA since its creation in 1996 and has been a true champion of the industry. “Accepting this award with Frank Fahrenkopf is a pleasure and honor. Together, our associations are bringing some of the world’s finest entertainment to consumers. But more importantly, we are contributing greatly to the economic strength of our country. We create jobs where they are needed. We provide revenue sources that benefit Tribal, local, state and federal governments. And in the case of Indian gaming, we provide a means to keeping native cultures alive and strong.”

When accepting his award at an IMGL meeting in California on May 22nd, Chairman Stevens dedicated his remarks to the Tribal governments still struggling with economic challenges and he urged Indian country to stand united in assisting those tribes and helping them fulfill the needs of their membership.

He also spoke of his Grandmother, a 98-year-old Oneida woman who had seen a great deal of hardship as a result of the assimilation efforts forced by the Federal government decades ago, but now sees the strength Indian gaming has brought to her people. "Today, my grandmother has the opportunity to see how perseverance and Tribal determination are paying off. I am very proud of the positive impact Indian gaming continues to have on Indian country and the rest of America and I credit tribal leaders for their efforts," said Stevens. "Our elders who created tribal gaming could only dream of the type of economic development and diversification currently seen on reservations. Now, the growth of real economic power is measured in the financial resources tribes are using to address generations of poverty and neglect."

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About the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA)

The National Indian Gaming Association is a nonprofit trade association comprised of 184 American Indian Nations and other nonvoting associate members. The mission of NIGA is to advance the lives of Indian people – economically, socially and politically. NIGA operates as a clearinghouse and educational, legislative and public policy resource for tribes, policymakers and the public on Indian gaming issues and tribal community development. For more information, visit www.IndianGaming.org.

About the International Masters of Gaming Law (IMGL)

The International Masters of Gaming Law (IMGL) is a non-profit association of attorneys, gaming regulators and gaming executives dedicated to the education, advancement of the gaming law profession and exchange of professional information concerning the local and global practice and development of all aspects of gaming law.