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Dean Logan's Blog

RWU and Poker: A Surprising Pair

Posted by David Logan on 09/07/2012 at 12:02 PM

Among the crazes of the last decade is poker, fueled by the ease (and promise of riches) from online playing and fan interest from TV coverage taking advantage of "pocket cams" that allowed observers to see players' "hole cards." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poker>

As it turns out, Roger Williams University has a number of interesting connections to gaming.

First, RWU undergrad alum Susan Bedusa produced a well-regarded documentary "All In: The Poker Movie," which traces the meteoric rise of poker's popularity, with the 6 entrants in the first "Main Event" of the World Series of Poker (no limit Texas hold'em) increasing to over 8,000 players.

<http://allinthepokermovie.com/>

Second, one of the most interesting legal issues out there, and a source of much debate, is whether poker is really "gambling" or rather is a "game of skill." This is not just an academic matter, as the answer may determine whether playing is in violation of the criminal law. Well, the answer is now clear, thanks to a masterful opinion by Federal Judge Jack Weinstein.

The RWU connection: we were honored to have Judge Weinstein, a giant of the law, deliver the Commencement Address at RWU Law's 2012 graduation. <http://law.rwu.edu/blog/commencement-2012-v20>

Third, gambling is a hot issue in New England, with a ballot question on allowing table games in Rhode Island,

<http://news.providencejournal.com/breaking-news/2012/06/judge-issues-ru.html> for rights to a casino in Massachusetts, http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505245_162-57502442/mass-panel-casino-selection-process-lawful/

and the financial travails of the Native American gambling behemoths in Connecticut

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/magazine/mike-sokolove-foxwood-casinos.html?pagewanted=all>

on the front burner. So, what better time than bringing to our community the head of the American Gaming Association, Frank Fahrenkopf, to discuss all this, as well as the impact of the internet on

gambling. <http://law.rwu.edu/event/business-legal-issues-gaming-internet-era-featuring-frank-j-fahrenkopf-jr>

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention one final, and personal connection, to poker: my son has competed in the Main Event and ended 'in the money' (indeed in the top 100 finishers in 2006 and 2011).