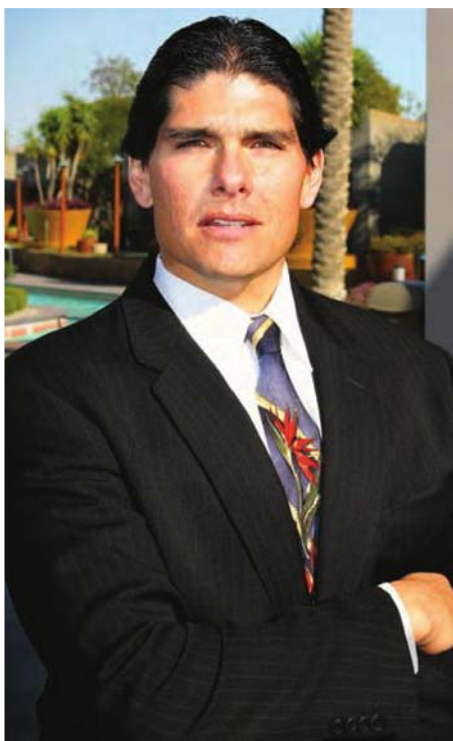


IMPROVISE, ADAPT, OVERCOME

Jason Giles

Executive Director, National Indian Gaming Association



Sometimes, getting tribes to agree on an issue or work together is very difficult. But it is the mission of the National Indian Gaming Association, and one which takes some skill to perform.

Jason Giles, a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma, grew up in McLean, Virginia, where his parents were government employees. He began his career path at an early age, when he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1988. After four years, Giles emerged as a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps, and was honorably discharged as a captain in 1997. After leaving the Corps, he attended law school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

While in the Marines, Giles was posted to Hawaii, and fell in love with the state, so after graduating from law school, he returned there to work for a law firm in Honolulu, where he focused on labor law, real estate law and bankruptcy issues.

"I truly never thought I'd leave there," he said.

But since lives rarely go according to plan, the experience Giles compiled in Hawaii became valuable in other venues, particularly in Wash-

ington, D.C. He joined NIGA in 2005 as the organization's legal counsel and was quickly promoted to deputy executive director, where he was responsible for drafting NIGA member alerts on current gaming issues, preparing and assisting in the drafting of congressional testimony and memorandums on gaming-related issues, and organizing NIGA's bi-annual legislative summits on Capitol Hill. Early in 2012, Giles was named executive director, replacing Mark Van Norman.

Giles quickly earned a reputation at NIGA as someone who could get something done. And in an organization comprised of many diverse tribes with many different opinions, Giles learned to listen closely to what the leaders of NIGA say.

"The board only meets once or twice a year," he says. "So it's important that we get them to consider the issues that are crucial to the success of the NIGA goals in Washington."

Even between meetings, however, Giles is actively speaking to board members and important tribal leaders.

"We've got to keep them up to speed because things can change quickly in Washington," he says.

One of those changes came at the end of the last session of Congress, when it became apparent there was a move to tighten up regulations on taking land into trust. Combined with the Supreme Court's *Carcieri* decision, the proposals came from California senators and congressmen who were concerned that Governor Jerry Brown's recent decisions to permit two landless tribes to open casinos would continue to spread.

"This came up quickly," says Giles, "so we have to be prepared to respond."

Also an issue of contention among tribes is internet gaming. Even with a carve-out in the Reid-Kyl bill, there was a significant number of tribes opposed to legalization of online poker at a federal level. But even more controversial is a tribal role in the state-by-state legalization process.

"This is going to be very complicated," says Giles. "But we've put out a position paper that was agreed to by the NIGA board members. We have to stay on top of this in order to make sure tribes are treated fairly."

—Roger Gros



SKILL, VISION AND TENACITY

Kimberly Arnold

COO/Partner, The Innovation Group

Kim Arnold's five-year tenure with the Innovation Group has been a tremendous victory, for both sides.

After helping the Littleton, Colorado-based company expand from four divisions to eight, Arnold was named COO and partner in 2012. Among many roles, Arnold helped establish the iGaming North America and RD&E conferences co-produced by the Innovation Group of Companies in recent years. She also speaks at several industry conferences and trade shows.

Arnold and partner Paul Girvan helped launch Innovation Interactive, the Innovation Group of Companies' affiliate dedicated to i-gaming advisory services. As co-manager of this specialty practice, Arnold helps domestic clients develop online gaming strategies and procure partners.

I-gaming is a lucrative, looming growth area. Operators appear poised to stalk this multibillion-dollar windfall once state legislators allow it. Nevada and Delaware were the first to award licensing for it.

"Nobody has a crystal ball, but it is inevitable that this could be an explosive area of growth for the industry," Arnold says. "When you look at the market for social gaming, you see how much younger the gaming clientele is, how comfortable they are using the internet as a source for gaming and entertainment, etc. There are so many things that are ongoing here; it's just a question of when it will all come together."

The Innovation Group's first involvement with

GOLDEN BOY

Tom Pohlman

Vice President and General Manager,
Golden Nugget Atlantic City

For Tom Pohlman, taking the reins of Golden Nugget's most recent property was like coming home. Though he spent years honing his leadership skills in the Las Vegas casino market, the vice president and general manager at Golden Nugget Atlantic City was pleased when he got the opportunity to move back East.

"I'm originally from Long Island, so this was a natural homecoming for me to be able to come back to the East Coast," Pohlman says.

Pohlman relocated in February 2011, the day that Landry's Inc. announced it had acquired Trump Entertainment's struggling Trump Marina property in Atlantic City. The acquisition was one of several expansion projects overseen by Landry's owner Tilman Fertitta, the colorful Texas billionaire who has built his company into one of the world's leading restaurant, hospitality and entertainment brands.

Pohlman has learned a lot from Fertitta over the five years he has worked at the Golden Nugget properties. After graduating from University of Nevada Las Vegas, Pohlman began his gaming career in 1998 in surveillance at Tropicana Las Vegas, working his way up to director of the department by 2001. In 2005 he went to work for MTR Gaming—owners of Binion's and Speedway Casino—as corporate director of surveillance. Pohlman made the transition into operations at MTR, becoming director of operations and eventually assistant general manager. It was then that he came to the attention of Fertitta and the corporate family at Golden Nugget. The company owned two properties in Nevada, and Pohlman was appointed general manager for Golden Nugget Laughlin.

He worked in Laughlin for three and a half years before making the move to Atlantic City. He sees a distinct similarity in the two properties.

"I think Atlantic City and Laughlin have more similar characteristics in the market than Atlantic City and Vegas do," Pohlman says. "We only had 300 rooms in Laughlin, and in Atlantic City we only have 730. So in terms of marketing we have to go after more locals and give people reasons to come to our property while they're in town."

Despite a similar "boutique-style" appeal, the casinos couldn't have been more different. Trump Marina had been floundering for years and, in the shadow of the larger Borgata and Harrah's properties, was on the verge of bankruptcy. That all



changed when Landry's took over and began a \$150 million renovation that would last over a year.

"Everything on the property has been touched, the most dramatic being the façade," Pohlman says. "People said the old Trump Marina looked like a hospital, but now when you pull up the exterior is completely brand new."

Pohlman is clearly proud of the renovation the Atlantic City property has undergone. The public was invited to "Watch the Transformation," turning what could have been an intrusive construction job into a clever marketing campaign. The response by customers has been overwhelmingly positive. The upgrades were personally overseen by Fertitta, whom Pohlman maintains is an inspiring leader.

"It's amazing that he's got so much going on but he knows exactly what's happening in each one of his properties and restaurants," Pohlman says.

Despite the setbacks Atlantic City has seen in recent years, from casino competition in neighboring states to the toll of Hurricane Sandy, Pohlman remains optimistic about Atlantic City and Golden Nugget's place in the market. With the right blend of retail, restaurants and gaming, he believes the casino will become the premier boutique-style destination in the area. The property will concentrate on entertainment in the new year, opening a nightclub and bringing in some big names to the showroom, and also offering the types of festivals and special events that appeal to a local audience.

As for how he feels about his homecoming?

"It feels great to be back," he says. "At first I was a little worried leaving the Vegas environment, but I'm not looking back."

—Robert Rossiello

a client often involves surveys. They bring the operators and online players together.

"The first thing with market research here typically is that we will assess what a player's interest is," Arnold says. "We will ask what social games they prefer, what kind of comps would drive them to come onto a property, how far they would go in terms of driving distance, what are they spending on games, and would that increase if they were on a property? We help the operators understand the demographics they are dealing with. That's important because many operators have an aging demographic database. The younger players tend to be wealthier and more connected with the social gaming experience."

This connection of operators and patrons typifies the company's service menu. It can conduct a feasibility study advising a client seeking to expand. The company can educate the operator about market conditions and even locate an investment banker. Arnold says many clients use Innovation's official findings to procure investments.

Arnold plans to direct at least three major efforts in this area for 2013. Innovation's i-gaming show, which doubled its attendance in 2012, unfolds in February. The RD&E conference with GGB magazine unfolds in May and G2E emerges, as always, in the fall.

Arnold had not expected to serve gaming from this side of the table. The Colorado resident was a partner and vice president of business development and client relations at Denver-based WorthGroup, a turn-key design/build organization specializing in the gaming and hospitality industries. Arnold spent 10 years there before Innovation came calling five years ago.

Besides gaming, Arnold is active with the AGA's Global Gaming Women initiative, sits on the board of directors of the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce, and is a lifetime charter member of the CWCC Women's Leadership Foundation.

—Dave Bontempo