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TOM NIEMAN, DAVE PALERMO HONORED AS RECIPIENTS OF ASSOCIATION OF GAMING EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS (AGEM) MEMORIAL AWARDS HONORING JENS HALLE AND PETER MEAD

LAS VEGAS – The Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers (AGEM) announced today that Tom Nieman has been selected as the recipient of the 2019 Jens Halle Memorial Award Honoring Excellence in Commercial Gaming Professionalism, and the late Dave Palermo has been selected as the recipient of the 2019 Peter Mead Memorial Award Honoring Excellence in Gaming Media & Communications.

AGEM previously announced the creation of this unique annual awards program to acknowledge the lasting impacts on gaming by Halle and Mead, two distinctive industry veterans who died unexpectedly in 2015. Honorees will be announced each year at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) in Las Vegas, and this year’s awards ceremony for Nieman and Palermo will take place on Wednesday, Oct. 16 at 4 p.m. at AGEM booth No. 3700 near the main entrance to G2E at the Sands Expo.

Recently retired after a 47-year career in the gaming industry, Nieman, 70, has a long history of innovation, creativity and respect in the global gaming industry, beginning with a position with Bally Manufacturing in Chicago in 1972 and continuing through to his last title as VP of Worldwide Marketing for JCM Global, a Japanese-based automated transaction solutions company. While at Bally from 1972-84, he conceived of property licensing for Bally’s amusement games, securing dozens of licenses from film studios, the music industry and A-list celebrities that laid the foundation for the same focus on lucrative branded titles in the slot machine business. Starting in 1984, Nieman helped further the growth of the U.S. lottery industry while at Scientific Games as the marketing member of the launch team in Iowa, West Virginia and California, before a taking a series of senior marketing positions in Las Vegas with Bally Gaming, Shuffle Master and then JCM Global. Nieman also served as AGEM President 2017-19, and for the past 15 years was the driving force behind the annual AGEM-AGA Golf Classic that has raised more than $2 million for the National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG).

“It’s hard to fathom a career in gaming that began in 1972 and yet Tom Nieman helped shape our industry not simply through a half century of working, but more importantly by being innovative, creative, humble and generous,” said Luke Orchard, President of AGEM. “Tom and Jens crossed paths many times, and like Jens, Tom has traveled the world, shaking hands and spreading his positive energy while moving business forward and representing the supplier sector with integrity and vision. It is my honor to succeed Tom as AGEM President and we hope this memorial award will serve as a reminder of his legacy in gaming as he moves into a well-deserved retirement and hopefully more time focused on grandchildren, golf and Michigan football.”

Born in Kankakee, Illinois, in 1947, Palermo was 71 when he died by suicide in Las Vegas in July of this year. He worked for 13 newspapers in 33 years during a distinguished career that culminated with his status as the preeminent reporter on Native American gaming issues. Palermo started at the Daily Herald in Arlington Heights, Illinois, before moving on in 1977 to Los Angeles, where he won one of his more than 30 career awards, including the Investigative Reporters and Editors’ Award in 1982 while at the Orange County Register. He was introduced to the gaming beat while at the Las Vegas Review-Journal in the mid-1990s and served his last newspaper post in Biloxi at the Sun Herald before ultimately returning to Las Vegas and contributing to Global Gaming Business (GGB) and other industry publications. He embraced the Indian Country beat and was passionate about Native American sovereignty, history and social problems and programs, with an emphasis on assisting tribal communities progress in a positive direction.

“Dave was certainly one of a kind and his gruff exterior could clash with his soft side, but the dedication to both his craft and Native American issues overall was evident to all who followed his work,” said Marcus Prater, Executive Director of AGEM. “We let the nominating criteria guide the selection of these AGEM Memorial Awards, and when you see the Peter Mead trait of ‘taking risks and questioning the status quo,’ that’s exactly what Dave did when it came to advocacy for tribal issues and where gaming intersected with those issues. It’s very sad Dave chose to leave us early and we will miss him and his unique insight, but his legacy lives on through his stories and the impact they made and now through this award as well.”

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Halle, a longtime Bally and Novomatic executive in Europe who was most recently CEO of Gauselmann Group’s Merkur Gaming based in Florida, died suddenly on May 20, 2015 at the age of 57. Mead, the founder and publisher of Casino Enterprise Management magazine, died suddenly in Las Vegas on June 24, 2015 at the age of 54.

Current gaming professionals were nominated for these memorial awards based on the following criteria that aim to capture the unique attributes displayed by Halle and Mead during their storied careers:

**Jens Halle Memorial Award Honoring Excellence in Commercial Gaming Professionalism**

“Nominees must have experience working in the global gaming supplier sector for a minimum of 10 years and possess the following traits and qualities that Jens displayed throughout his working life: Professionalism, business success, international scope, attention to detail and timely follow-up; a willingness to ‘go the extra mile,’ both figuratively and literally; a sense of humanity in an oft-times cutthroat business; a recognition of the importance of a handshake and a fair deal for all; and a dedication to the health of the industry as a whole.”

**Peter Mead Memorial Award Honoring Excellence in Gaming Media & Communications**

“Nominees must have experience working in the mainstream media, gaming trade press or individual gaming company PR/communications for a minimum of 10 years and possess the following traits and qualities that Peter displayed throughout his working life: Quality reporting and communication with an emphasis on personal contact to generate ideas and gather information; taking risks and questioning the status quo; challenging the industry to consider new ideas; and identifying trusted partners to improve the overall product.”

Gavin Isaacs, currently Chairman of SBTech, and Global Gaming Business (GGB) Editor Frank Legato were the recipients of the AGEM Memorial Awards program in 2018, and Chief Executive Officer and President of Novomatic Americas Rick Meitlzer and GGB founder and Publisher Roger Gros were the recipients in 2017. Ainsworth Game Technology founder Len Ainsworth and then-Golden Entertainment Director of Corporate Communications and longtime Las Vegas Review-Journal gaming columnist Howard Stutz were the initial recipients of the AGEM memorial awards program in 2016.

AGEM is a non-profit international technology trade association representing manufacturers and suppliers of electronic gaming devices, lotteries, systems, game content, table games, online technology, sports betting, key components and support products and services for the gaming industry. AGEM works to further the interests of gaming equipment suppliers throughout the world. Through political action, regulatory influence, trade show partnerships, educational alliances, information dissemination and good corporate citizenship, the members of AGEM work together to create benefits for every company within the organization. Together, AGEM has assisted regulatory and communications and participated in the legislative process to solve problems and create a business environment where AGEM members can prosper while providing a strong level of support to education and responsible gaming initiatives. For more information, visit www.AGEM.org.
