

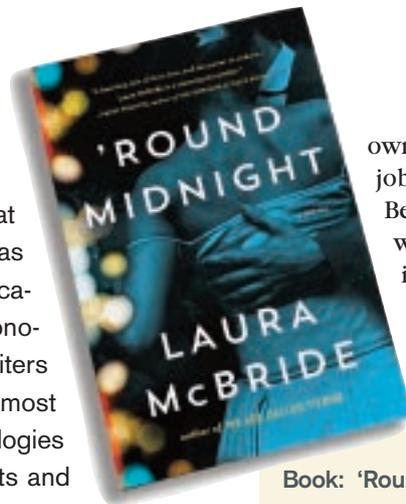
## Round Midnight: Real People Do Live in Las Vegas

by William Thompson

The modern history of Las Vegas casinos dates back to 1931. That course of nearly nine decades has been recorded by myriad journalists, academic historians, criminologists, economists, and psychologists. Yet the writers (including this reviewer) have for the most part confined their writings to chronologies of casino properties, ownership events and notable personalities the likes of mobsters Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky, movie mogul Howard Hughes, and entrepreneurs Kirk Kerkorian and Steve Wynn. These recordings of personalities, places and events leave readers with a true notion that Las Vegas is a special location for entertainment and excitement but also with a void. Las Vegas has been a fast growing community of “real” people carrying on activities of “real” lives both tied to the casinos as well as outside of their milieu.

This void has now found a “real” degree of fulfillment in the words of novelist Laura Mc Bride on the pages of her book *Round Midnight*. Mc Bride does use a platform of academia as she is a Ph.D. professor of English at the College of Southern Nevada. However her “platform” goes beyond mere historical events untied to direct human involvement. In Las Vegas people live and carry on the ordinary activities of life. Other writers often overlook realities highlighted by Mc Bride’s work.

She looks at Las Vegas through the prisms of racial segregation, troubled public schools, broken highways, and ineffective health care and hospitals. Unlike most other academics examining the local scene, she tells of a history using stories she generates with a focus upon a fictional El Capitan Casinos with its “Midnight” showroom and theater, lounge and cafe. Around (Round) this venue she places the main personalities of the book. These included the top executive and casino



Book: *Round Midnight*

Author: Laura Mc Bride

Publisher: New York-Touchstone, 2017

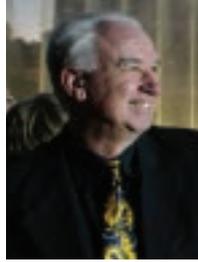
owner who worked his way up from a manual labor job that began at age 12 to an industry owner. Beside the owner on his rise to the top was his wife, who focused her attention on entertainers in the Midnight venue. The husband and wife found a touch of magic as they discovered and then promoted a charismatic singer who (it was in the late 1950s) happened to be an African American. His race ties the story to a time when Las Vegas was a racially segregated city. The story draws in the brief history of the integrated Moulin Rouge casino on the city’s north side. The African American players as well as prominent entertainers were not welcome on the Las Vegas Strip—except when they were performing. By the onset of the 1960s, civil rights leaders were responding to segregation with protest parades and threats to close Las Vegas down. The leader of the El Capitan joined in their cause, especially after the murder of his top assistant, an African American he had befriended in his youth.

Following the murder, the casino owner reached out to his assistant’s wife. When his own wife gave birth to an illegitimate daughter fathered by the charismatic singer, the chief executive in effect kidnapped the child and clandestinely placed her with his late assistant’s wife. As decades passed the child stayed out of sight while developing into an effective teacher in Las Vegas schools. The owner’s son became the casino chief executive after the death of his father.

One casino story revolved around a high roller who was fully “comped” whenever he visited Las Vegas and the El Capitan. A rich loner, he had sponsored a “mail order” bride from the Philippines. He brought her to the casino, but as fate had it, he was “using her” but he had not bothered to actually marry her. An interesting gambling story developed as the loner gambles at tables and leaves his “bride” to play the machines on her own. Luck takes a twist as she hits a “mega-bucks” machine and has a win worth over a million dollars.

The casino has to follow the law and award the entire jackpot to the woman—who quickly disappeared from the rich loner. She stayed hidden in Las Vegas living clandestinely with her own daughter. Another character comes to the casino as an illegal (undocumented) alien who also helps the “bride.” She is effective in keeping the woman safe when the loner discovers their location in Las Vegas. The story seems to move toward a violent ending but the room attendant manages to take a gun away from the loner and they all hide what has happened from the police. In the meantime the school teacher daughter also manages to gain a reunion with her natural mother.

The book offers a very good read with each of the main personalities giving a bit of natural light to interacting lives of myriad casino actors and the natural and ordinary citizens of what has become the “Sin City” of America. ♣



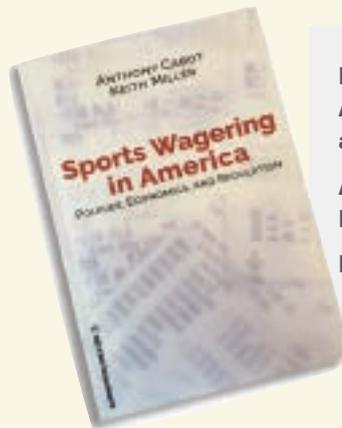
*William N. Thompson is a professor emeritus at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. He is a frequent contributor to American Gaming Lawyer and has authored over a dozen books on many gambling subjects.*

## BOOK REVIEW

### Sports Wagering in America:

### Policies, Economics, and Regulation

By Quinton Singleton



**Book:** Sports Wagering In America: Policies, Economics and Regulation

**Author:** Anthony Cabot, Keith Miller

**Publisher:** UNLV Gaming Press

**T**horough, thoughtful and timely. In *Sports Wagering in America*, Cabot and Miller continue adding significant thinking and education to our gaming lexicon.

It contains a concise overview of the complex history of sports wagering in the U.S. and sets out many of the sports wagering policy issues that should be considered at a time when legislatures and regulators are acting quickly to enact legislation and promulgate regulations in preparation for the U.S. market opening for legal and regulated sports wagering.

*Sports Wagering in America*, therefore, serves an important purpose. Cabot and Miller have pro-

vided policymakers with a significant tool to use in their deliberations when establishing the legal and regulatory structure for sports wagering and engaging industry stakeholders. ♣



*Quinton Singleton works in the gaming industry and currently focuses on entry and preparedness for sports betting and igaming in the U.S. Previously, Quinton served as an executive with B2B and B2C sportsbook and igaming operators and suppliers, is a CPA formerly with Deloitte and an attorney formerly with Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie. He can be reached at qrsingleton@gmail.com*