



Harold Lee, Ex-Judge and Outspoken Off-Reservation Gambling Advocate, Convicted of Three Felonies

PAUL RUBIN | FEBRUARY 6, 2012 | 12:04PM

A Maricopa County jury convicted Harold "Bud" Lee Jr. of three felony counts related to gambling on Friday, including conspiracy and illegal control of an enterprise.

The 68-year-old Lee, who once served as a Phoenix



Justice of the Peace, was allowed to remain free from custody until his sentencing, now scheduled for March 7. Lee will be eligible for probation but also faces a possible prison term.

We **published a story** back in April 2009 about Lee's mission in life--which has been to convince the world that Arizona's anti-gambling laws are lunacy.

Trouble for Lee was that he walked the walk, which led the state Attorney General's Office (under then-AG Terry Goddard) to secure a grand-jury conviction against the Phoenix man and two co-defendants, both of whom pleaded guilty earlier to reduced charges.

Poker rooms are against the law in Arizona, except at the 22 casinos on 15 Indian reservations, where a few hundred tables are in service night and day.

Arizona does permit "social gambling" outside of the Indian casinos, but only if no one other than the players collects money from a game, whether it is poker or anything else. It also is illegal for the "house" to charge an entry fee for a poker game off the reservations.

Not that the gendarmes are about to knock down the doors of an Elks club anytime soon, but Lee's "organization," the International Card and Player's Association, charged interested "card room" owners a starting fee of \$5,000. In return, he issued a charter and a quasi-business plan for an off-reservation poker room, collecting (he told us) as much as 15 percent of the profits from said owners.

Lee told us for the story that he also made "a little money" from the \$20 annual "membership fee" charged to every new poker player at one of his rooms. He claimed that more than a thousand people "joined" one of his onetime affiliates, the now-defunct Club Royale in Tucson.

Prosecutors from the AG's Office (assistant attorney general Todd Lawson tried the case) sought the indictments after agents from the Arizona Department of Gaming completed a

lengthy investigation.

It apparently marked the first time in Arizona that authorities brought felony charges against individuals under the state's illegal gambling laws.

The indictments focus on illegal gambling that went on at the Ace High Card Room and Social Club in Surprise. That club is no longer is in business.

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