

A. J. "Bud" Hicks



A. J. "Bud" Hicks, Senior Counsel

ajhicks@mcdonaldcarano.com
P: 775.788.2000; F: 775.788.2020

Area of Practice

Gaming & Administrative Law

Bar Admissions

Nevada

Education

- J.D., University of Southern California, 1972
- B.S., Finance, Cum Laude, University of Southern California, 1968

A.J. "Bud" Hicks joined McDonald Carano in December 1978 and led the Gaming & Administrative Law Practice for more than 40 years. In 1980, Bud co-founded the Nevada-headquartered International Association of Gaming Advisors, which was originally established as the National Association of Gaming Attorneys. In its Winter 2017 issue, the *UNLV Gaming Law Journal* published an in-depth interview with Bud titled "[The Oral History of A.J. "Bud" Hicks.](#)" The interview reveals that the history of Bud Hicks is synonymous with the history of gaming.

Mr. Hicks is one of Nevada's most experienced gaming law practitioners and has received the distinguished Senior Statesperson recognition in Gaming & Licensing Law from *Chambers USA America's Leading Lawyers for Business*. Clients describe Mr. Hicks to *Chambers* researchers as "very knowledgeable about everything; he's the be all and end all of gaming law." "He is well known for his longstanding practice in the gaming space." "Bud is an incredible Lawyer." "Bud is very well respected by lawyers and regulators, and he has a deep well of knowledge."

Throughout his career, he has focused his practice in the areas of gaming law and related corporate, litigation, and transactional matters, representing many premier national and international resort gaming operators and gaming equipment suppliers, as well as Nevada's largest Native American gaming operation. Due to his significant experience in the gaming industry, Mr. Hicks has been called upon to serve as an expert witness on gaming law matters, published numerous articles on gaming issues, and testified before the U.S. Congress and the Nevada State Legislature on gaming matters. He served as Chief Deputy Attorney General for the State of Nevada on gaming matters and as counsel to the Nevada Gaming Commission in a landmark case that upheld the constitutionality of Nevada's gaming regulatory structure and that helped rid Las Vegas' gaming industry of the last vestiges of organized crime.

Mr. Hicks also assisted the Nevada Gaming Control Board ("NGCB") on numerous investigatory matters, assisted the Nevada gaming authorities in establishing procedures for dealing with the entry of publicly traded companies into the Nevada gaming industry, and represented the Nevada gaming authorities before the Nevada legislature on gaming matters for multiple legislative sessions. As a result of his extensive regulatory experience, he often assists his clients on compliance matters and other licensing and regulatory issues.

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Mr. Hicks has more than four decades of experience handling matters relating to the gaming industry as it has expanded and grown throughout the United States and internationally. He has represented many individuals and entities proposing to enter or expand within the gaming industry in Nevada and other jurisdictions, including representing publicly traded gaming companies and their controlling persons as well as privately owned gaming establishments and their owners on gaming matters.

He has also represented investment banks and commercial lenders dealing with gaming operators, including lenders and other interested parties in creditor proceedings and financial restructurings of licensed gaming companies; assisted gaming clients on major transactions; and worked on complex gaming licensing matters for private and public companies that provide services or systems to gaming businesses or are manufacturers or distributors of gaming devices, products or equipment to the gaming industry, as well as high net worth individuals involved in the gaming industry throughout the U.S. and internationally.

Mr. Hicks has also served as the gaming law-knowledgeable Independent Member of the Gaming Compliance Committees for numerous gaming companies over the years, including serving as Chairman of the Gaming Compliance Committee of one of America's largest regional gaming operators and currently serving the Chairman and gaming law-knowledgeable Independent Member of the Gaming Compliance Committee of one of the world's largest gaming operators. Mr. Hicks' prominent and influential involvement in compliance began while serving as Deputy Attorney General for the State of Nevada, a position which included serving as counsel for the Nevada Gaming Commission where he worked on the first Internal Reporting System and Compliance Plan accepted by the NGC. That pioneering Plan became the model for all the Gaming Compliance Plans that followed.

Mr. Hicks is a published author of fictionalized works inspired by real gaming events and characters, including *Fortune's Trail – A Nevada Story* and *The Count Room*.

Mr. Hicks served as the U.S. Presidential Appointee to the Board of Governors of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency between 2017 and 2023. The TRPA is a bi-state agency created by a compact between the States of California and Nevada, then ratified by the U.S. Congress. The TRPA is charged with regional planning, development and redevelopment oversight, regulatory enforcement, and implementation of environmental protection and restoration programs for the Lake Tahoe region. In September 2021, *Law360* published a feature story about Mr. Hicks' involvement in TRPA and the organization's prominent role in establishing new rules and regulations that were instrumental in fighting the dangerous and devastating Caldor Fire in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Awards and Recognition

- *Martindale-Hubbell* – AV Preeminent Peer Review Rating (since 1984)
- *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business* – "Senior Statesperson" in Gaming & Licensing Law (2020-2025), top ranked in Chambers since 2004
- *The Best Lawyers in America* – Gaming Law (2005-2026), Administrative & Regulatory Law (2021-2026), Business Organizations (2020-2026)

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- *The Best Lawyers in America* – “Lawyer of the Year” in Gaming Law (2012, 2018, 2021, 2024)
- *Mountain States Super Lawyers Magazine* – “Super Lawyer” (2007-2023)
- *UNLV Gaming Law Journal* – The Oral History of A.J. “Bud” Hicks, Vol. 8:13 (Nov. 2017)
- *Nevada Business Magazine* – “Legal Elite/Top Rank Attorneys” (2012)

Presentations and Publications

- Feature Story, “The Hicks Dynasty: A Legacy of Legal Excellence,” *Attorney at Law*, February 2025
- Feature Interview, “Tahoe Regional Agency Appointee Sees More Wildfire Hurdles,” *Law360*, September 24, 2021
- Panel Presenter, “Prosecution and Defense of Organized Crime,” District Conference – Anatomy of Litigation, U.S. District Court, District of Nevada, April 25, 2024

Professional Affiliations

- Member, Gaming Law Advisory Board, UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law (current)
- Member, Counselors of International Association of Gaming Advisors (1986-present)
- Founding Trustee, Past President and Member, International Association of Gaming Advisors (1980-present)
- Founding Chairman, Nevada Bar Association Gaming Law Section
- Past President, American Bar Association Gaming Law Committee

Community Engagement

- U.S. Presidential Appointee, Board of Governors of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (2017-2023)
- Member, California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission (2007-2009)
- Honorary Firefighter, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District (2008)
- Board Member & President, Glenbrook Homeowners Association Lake Tahoe (1999-2014)
- Member, Nevada Sesquicentennial Commission (2011-2014)
- Chairman, Nevada 150 Foundation (2012-2018)

McDonald Carano LLP (www.mcdonaldcarano.com)

Reno Office: 100 West Liberty Street, Tenth Floor, Reno, NV 89501, P: 775.788.2000

Las Vegas Office: 2300 West Sahara Ave., Suite 1200, Las Vegas, NV 89102, P: 702.873.4100