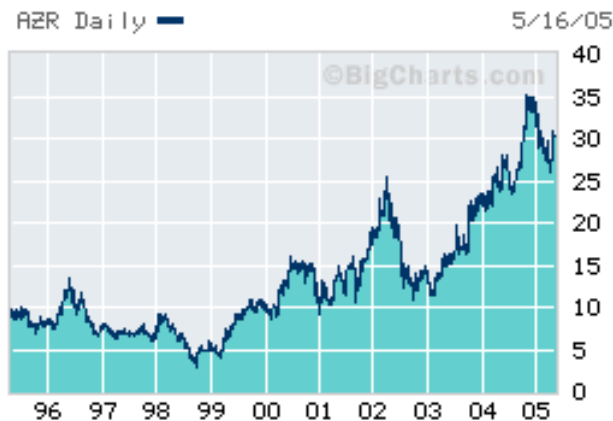


Dennis C. Gomes

President & CEO Gomes Gaming, Inc.

Compilation of Newspaper Articles



*Azta 1995-2005 (Arrival to Departure)

"I tell my employees, 'Don't put yourself in a box, everyone has the ability to be creative.'"



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Dennis Gomes: Can He Work His Magic at the Aladdin?

By John Morrissey

3,300 words

15 April 1987

Las Vegas Business Press

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English

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LAS VEGAS
REVIEW-JOURNAL
reviewjournal.com

Las Vegas, NV, US --

After more than a year in mothballs, the Aladdin Hotel and Casino reopened its doors on April Fools Day.

Despite the timing, Ginji Yasuda, the hotel's new owner, is hardly rushing in where angels fear to tread. Putting an 1100-room hotel back on line is no mean feat. But the Korean-born entrepreneur has assembled an impressive management team to launch the Aladdin on a magic carpet ride.

At the top of that list is **Dennis Gomes**, former **Wunderkind** at the Las Vegas Hilton. **Gomes**, now executive vice president and chief operating officer at the Aladdin, brought a number of his colleagues with him to Yasuda's operation.

He declined comment on local reports that he is being paid \$750,000 per year on a four year contract. "I prefer not to discuss the compensation arrangements," he said.

The Aladdin's managers were still recruiting key personnel even as the doors swung open at 12:01 a.m., April 1, but have most of those slots filled now.

The tasks facing the Aladdin are formidable -- a local casino operator likened it to "reheating yesterday's prime rib . . . it's very tough to do."

Gomes doesn't quibble about the difficulty of the task ahead. "It's tougher to open an existing facility as opposed to a new one because of the time constraints," **Gomes** says. "It's easier to open a new place because of the lead times while the facility is under construction."

"The most difficult problem was that we needed to hire 1000 people in four weeks and put them in the right slots so there was the appearance to the public that the place had been open for 10 years," he says.

But **Gomes** says the operation is operating smoothly and running in the black. He expects to show a profit this year.

Employees as 'family'

By all accounts, Yasuda has a genuine interest in the well-being of his employees, considering them as "family." Other business leaders familiar with Yasuda, concur in that assessment.

Gomes says he and Yasuda share that concern about employees. "My philosophy is that you should care about the people who work for you.

"People come to work for me because they know I'll treat them right," **Gomes** says. (One employee who made the move to the Aladdin from the Hilton reportedly says she decided to move because she would know more of her co-workers at the Aladdin than if she stayed behind at the Hilton.)

But Yasuda's decision to retain more than 400 employees while the hotel was shut down, incurring a monthly operating loss of \$850,000 in the process, wasn't only a reflection of Yasuda's interest in his employees.

"In a sense, retaining the 462 employees paid off because he has the most loyal, grateful employees you'll ever see," **Gomes** says.

The strategy also will likely have an unspoken result -- labor organizers are probably going to have a tough go trying to unionize the Aladdin's employees.

The Aladdin's organizational chart is modeled after the Mormon Stake, or the communist cell, **Gomes** says. **Gomes** and his managers implemented a similar system at the Hilton Reno and were establishing a similar program at the Las Vegas Hilton.

The hotel has monthly employee meetings, where management policy decisions are filtered down through the ranks for implementation. Information and feedback is brought back up through the ranks.

Gomes says the process is efficient and requires a minimum amount of meeting time.

"I talk to the five people who report to me. They talk to their employees and so on, until it gets down to the floor. There is also a system in place to bring information back up from the floor," he says. "And it works, believe me, it works."

In addition, all employees receive regular performance reviews. No immediate supervisor has unilateral firing or discipline powers. Any proposed disciplinary action must be reviewed before it is dispensed and all terminations must be approved by the senior vice president in charge of the that operational division.

Gomes says the system avoids the pitfalls of an unmotivated or indifferent middle management because upper level managers keep tabs on their subordinates and because the company takes care of its employees.

"You motivate people by taking care of them, sharing the wealth." He's convinced that by treating employees properly and recognizing their worth, the company is rewarded with improved morale and better performance.

"If you treat them fairly, and they enjoy coming to work, if you treat them consistently and with dignity, they will be happy. And a happy employee is a friendly employee.

"The difference between an administrator and a leader is that a true leader takes care of his people," **Gomes** says. Yasuda is a leader, he says, and when pressed, **Gomes** also claims the mantle.

"The organization reflects the top guy," he says. "Any operation is a reflection of the leader."

Go-getters on the second floor

Gomes, 42, brings a wealth of experience to Yasuda's operation. He's an accountant with a master's degree in business. **Gomes** spent 10 years as an investigator for the Nevada and New Jersey gaming commissions. After that experience, he became a casino manager, lending his talents to the Frontier, Silver Nugget and the Flamingo before moving on to a rescue mission at the Las Vegas Hilton three years ago.

"Every place is different. You have to evaluate each one separately. You can't make the Aladdin into the Hilton or Circus Circus."

Gomes says the Aladdin's strengths are its location near the four corners at Las Vegas Boulevard and Flamingo Road, a good layout that promotes traffic flow while offering the excitement of the lounge at the inside corner of the casino ell, and a "warm feeling" because of the low ceilings.

The hotel's Bagdad Theatre will debut a new show April 24, described as a "Brazilian/African," high-energy show that is currently touring Europe.

Gomes bristles when asked about the stereotypical image that some Las Vegas, (and uninitiated newspaper reporters), have of him as a buttoned-down, bean counting corporate type. **Gomes** notes that before he developed a national reputation as a "gung-ho, idealistic crime buster" while with gaming regulators, he first had to fight off the "bean counter image" when he switched from accounting to law enforcement. Then he had to fight off the cop image when he moved to casino management.

"I'm more detail-oriented than Yasuda, but I hate details too. I have my people look after those things."

Both men are apparently conceptually oriented. "We both want to be different from other people. He's got a lot of patience and I don't. I am learning that from him."

Gomes, who has studied and taught karate, says the experience provides discipline that is applicable to a business setting. "In Karate, I wait for my opponent to come to me and then counter his move. But you need to stay ahead of the other person mentally -- you need to think ahead to the next move or sucker him into a bad move.

Magic in the marketing plan?

But finding the Aladdin's niche will be important to its future performance.

"Every casino now in bankruptcy, with the exception of the Marina, was at one time the most popular, premiere, most profitable casino in town," he notes. "But they failed because management didn't stay on top of a dynamic marketplace. We can't be what everybody else is. Every casino has a product cycle. What you want to do is do something different at the top of the cycle so you always ride the crest."

Gomes wouldn't provide a timeframe to get the Aladdin on top of that cycle. But he noted it took two years to reach the top at the Frontier and about two years to get there at the Hilton. While not committing to a two-year time frame at the Aladdin, he conceded that would be a reasonable time period.

The key to riding that crest is a marketing program for the hotel to position itself.

"We will set our own marketing plan and R&R \Advertising Co.} will facilitate it with the ads, the creative stuff," **Gomes** says.

Gomes says the emphasis will be to attract two distinct markets -- slot players, with a "loose slots" promotion and high rollers, with an emphasis on personalized service.

Those two markets offer casino operators the best profit margins, **Gomes** says. Slot machines provide a 60-70 percent margin while table games produce a maximum of 30 percent. But the highest per player profit is produced by high rollers.

"With loose slots, you have to convey to public that they really are looser." **Gomes** says. Another way to build slot business is with the recently introduced slot player management systems which identify and track good customers with the use of a magnetic card. The Aladdin's slot management system is not yet operational, **Gomes** says.

He agrees they are two distinct markets, but claims the Hilton was successful at attracting both. He plans to implement a similar strategy at the Aladdin.

"Friendly treatment is important to both groups. But with the high rollers, you have to give them the most personal attention that they can get anywhere."

The Aladdin will concentrate its marketing efforts west of the Mississippi, especially in Texas and Oklahoma, and in the Far East, especially in Japan. The Aladdin is hoping to

play off Yasuda's reputation as an experienced Tokoyo hotel operator with a variety of Japanese business interests and contracts. In addition, his Nevada gaming license application got a lot of publicity in Japan.

According to testimony before the gaming commission, the Aladdin will also offer high rollers a liberal credit policy, up to 35 percent.

Gomes says the Aladdin will fly in its good customers on commercial flights until the hotel's order for an MD-80, a 100-seat jet that will be set up to carry 24 people, is delivered next year.

The hotel will rely on a local advertising strategy, based on **Gomes'** belief that "the most recent message in the consumers mind is the most important." Look for billboards to go up soon along Interstate 15 to attract the Southern California motorist market, he said.

The Aladdin has several other assets that can be used to build business -- its 7000 seat performing arts theatre and the city's fifth largest convention facility to name two -- but plans are not yet firm on those efforts. The hotel's sales staff is brand new and convention marketing takes time, two or three years for the larger shows. **Gomes** says the sales department has already attracted small meetings.

Management is also projecting a "significant expansion" at some future date, but **Gomes** won't say how many additional rooms are planned or specify the construction timetable.

Those plans are not to defend the resort from announced plans for the 6000-room Southstar resort or other operators plans, **Gomes** says, but by "confidence that we could fill additional rooms if we had them."

"There is a synergisim on the Strip. \{Those plans\} will benefit us no matter what is done. I hope they build all around us," **Gomes** says.

Ginji Yasuda: A Charmed Life Before the Aladdin

With the re-opening of the Aladdin Hotel and Casino, Ginji Yasuda is the latest of the big operators to move onto the Las Vegas Strip.

Yasuda is the first foreign national to be granted a Nevada gaming license, in action taken earlier this year.

But despite the grueling gaming commission investigation and the public scrutiny that came along with it, or perhaps because of it, he remains in the background.

Yasuda declined a request for an interview, but the transcripts of the public licensing hearings illustrates some of his background and indicate the difficulty both Yasuda and state regulators had in processing his gaming license application.

At one point, Yasuda's Japanese accountant was called upon to testify about the ins and outs of various financial transactions that caught the eye of gaming investigators. In

addition to his lawyers and accountants, Yasuda also had an interpreter standing by to clarify questions.

This snippet illustrates the communications difficulty on both sides.

Grant Sawyer, Yasuda's lawyer. "Would the board like to hear from Mr. Tomiya, \the accountant.} Ma'am, Mr. Tomiya speaks no English."

Michael Rumbolz, gaming board member: "I speak no Japanese, Governor."

Yoshi Hendricks, Yasuda's interpreter: "And I am not an accountant."

Press accounts invariably refer to him as a "high roller." He plays the ponies -- he and his wife Yoko own about 50 thoroughbreds stabled in California, Kentucky and Japan -- and he knows his way around a gaming table.

But Ginji Yasuda is much more than a high roller. Associates say he is a born entrepreneur, a sincere boss and shrewd international businessman.

And he's packed a lot of living into his 55 years. Consider the variety of these life anecdotes:

* He's not Japanese, he was born in Korea and his family immigrated to Japan when he was 2-years-old. His father earned a university degree and a built a modest family nestegg into a real estate fortune, especially in hotel and apartment management.

* Yasuda was the European skeet shooting champion in 1962, and was selected as a member of the Korean skeet team at the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

* He spent time in jail 20 years ago for disrupting a Japanese shareholder meeting when his family and the national railway company got into a dispute concerning the 2000-room Atami Haccheon Hotel Spa.

* He purchased the Central Apartment complex in Tokyo -- which was sold in 1985 for \$120 million partially to finance the purchase of the Aladdin -- in 1962 when he assumed a \$300,000 debt on the property.

* During an 18 month period in 1985-86, he made \$3.9 million in the foreign currency market.

Yasuda and his wife, Yoko Katsumata Yasuda, have been married for 27 years and have three children: Rika Yasuda, employed by the family's Japanese operations; Kanetomi "John" Yasuda, a third-year law student at Boston University; and Rina Yasuda, who also attends Boston University.

The Yasudas have lived in California since 1971. Both Yasuda and his wife are licensed for horse racing in California and Japan. Although Yasuda likes to bet on his horses -- he

reported racing income of \$400,000 in 1985 -- Mrs. Yasuda told the Nevada Gaming Commission that she doesn't like to gamble.

(That prompted Gaming Control Board Chairman S. Barton Jacka to ask Mrs. Yasuda to keep an eye on her husband and make certain that he stayed within the bounds of the suggestions that state regulators had set out for his gambling conduct during the licensing period. "I should have talked to you sooner," Jacka remarked.)

(At another point during the hearings, Yasuda's son John was asked whether he had ever given his father advice about his business practices.

"No," John said, "he lectures me.")

During 30 years of business in Japan, Ginji Yasuda has been involved in only two business lawsuits, both times as a plaintiff, a record his Nevada lawyers characterized as amazing during testimony before the gaming commission.

Yasuda explained that his father parlayed his native intelligence and modest family means into a real estate fortune. His father got into the market by acquiring small parcels and building up.

The family moved to Japan when Yasuda's father was about 22. The senior Yasuda worked part time in insurance while attending school and tried his hand at several businesses after graduating -- the newspaper business, a short-lived trading company which imported elastic and tried to start a bank, which was foiled by officials. The family apparently suffered discrimination because of their Korean background.

The gaming commission turned up several minor arrests during Yasuda's younger days. His father opened a tavern, where Yasuda worked as a bouncer while in school. Yasuda had a couple of minor scrapes with the law as a young man. He was apparently accused of assaulting a patron at his father's bar, while working as a bouncer.

"He threw undesireables out and kept undesireables from coming in," said his Nevada lawyers of that experience.

Yasuda was also arrested with several classmates who were "horsing around" at a friend's house, which happened to be next door to a police dormitory. Dorm residents apparently asked their neighbors to quiet down, and Yasuda's pals apparently "lipped off" to the official in charge. They were released to their parents several hours later.

Yasuda began his career in the family-owned Atami Spa hotel in 1960. Also that year, he became the manager of the New Ginza Building Co. In 1962, he acquired and began managing the Central Apartment building. He became manager of the Royal Co., a premium hotel in Tokyo, in 1971.

As Yasuda tells the story, his interest in the Aladdin Hotel was happenstance.

While in Las Vegas during late 1984, he was told by Ash Resnick, a professional greeter and junket organizer, that the Aladdin was for sale. Yasuda initially attempted to buy the first deed of trust secured by the hotel, but was pushed into a bidding war after the hotel went belly up and filed for bankruptcy.

He decided that as long as he'd already plunked down \$54 million to buy the Aladdin, he might as well undergo the investigatory gauntlet to obtain a gaming license to operate the hotel. He told gaming regulators that since he'd been on the players side, he thought he might as well some experience on the pit side.

In addition, he describes the Aladdin purchase as a challenge to create and put in place new Japanese high technology operations equipment in the hotel.

Yasuda's contact with Resnick and Ralph DiDonato attracted the gaming commission's interest. Despite a \$15,000 tip Yasuda reportedly gave DiDonato for cashing in a \$380,000 winning horse bet, Yasuda assured state regulators he has nothing to do with either man.

(He explained that tip to state regulators by saying he wasn't familiar with American tipping standards, and that after all, 15 grand was less than 5 percent of \$350,000!)

To finance the Aladdin purchase, Yasuda sold the Central Apartments for \$120 million in 1984. But Japanese law requires him to reinvest all of the sale proceeds by next year or face a 95 percent capital gains tax.

In addition to the \$54 million Aladdin purchase and \$20 million in renovation at the hotel, Yasuda plans to buy four jet aircraft, using one for the hotel and leasing the other three to Japan Airlines. He has built a \$10 million high technology software development laboratory in Tokyo and has purchased "substantial real estate" in the town of Atami, Japan.

Although the software development company is based in Japan, a U.S. division may eventually be based in Las Vegas. Yasuda, along with NEC and Mitsubishi, have contracts with the Japanese Telephone Co. and Japanese Police Bureau to provide telecommunications equipment.

The new company, called High Tech USA, is being managed by Richard Butcher, who was formerly Yasuda's chief executive officer at the Aladdin Hotel during the renovation process.

Yasuda already has a working relationship with NEC resulting from computer and surveillance system installations at the Aladdin. NEC installed state-of-the-art systems at the hotel, at a reduced price, to showcase its high technology products.

Former Nevada Exec Named President of Trump Casino

313 words

14 March 1991

The Associated Press

English

(Copyright 1991. The Associated Press)



ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) - A former Nevada gaming executive has become the fifth president of Donald Trump's Taj Mahal Casino Resort in the property's troubled first year.

Trump announced Wednesday the appointment of **Dennis Gomes**, who was in charge of the Golden Nugget Casino Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev.

Gomes formerly directed the Nevada Gaming Control Board's Audit Division and the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement's special investigations unit.

His experience in the Nevada gaming industry includes top management positions at Summa Corp. and Hilton Hotels Corp. casinos.

Gomes also was a senior executive at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas and was president of the Dunes Hotel & Country Club before becoming president of the Golden Nugget.

The Taj Mahal opened April 2 to great fanfare as the city's largest and most lavish casino. The property has led the city's casinos in gross gaming revenues but has failed to meet the average \$1.3 million a day that analysts said it needed to break even.

Walter Haybert was the casino's first president when it opened. But within days, he was replaced by Willard C. "Bucky" Howard amid problems with the casino's slot machines.

Then former Resorts International Inc. President I.G. "Jack" Davis came out of retirement to become the third president.

Edward Tracy, the man who ran Trump's Atlantic City holdings, took over last month as attorney Nicholas Ribis took Tracy's old job.

Tracy will be Ribis' assistant when **Gomes** begins his presidential duties at the Taj, Ribis said Wednesday.

Next month, the casino plans to file a Chapter 11 petition in U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Under a proposed restructuring, Taj bondholders who loaned Trump \$675 million have agreed to accept a lower interest rate in exchange for half the equity.

Trump Selects Gomes To Be New President Of Taj Mahal Casino

235 words

14 March 1991

The Wall Street Journal

English

(Copyright (c) 1991, Dow Jones & Co., Inc.)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

NEW YORK -- **Dennis Gomes** was named president of Donald Trump's Taj Mahal **Casino** in Atlantic City, N.J., the fifth person to hold the position since the facility opened last April.

"This gives us an opportunity to bring in a professional manager who was the finest casino operator available to us," said Nicholas Ribis, who heads Mr. Trump's Atlantic City casino operations.

Mr. **Gomes**, formerly president of Golden Nugget Corp.'s downtown Las Vegas, Nev., casino, succeeds Edward Tracy, who will become chief operating officer of Mr. Trump's Atlantic City organization.

The removal of Mr. Tracy from the Taj Mahal is not expected to please bondholders, who have praised his abilities as a casino operator. The bondholders and Mr. Trump are putting the finishing touches on a restructuring proposal that would give the bondholders 50% of the casino's equity in exchange for lowering the interest on \$675 million in junk bonds backed by the facility, which is the largest in Atlantic City.

Mr. **Gomes**'s hiring completes a management shake-up of all three Trump-owned Atlantic City casinos. New presidents were named recently for Mr. Trump's two other casinos, the Trump Castle and Trump Plaza. Both of those facilities face the possibility of restructuring when sinking fund and interest payments come due on June 15.

Nugget chief quits to work for Trump

Howard Stutz

14 March 1991

The Las Vegas Review-Journal

7b

English

(Copyright 1991)

LAS VEGAS
REVIEW-JOURNAL
reviewjournal.com

Golden Nugget President **Dennis Gomes** resigned Wednesday to accept a similar position with the financially ailing Trump Taj Mahal resort in Atlantic City.

Gomes, 46, who has headed the downtown hotel-casino since April 1989, will become president and chief executive officer of Atlantic City's largest resort, the Trump Organization announced in a two-page statement.

He becomes the second high-level Golden Nugget Inc. executive to leave Las Vegas for one of the three Atlantic City casinos owned by developer Donald Trump since January.

Kevin DeSanctis, who was head of casino operations at The Mirage, resigned in January to become president and chief operating officer of Trump Plaza. DeSanctis received a temporary gaming license from New Jersey regulators Wednesday.

Former Gaming Control Board Chairman Mike Rumbolz also is working for Trump in Atlantic City, serving as executive vice president of Trump Castle.

Gomes, a former division chief with the control board, has held various casino industry management positions in Las Vegas since 1978 with the Summa Corp., Frontier, Las Vegas Hilton, Aladdin and the Dunes.

He was Chief of Special Investigations for the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement in 1977 before returning to Nevada.

Gomes' working relationship with company Chairman Steve Wynn reportedly developed a rift in recent weeks over outstanding credit owed by Golden Nugget casino customers.

Gomes made a trip to the Far East in February to collect on some of the debts.

A move to the Taj Mahal by **Gomes** had been rumored since DeSanctis, his longtime friend, took the position with Trump in Atlantic City.

Other reports had **Gomes** discussing a possible return to the Dunes in a lease-management agreement with resort owner Masao Nangaku.

As head of the Golden Nugget, the 1,900-room resort turned in record earnings. In 1990, the Golden Nugget gaming revenues exceeded \$150 million, non-gaming revenues were more than \$60 million and hotel occupancy was above 92 percent.

Gomes, who gave notice to Wynn on Wednesday, could not be reached for comment.

In the statement, **Gomes** said he was looking "forward to the exciting challenges that await me at the Taj."

Trump was quoted as being "thrilled" to have **Gomes** running the Taj Mahal.

Neither Wynn nor a spokesman for Golden Nugget could be reached for comment.

With the 1,200-room Taj Mahal, which has been open for 11 months, **Gomes'** task to make it profitable won't be simple.

Having won more than \$53.1 million from gamblers in the first two months of 1991, the casino is the leading money-winner of Atlantic City's 12 resorts. But it is not making enough at the gaming tables to cover its debt-load.

Trump will put the casino into a prepackaged Chapter 11 bankruptcy next month to lighten the debt and give his lenders 50 percent equity in the lavish resort.

Gomes is replacing Ed Tracy, who is becoming an assistant to Nick Ribis, chief executive officer for the three Trump casinos and Trump's non-gaming Atlantic City hotel.

Gomes said his management style "sounds simplistic and kind of corny" but relies upon creating a friendly casino worker without resorting to "friendliness training and education programs." Instead, he said, employees are treated well and channel that treatment to customers.

Gomes is a black belt and credits karate for contributing to his own sense of self-discipline and confidence.

"You know you can handle a lot," he said. "It also teaches you to respect the power of other people."

As for his own boss, who has been known to launch into a tirade or two, **Gomes** said, "It's a challenge because he's very demanding and a perfectionist. He challenges your ability."

Gomes would not comment on his stint at the Golden Nugget, which is suing **Gomes** for allegedly violating his contract. In the latest flap between two high-profile casino magnates, Trump has countersued Golden Nugget Inc. chairman Steve Wynn for allegedly breaking the contract by verbally abusing **Gomes**.

Before his presidency at the Golden Nugget, the 47-year-old **Gomes** directed the Nevada Gaming Control Board's Audit Division and the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement's special investigations unit.

Gomes, who has a master's degree in business administration from the University of Washington, said his law enforcement bent grew from his initial desire to be the "best FBI agent the FBI ever had."

Frustration that few people shared his love for law enforcement drove him into the casino industry, but didn't dim his memories of the work.

"I still love it more than anything I've ever done," **Gomes** said.

ATLANTIC CITY; Mr. Fix-It

By BILL KENT

16 April 1995

The New York Times

Late Edition - Final

12

English

Copyright 1995 The New York Times.

The New York Times



When casino executives gather, two questions are asked more than any others these days: When and where will Steve Wynn -- whose Golden Nugget Mirage brought the Las Vegas Strip back from the dead -- build a casino in Atlantic City? And will he get **Dennis Gomes** to run it?

In 1991, Mr. **Gomes** (the name rhymes with homes) was hired away from Mr. Wynn to save Donald Trump's Taj Mahal casino complex. While the rescue is still in progress, Mr. **Gomes's** accomplishment has been viewed as miraculous. In four years he has turned the Taj Mahal from a hopeless money loser to Atlantic City's top-grossing casino -- still losing money, but now with potential for full recovery.

At the age of 51, he is an oddity in Atlantic City, the town's most unconventional casino president. In the 1970's, he hounded mobsters in Las Vegas casino hotels as an investigator for the Nevada Gaming Commission, and by his own account he was something of a zealous cowboy. ("Casino," a Martin Scorsese film scheduled for release in the fall, is a Mafia's-eye tale based on Mr. **Gomes's** dogged investigation of Las Vegas's Stardust Casino, where mobsters spirited away \$20 million from the casino's gambling tables.)

Mr. **Gomes** briefly headed the special investigations section for New Jersey's Division of Gaming Enforcement, and then went to work for casinos, "because I knew the business from the inside out, and, believe it or not, I liked a lot of the people who were in it."

He says he has gambled exactly once -- he lost \$2,500 at craps in Las Vegas and never went back to the tables. He refuses to travel on business unless he can take his wife or whole family with him. He meditates, works out six days a week, takes frequent three-day fasts, splits rocks with his bare hands and makes light of the \$1.8 million salary Mr. Trump paid him last year.

In an interview, he noted that his contract gives him the option of resigning from the Trump Organization if he isn't given an equity package to his liking. Asked why that was important to him, he replied, "You have to keep score."

And score he has. Gamblers lost \$582.2 million under the Taj's enormous chandeliers in 1994, making it the nation's fourth-highest-grossing casino, behind the Golden Nugget Mirage and the MGM Grand in Las Vegas and the Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut.

"He's one of the most talented executives in the casino industry, and he's extremely well liked by his employees," said Marvin Roffman, a Philadelphia-based casino industry analyst who predicted in 1989 that the Taj Mahal would be the biggest money loser on the Boardwalk. The casino is still losing money -- \$363 million last year -- but Mr. Roffman said that was because the casino had been burdened with \$675 million in debt at 14 percent interest. From the standpoint of operating profits, he said, the Taj is doing very well.

"As they pay the debt down, they'll do even better," Mr. Roffman said. "Is this because of **Dennis Gomes**? Absolutely."

Mr. **Gomes** says the key was in changing his employees' attitudes. "The secret of leadership, the real difference I made here, was in letting my people know that I really care about them, and in getting them to really care about themselves and the job they're doing."

It is evident around the Taj that Mr. **Gomes**'s employees are not afraid to be convivial with him. Strolling about the Taj's airport-length concourses in his white karate uniform and conspicuous black belt (he established weekly training sessions for himself and his employees) or, later, in navy corduroy slacks and a pullover (he does not own a suit), Mr. **Gomes** responds warmly when employees call him by his first name.

"I'm a very inner-oriented person," he said. "I don't derive my happiness from money, power or what car I drive."

He drives a black 12-cylinder \$135,000 Mercedes 600SL because it makes him miserable?

"If you took it away from me," he replied, "if I lost this all tomorrow, it wouldn't bother me in the least."

Donald's debt.(investing in junk bonds issued by Taj Mahal casino, owned by Donald Trump)

268 words

9 October 1995

Forbes

134

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English

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DEFYING REASON and sad experience, investors raced to buy the stock Donald Trump was offering in his Atlantic City casino empire this past June. Defying gravity, Trump Hotels & Casino Resorts' shares (DJT) have risen 30% since the IPO, to a recent 181/4. That's around 10 times estimated 1995 cash flow.

If you must bet on Trump, better to buy his junk bonds--especially the \$780 million in bonds issued by the Taj Mahal casino. The 11.35% first mortgage notes are valued at about five times cash flow.

Like most Atlantic City casinos, Taj has done well this year, with cash flow in the second quarter at \$38 million, up 53% from 1994. The boffo performance has already boosted Taj bonds 23 points in 1995; but at a recent 88 cents on the dollar, they still carry a juicy 16.6% yield to maturity. The bonds could reach the mid-90s in the next few months, says Steven Ruggiero, a casino bond analyst at Chemical Securities.

Taj bonds may rise for another reason. Rumors have Trump working on a merger of the Taj with his public company, which controls the Trump Plaza casino and a casino under development in Gary, Ind. Taj bondholders could get a mix of cash, stock and debt for their paper.

One caveat: Taj owes much of its recent success to President **Dennis Gomes**. His contract expires this fall, but Ruggiero thinks Trump will do what he must to keep him.

Gomes to run Tropicana for Aztar

Marian Green

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Less than a month after departing Trump Taj Mahal, **Dennis Gomes** has resurfaced in an Aztar Corp. executive position that will put him in head-to-head competition with his old boss.

Gomes has been appointed to a newly created position of president of resort operations, reporting directly to Aztar Chairman Paul Rubeli, the Phoenix-based company announced Monday.

He will be responsible for directing and managing the TropWorld in Atlantic City, N.J., and the Tropicana in Las Vegas. His appointment is subject to gaming regulatory approvals.

While serving the last four years as president and chief operating officer of the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, **Gomes** positioned the resort to become that market's highest producer of revenue and cash flow.

In early October, Donald Trump announced **Gomes** had been terminated "with great regret." **Gomes** later said his departure resulted from his cancellation of his contract after Trump declined to give him an equity share in the company.

Gomes also previously served as president and chief operating officer of Mirage Resorts Inc.'s Golden Nugget in Las Vegas and held senior posts at other Las Vegas hotels.

Rubeli called **Gomes** an important addition to the company's senior management team and cited his leadership in taking the Taj Mahal's operating cash flow from about \$80 million to the almost \$150 million estimated this year.

"We are looking forward to Dennis contributing significantly to our expected cash flow increases at TropWorld next year as we complete our major hotel room expansion and become the largest hotel in Atlantic City," Rubeli said.

His Las Vegas experience will be "instrumental in capitalizing on Tropicana's outstanding location at the new four corners of the Strip," Rubeli added.

Gomes said he is eager to start his new job.

"The expansion program into new jurisdictions that Aztar has initiated, along with the land-based resort operations that I will oversee, offers tremendous potential for growth and for building the value of the company," he said.

Aztar also operates the Ramada Express in Laughlin and Casino Aztar in Caruthersville, Mo. It also has been selected to operate an Evansville, Ind., casino riverboat.

Dennis Gomes is no chicken

JUDY DEHAVEN
STAR-LEDGER STAFF
7 December 2001
The Star-Ledger Newark, NJ



Dennis Gomes knows a good idea when he sees it, even if it comes in a daydream.

Last year, the president of Aztar Corp.'s resort operations sat at his desk and racked his brain for a new promotion for the company's Tropicana casino in Atlantic City.

He locked himself in his office. He surfed the Internet. He stared at his desk.

Then, out of nowhere, an image appeared. He saw a large dome. A gambler rose into it. Music played. Smoke billowed. Money swirled. And the gambler grabbed up cash.

The idea for the Fortune Dome was born, and except for the smoke, it came out just like **Gomes** imagined it. It's been so successful that the casino often has to schedule in the players who had to gamble for hours to accrue enough points to go into the Dome.

Few businessmen would boast that a daydream was the impetus for a successful idea.

For **Gomes**, thinking like that - and ideas like chicken tick-tack-toe - have made him the most unconventional executive in the business.

"I tell my employees, 'Don't put yourself in a box,'" he said. "Everyone has the ability to be creative."

He started out as a construction worker, earned degrees in accounting and finance, then became what some describe as the Elliot Ness of Las Vegas by helping to dismantle the mob's hold over the city - the skimming operation he helped uncover as a Nevada Gaming Control Board investigator was portrayed in the movie "Casino."

He tired of battling mobsters and entered the corporate side, only to tussle with two industry heavyweights: He traded barbs with former boss Steve Wynn in court and later walked out on Donald Trump after he turned the Taj Mahal around. (Trump said he fired **Gomes**; **Gomes** said he canceled his contract.)

Along the way, the 57-year-old got a black belt in karate and splits cement blocks in his spare time. But in business, he is the Boardwalk's Idea Man.

Remember when the Taj tried to revive the High Diving Horse act from the Boardwalk's carnival heyday, except it used mules instead? Or when Blanche the Singing Bartender emerged as casino celebrity, worthy of a spot on Rosie O'Donnell's show?

Or how about when the Tropicana brought in the morbid "Torture Through the Ages" exhibit? Or, most recently, when the Trop grabbed headlines around the world by challenging gamblers to a game of tick-tack-toe against a chicken?

Those were all **Gomes'** ideas, and, save for the diving mules, nearly all found success.

"Dennis has unique skills," said Mark Sandson, a Tropicana lawyer who has known **Gomes** for 20 years. "He doesn't think traditionally, like a corporate executive."

Gomes seems to have a knack for reviving the carnival acts casinos have used since the 1930s, when the legendary Harolds Club in Reno had a mouse pick the winning number in a roulette game, said Bill Eadington, director of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming in Reno.

"This kind of gimmickry has been around a long time," Eadington said. "Whether having the gimmicks attracts more people - that's hard to determine. They're not good for the long term, but they can be quite effective in the short term."

Aztar Chairman Paul Rubeli, however, credits **Gomes** for helping boost the Tropicana's cash flow by providing non-cash incentives to lure gamblers into the casino.

Gomes' gimmicks and additional hotel rooms built since he started in 1995 have helped to more than double the Tropicana's cash flow, to \$112.6 million last year. Last quarter, the company shattered analysts' estimates by 9 cents a share.

"We are in the business of creating fun, fantasy, excitement and entertainment," Rubeli said. "**Dennis Gomes** probably epitomizes that best of anyone."

Gomes is quick to give the people at Aztar credit for give his zany ideas a try - especially Tropicana President Pam Popielarski, who is his alter ego.

"Pam pays attention to all the really important stuff, like organizing and detailing," he said. "My mind is always going off in so many different ways it's hard for me to sit."

He has recreated nearly every corner of the Tropicana since he joined Aztar, turning money-losers into jackpots by infusing carnival-style games once common along the Boardwalk. But nothing comes close to the Chicken Challenge.

Starting at 11:30 most mornings, throngs of adults stand impatient for a chance to win \$10,000 in a game of tick-tack-toe against a chicken. So far, just three people have beaten the birds; one chicken, Michelle, was sent back to the farm after losing twice in a row.

Gomes is proud to admit he stole the idea from this son-in-law, Jonathan Swain, president of Palace Station Casino in Nevada. As a joke, Swain told his colleagues he wanted to bring tick-tack-toe-playing chickens into the casino. To **Gomes**, the idea was no joke. He had his team research it.

They found articles about tick-tack-toe-playing chickens stolen from the Pennsylvania Fair last spring. That led them to the Boger family, which owned the stolen chickens. The Bogers turned a casino office into a chicken coop. And yes, it has an ocean view.

There were skeptics.

"Everyone thought Dennis was stark-raving nuts," Sandson said. "They thought the customers were so sophisticated they would think it was hokey."

But the Chicken Challenge has been such a success that a Palace Station spokeswoman said, "We're all kicking ourselves in the butt for not doing it." Swain declined comment.

Not all **Gomes'** ideas are winners. His biggest flop: the recreation of the diving horse off Steel Pier in front of the Taj.

Protesters swarmed the place. Trump wanted to stop the show, but **Gomes** said he convinced him the attention was drawing more gamblers. Trump let it continue, **Gomes** said, until he heard the crowd shout, "Make Trump jump. Make Trump jump."

Failure has never stopped **Gomes**, yet he doesn't get comfortable with success. He's already working on the next big thing, although he claims he's not sure what it will be.

Nothing a little daydreaming on company time couldn't cure. Judy DeHaven covers the casino industry. She can be reached at (609) 348-1934 or by e-mail at jdehaven@starledger.com.

PROFILE: DENNIS GOMES Age: 57 Education: Bachelors degree in accounting from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. Masters degree in finance from the University of Washington. Career: Started as a construction worker. Later worked as casino investigator. President of Golden Nugget in Las Vegas; president of Trump Taj Mahal; president of resort operations for Aztar. Hobbies: Martial arts. **Gomes** has a fourth-degree black belt in Tang Soo Do and second-degree black belt in Hapkido. Family: Has five children, two grandchildren. Met current wife, Barbara, while chasing mobster Joe Agosto. Agosto produced the Folies Bergere, which **Gomes** described as the ultimate girl show. Barbara was one of its dancers. Quote: Its our goal to do creative things, so our customers can have fun on our property.

'Whales' tough for casinos to bank on

JUDY DeHAVEN
STAR-LEDGER STAFF
706 words
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The Star-Ledger Newark, NJ



They called him the Warrior.

The casinos wooed him. And feared him. He could make or break the bank.

Akio Kashiwagi was one of the biggest high-rollers of his time.

He once took Trump Plaza for \$6 million, then came back and lost \$11 million. His biggest streak brought him \$19 million from an Australian casino.

The winning. The losing. Millions at a time.

It's the reason the table games business has gotten so tough. If a casino gets beat, it can drag down the profits of an entire company. And if it wins, it can still lose - if a player refuses to make good on his debt.

Dennis Gomes, president of Resort Operations for the Aztar Corp., knows this all too well.

In what has become part of casino lore - a version of it even made it in the movie "Casino" - **Gomes** went head-to-head with Kashiwagi at the baccarat table.

It was the mid-1980s. **Gomes** had just leased the Dunes, then a money-losing casino in Las Vegas, and had to come up with a way to make \$950,000 a month.

Bringing in a whale - the term casinos use for high-rollers - was one way to turn things around quickly. **Gomes** pursued the biggest whale he knew.

Kashiwagi agreed to come with \$5 million in cash, and **Gomes** borrowed \$5 million for his bank.

Gomes' accountant, John Sztremp, now with Wynn Resorts, determined the Dunes had a 25 percent chance of winning Kashiwagi's \$5 million. The gambler had a had a 20 percent of winning the casino's \$5 million.

Gomes decided the odds were good enough.

Kashiwagi started playing. And winning. At \$100,000 a bet, his stacks of chips grew bigger and bigger.

Gomes couldn't watch anymore. Within four hours, Kashiwagi had won **Gomes'** \$5 million. And he wanted to leave.

That is one of the problems for a casino in the high-end business - gamblers who quit when they're ahead. **Gomes** told Clifford Choi, Kashiwagi's host at the Dunes, to do whatever it took to get him back at the tables.

But Kashiwagi was intent. He put his money in a satchel and boarded a plane. He wanted to fly to Los Angeles and pick up a connection to Japan.

The plane, chartered by the Dunes, started down the runway, then stopped; Choi informed Kashiwagi the pilot felt too unlucky to fly.

So Kashiwagi said he wanted to fly a commercial plane; Choi took him to the airline that he knew wouldn't make the Los Angeles connection.

Kashiwagi said he wanted to fly to Los Angeles anyway and stay for the night. Choi reminded him it would cost \$2,000 to put him and his entourage up in a hotel.

Why pay, Choi asked, if you could stay at the Dunes for free? He could have dinner. The casino would bring out its best wine. Choi would take him to see the latest topless dancing show.

And he wouldn't have to gamble.

Kashiwagi conceded.

"He was a pretty greedy guy," **Gomes** said. He went back, ate dinner and drank the bottle of wine.

Then he agreed to play. But just \$10,000 a hand. He didn't want the casino to take his money.

Kashiwagi won that first \$10,000 bet. "And you could tell he was thinking, 'If I had bet \$100,000, I'd have \$90,000 more,'" **Gomes** said. So Kashiwagi upped his next wager to \$100,000. And won.

But the winning streak couldn't last. When the night was over, Kashiwagi lost the \$5 million he had won from the casino, plus the \$5 million he brought with him.

"That night I was resurrected," **Gomes** said. "He was playing with my reputation, my money, my career, my future, everything."

Kashiwagi went on to win and lose millions in the next few years. It finally caught up to him.

In 1992, shortly after telling his creditors he couldn't come up with \$10 million he owed, he was found in the kitchen of his Japanese fortress, hacked to death with a samurai sword.

Dennis C. Gomes, President, Resort Operations, Aztar Corporation Elected President of the Casino Association of New Jersey

4 December 2002

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ATLANTIC CITY, N.J., Dec. 4 /PRNewswire/ -- Timothy Wilmott, President of the **Casino** Association of New Jersey, announced that Dennis C. **Gomes**, President, Resort Operations, Aztar Corporation, Tropicana Casino And Resort's parent company, has been elected as the next President of the Casino Association of New Jersey (CANJ) effective January 1, 2003.

"For the past four years, the Casino Association of New Jersey has presented a unified voice on issues important to the Garden State's gaming industry," said Timothy Wilmott, Eastern Division President of Harrah's Entertainment, Inc. "During this time, we have seen a tremendous increase in both proposed and actual casino legislative developments that will continue to position Atlantic City as a premier entertainment destination," Wilmott added. "I have greatly enjoyed representing our industry during my two-year tenure as President of the Casino Association of New Jersey. As I turn this position over to my successor, I know that **Dennis Gomes** will prove to be a strong and dynamic leader."

During the administration of Timothy Wilmott, the CANJ worked closely with legislators on amendments to the Casino Control Act as well as legislation that encourages development and expansion of Atlantic City gaming properties. Mr. Wilmott continued the tradition of monthly meetings with Trustees of the Association and encouraged open lines of communication with the Association and government and business leadership.

The CANJ is comprised of membership representing all 12 operating casinos in Atlantic City and serves as a unified voice for the New Jersey casino industry.

"I am proud to be selected as President of the Casino Association of New Jersey and look forward to continuing the fine representation of our industry set forth by Tim Wilmott," said Dennis C. **Gomes**. "Tim and the other trustees have made great strides in the last two years. By doing so, Tim has provided us with a strong foundation upon which to grow this organization."

Since 1996, Dennis C. **Gomes** has served as President, Resort Operations of Aztar Corporation. As Aztar's President of Resort Operations, **Gomes** oversees two of the company's premier properties: Tropicana Casino And Resort in Atlantic City and the Tropicana Resort And Casino in Las Vegas. With over 35 years experience in the gaming industry, Dennis is perhaps best known for his innovative thinking and creative approach to business.

Dennis also has a fascinating history in law enforcement. A one-time law enforcement officer in Las Vegas, NV, he later held various executive positions in several large casino hotels in Las Vegas. In fact, the film "Casino" was based on an investigation led by Dennis while serving as Investigator with Nevada State Control Board. He came well prepared for the job of Chief of Special Investigations of the New Jersey State Division of Gaming Enforcement where he contributed significantly to the development of New Jersey casino internal control regulations. Dennis earned a Master's Degree at the University of Washington and is a certified public accountant (CPA) in three states.

As father of five and head of a "family" of 5,000 Tropicana employees in Atlantic City and 2,500 employees in Las Vegas, Dennis feels a strong sense of responsibility to the community.

May 10, 2005

By DONALD WITTKOWSKI Staff Writer,
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Imaginative casino executive Gomes leaving Tropicana

ATLANTIC CITY - Combining some P.T. Barnum-like showmanship with a shrewd business sense, Dennis Gomes helped build the Tropicana Casino and Resort into one of the powerhouses of the gaming industry.

But the man who gave gamblers everything from tic-tac-toe chickens to a glitzy \$280 million Cuban-themed entertainment complex is moving on after a 10-year career overseeing the casino for parent company Aztar Corp.

In what is being termed a "mutual agreement," Gomes will leave the Phoenix-based company May 25. His fate was sealed when his mentor, former Aztar Chairman Paul E. Rubeli, retired in March and a new management team headed by CEO Robert M. Haddock took over.

"Yeah, that had something to do with it," Gomes acknowledged of the leadership change Monday.

Aztar spokesman Joe Cole declined to say whether Gomes was forced out or is leaving voluntarily. He said the company hasn't decided whether to replace Gomes.

"We acknowledge and appreciate the contributions that Dennis has made at the company over the past 10 years and we wish him well," Cole said.

Gomes was coy about his future, saying only that he is exploring other opportunities in the gaming industry, possibly in Atlantic City, where he would like to stay.

"I'm absolutely staying in the gaming industry. I love the action," he said. "It's really been good for me, and I love this business. It's something I've grown in and I've found fascinating."

Gomes denied that his departure had anything to do with Tropicana's catastrophic parking garage collapse Oct. 30, 2003. The accident, which killed four workers, was blamed on defective designs and faulty construction by Tropicana contractors.

The garage was part of a hotel, retail and entertainment complex called The Quarter. The splashy expansion project, designed to resemble the streets of Old Havana, Cuba, has not produced the blockbuster results that were expected since its grand opening last November.

"If we would have opened in April instead of the winter months and we didn't have the collapse, we would have better results than what we have had," said Gomes, insisting that The Quarter is now on an upswing.

Gomes, 61, a 34-year veteran of the gaming industry, joined Aztar in 1995 as president of resort operations, a newly created position that placed him in charge of the company's flagship Tropicana casinos in Atlantic City and Las Vegas.

Known then as the TropWorld Casino and Entertainment Resort, the Atlantic City property was completing a 628-room expansion that would turn it into the largest hotel in New Jersey. However, it was still plagued by some decidedly small-time touches that made it seem more like a children's playground than an adults-only gambling palace.

In 1996, Gomes repositioned the casino as a megaresort by renaming it Tropicana Casino and Resort, overseeing \$100 million in improvements and tearing out the Ferris wheel, roller coaster and other rides that were part of the Tivoli Pier indoor amusement park.

"When I got here, there were Ferris wheels and roller coasters, but we're an entirely different product now," Gomes said of the casino's growth. "We're light years ahead. It's a positive feeling. I've left them in a good position."

Considered one of the casino industry's most imaginative executives, Gomes concocted some oddball promotions to separate Tropicana from its competitors. A blackbelt in martial arts, Gomes once celebrated the groundbreaking of a Tropicana expansion project on the Boardwalk by executing a pair of wall-shattering karate kicks.

Among his most notable publicity stunts, Gomes gave gamblers the chance of winning \$10,000 if they could beat live chickens in a game of tic-tac-toe. The chickens almost always won.

Under Gomes, Tropicana hosted a number of offbeat exhibits, including "Torture Through the Ages," a collection of history's most infamous torture devices.

He also introduced some bizarre gambling gadgets, such as a whirling money machine called the "Fortune Dome" and the "Amazing Cash Contraption," an impossibly complex Rube Goldberg-like device that spits out cash jackpots.

"Thinking outside of the box is important for increasing market share. He was able to develop that product when Trop was in its prime," Deutsche Bank gaming analyst Marc Falcone said, while praising Gomes as a creative thinker.

Prior to joining Aztar, Gomes held a number of high-level positions in Atlantic City and Las Vegas. He was president of Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort, president of the Golden Nugget Casino in Las Vegas and senior vice president of the Hilton casinos in Nevada.

Gomes got his start in the gaming industry in the early 1970s as an investigator with the Nevada Gaming Control Board, where he helped to uncover a massive skimming operation at the Stardust and Freemont casinos. The scandal inspired the 1995 movie "Casino" starring Robert DeNiro.

A.C.'s gimmick king leaving Aztar a bit early - Gomes calls parting 'amicable,' denying troubles

JUDY DeHAVEN
STAR-LEDGER STAFF
598 words
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The Star-Ledger



Dennis Gomes, the gimmick guru of Atlantic City, is leaving his job as president of resort operations for Aztar, owner of the Tropicana casino in A.C.

Gomes, 61, said he will leave Arizona-based Aztar on May 25, roughly six months before his contract was to expire.

"It's amicable," **Gomes** said. "I'm going to miss this company."

It was widely known among casino insiders that **Gomes** had been unhappy with Aztar since former Chairman and Chief Executive Paul Rubeli stepped down March 1 and was replaced by Bob Haddock, the former chief financial officer.

Gomes and company spokesman Joe Cole, however, disputed reports of troubles between **Gomes** and Haddock, or that **Gomes** had been forced out.

Gomes is thought of as something of a genius of casino promotions. His most notable ploy was the tick-tack-toe-playing chicken he brought to the Tropicana in A.C. In contrast, Haddock is known to be more conservative.

"We acknowledge and appreciate the contributions **Dennis** has made to the company over the past 10 years, and we wish him well," Cole said.

Gomes is leaving the Tropicana just six months after the casino opened its long-awaited retail expansion called "the Quarter," hailed as the first Las Vegas-style shopping outlet at an A.C. casino. But Wall Street has grown impatient with its sluggish start.

The Quarter, **Gomes'** brainchild, opened in November during Atlantic City's slow season, after a bevy of delays sparked by a garage collapse in the fall of 2003. And while it helped the Tropicana generate a 21 percent hike in revenue during this year's first quarter, the bulk of the increase was eaten up by opening costs.

"I think the initial opening has been somewhat frustrating," Deutsche Bank analyst Marc Falcone said.

Shareholders also have been disappointed with Aztar's Las Vegas strategy. While other companies have been building grand, multibillion-dollar gambling palaces, Aztar has repeatedly put off plans to remake its Tropicana Las Vegas, which sits on a valuable 34-acre parcel.

Gomes has had a storied career. After earning degrees in accounting and finance, he became the Eliot Ness of Las Vegas by helping to dismantle the mob's hold over the city. The skimming operations he helped uncover as a Nevada casino investigator were memorialized in the movie "Casino."

Later, he went to work for the industry's heavyweights: Barron Hilton, as senior vice president of Hilton Casinos in Las Vegas; Steve Wynn, as president of the Golden Nugget in Las Vegas; and Donald Trump, as head of the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City. At each stop, he garnered a reputation for turning money-losing casinos into profitable ones.

Gomes' departures also have been noteworthy. He left the Nugget before his contract expired to work for Trump, Wynn's former nemesis, sparking a nasty lawsuit. Then he walked out on the Donald - Trump has said Gomes was fired; **Gomes** said he canceled his contract.

But **Gomes** has since mended fences with both casino moguls. As word leaked out of his latest departure, it sparked speculation he would take a job with either Trump or Wynn.

Gomes denied it. He said he does not yet have a job lined up. But, he said, "There's a lot of opportunities for somebody with the track record I have."

May 12, 2005
Editorial Section



Trop's Dennis Gomes – Tough Act to Follow

Casino executives come and go. But **Dennis Gomes**, who's leaving as head of Tropicana Casino and Resort after a 10-year stint, deserves special mention as he moves on.

During his tenure, the Trop was in the forefront of some encouraging trends in Atlantic City - from investing in The Quarter, a huge retail/entertainment complex, to bringing in offbeat exhibits featuring Titanic artifacts and "Torture through the Ages." And then there was the tic-tac-toe-playing chicken ...

Atlantic City is moving forward now with more retail, more entertainment, more noncasino attractions. All will help meet gambling competition from surrounding states. But the Trop, under **Gomes**, was a leader in making the city more competitive. He will, indeed, be a tough act to follow.

Gomes Going

By CHUCK DARROW
20 May 2005
Daily Record



The unhappy news along the Great Wood Way is that Wednesday is Dennis Gomes' last day as president of resort operations for Aztar, which owns the Tropicana.

In the decade he held the post, Gomes time and again proved to be one of Atlantic City's greatest marketers, and that he is someone who knows the casino business is supposed to be about fun.

His greatest legacy is The Quarter, the Trop's highly acclaimed, \$285 million, Havana-in-the-'50s-themed retail, dining and entertainment complex.

But he'll also be remembered for bringing to town fascinating exhibitions dedicated to President John F. Kennedy, the Titanic and even torture through the ages.

And, of course, he was the showman behind the casino's wacky - and wildly successful - Tic-Tac-Toe-playing chickens.

Word is that Gomes' departure was prompted by the recent selection of Robert Haddock as Aztar's chairman of the board .

We're sure Haddock is a great guy and an astute businessman. But with Las Vegas showing no signs of ceding its crown as the nation's leading destination for adults, and Pennsylvania and New York State gearing up for casino-style gaming, AyCee needs visionaries like Gomes a lot more than it needs another accountant.

Rumors are already flying about Gomes' next stop. Here's hoping wherever he lands, it's just a short trip from the Trop.