

# Opinion: Raggio's death leaves a void in Nevada

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No one who knew Bill Raggio could doubt his toughness.

He was, after all, a former Washoe County district attorney best known for burning down Joe Conforte's brothel near Wadsworth – in a community more often willing to turn a blind eye to the shenanigans of Conforte and his ilk.

Fifty years later, Raggio, who died last week while vacationing in Australia, showed his toughness again when he went against his own party to support U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., for re-election. Raggio knew he'd receive harsh criticism in the heat of one of the nastiest political contests in recent memory. As always, Raggio did what he thought was right and let the cards fall where they may. The criticism came, but Raggio never backed down.

It was a toughness that made him a formidable foe as his party's leader in the Nevada Legislature. He could twist arms with the best of them, driving his opponents crazy, especially those in Southern Nevada who learned early on that Northern Nevada was not to be messed with as long as Raggio was in charge.

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