



**Gerry Thompson**

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April 18, 2001

Gov. Vic Atiyeh  
7690 S. W. Fairmoor Street  
Portland, Oregon 97225

Dear Vic.,

I was going through the "past news" in Oregon on my computer while in the desert and found this article about you. What a pleasant surprise!

It was so nice to be reading your words again. And it was so nice to see everything portrayed so positively. And it was so nice to read about my favorite boss even though I was out of state.

I have returned from the desert now to this grey and gloomy weather in Oregon. Oh, well, I guess that is why I love Oregon so much. I must admit that I am anxious to see the sun again.

Vic, I am serving on the Capitol Foundation. I will be calling you, but we are having a kickoff April 25, 2001, in the Capitol building. When I returned, I asked if you were involved. Can you believe it? No one had thought of involving any of the past Governors. We would very much like you to attend and would very much like you to say a few words. In addition, we want to schedule time to get a picture of all the living Governors together. The pictures would be autographed, limited in numbered and used as items to sell to raise money for the preservation of the history of the Capitol. Has anyone talked to you about this?

I heard today that Goldschmidt is too busy to attend as is Roberts. How do you like that!

My very best to you and to Dolores. I will call you later this week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Thompson", written in a cursive style.

Gerry Thompson

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NEWS

Monday, Marc

## Oregon's last Republican governor reflects on the office

Vic Atiyeh says he helped the state survive a recession.

RICHARD R. AGUIRRE  
Statesman Journal  
March 26

Victor G. Atiyeh was Oregon's 32nd governor since statehood. He served two decades in the Legislature before his governorship.

He was the state's last Republican governor — and one of the best, according to Oregon Labor Commissioner Jack Roberts.

When he launched his own campaign for governor earlier this month, Roberts said, "We've not had a governor since Vic Atiyeh who has tried to manage the state, to really take charge of the executive branch."

Atiyeh beat legendary Gov. Tom McCall to capture the Republican primary in 1978. In the fall, Atiyeh beat Democrat Bob Straub.

Atiyeh was governor during a time of economic turmoil. Half the state's timber mills were closed or slowed production and unemployment topped 12 percent. He called the Legislature into special session four times to rebalance the budget.

Although proud of his leadership during the crisis, Atiyeh told the Statesman Journal that McCall was a tough act to follow.

"Tom McCall — I said many times while he was alive, in his presence and not in his presence — will go down in history as one of the great governors in Oregon," Atiyeh said.

McCall was eloquent, tenacious and pushed good ideas, even if they were controversial, Atiyeh said. That included the bottle recycling bill and land-use planning.

Still, Atiyeh says his own administration also was effective.

"I think the state survived the recession really quite well because I was there. The economy of the state was diversified," he said. "I never felt I was in his shadow. I wasn't trying to be a Tom McCall because I'm not one. I'm Vic Atiyeh."

**Richard R. Aguirre** can be reached at (503) 399-6739.



Atiyeh

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2001 LEGISLATURE

## Atiyeh discusses government

The former Oregon governor talks in an interview about term limits and criticism.

Statesman Journal  
March 26

Victor G. Atiyeh was Oregon's governor from Jan. 8, 1979 to Jan. 12, 1987, tying him for the state's longest gubernatorial tenure.

He served after Gov. Bob Straub and before Gov. Neil Goldschmidt.

Although he was governor during an economic recession, Atiyeh said he helped improve social service programs, worked for increased international trade, supported the state's land-use laws and pushed for tax reform.

Atiyeh, 78, reflected on his service, discussed how he and his wife, Dolores, dealt with criticism and commented on the state budget and the 2001 Legislature during an interview with reporters and editors. Excerpts:

### Question: Why are you opposed to annual sessions of the Legislature?

**Answer:** If there's any hope at all for what's called a "citizen legislature," it'll be wiped out with annual sessions. It's bad enough now in the face of term limits, which wiped out experience and institutional memory, leaving it to the bureaucrats to run because they'll always be there.

There really isn't any need for annual sessions. We have all the tools available to stay in session until we make the decisions and either the Legislature or the governor can call special sessions if there's really an emergency.

### Q: What advice would you give Republican gubernatorial candidates?

**A:** I certainly treasure the title of governor, but I'd be willing very much to give up the title of the "last Republican governor." I'm ready for that, anytime now.

I tell them to get organized. What wins an election is good organization, lots of volunteers and having a campaign plan that you do not deviate from. The first time that comparison came to me was the Bush-Dukakis campaign. (George) Bush clearly had a campaign plan; he stuck to it and went all the way, and he won. (Michael) Dukakis kept changing his every week.

Monday, March 26, 2001

### On the radio

To hear the full interview with former Gov. Atiyeh, tune in to KATZ Radio (91.5 FM) at 9 p.m., today, or to KATZ Radio (550 AM) at 9 p.m.

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**Q: To balance the budget, should the Legislature use money intended to go back to taxpayers as income tax refunds?**

**A:** In balancing the budget, there's two ways to do that. One is, of course, to raise money. And the other is to cut budgets. There's not one way to do it; there's two ways to do it. And as I've watched how government operates today, I think there is room to cut some budgets.

**Q: What would you cut?**

**A:** Well, it probably is almost unfair, because you have to be there to do it, but there's some little things that are more of a style and that would lead you somewhere. They're not very large (cuts), but they have some meaning.

I mentioned earlier to someone here that every time there's a problem and there's a response from the governor's office, it's the governor's adviser for whatever it is. This happens all the time. I said, "How many advisers does he have? He has an adviser for every subject that comes up." Why do you need that many advisers? I don't know that. It's a good question to ask. And they're getting paid, incidentally.

I think really the Legislature itself can operate with less of a staff than it has at the present time.

A story: I was with a group that met annually and had a good time for a weekend, and they had a poker game — small game and a big game. So I said one day, "Well, I'll get in the big game."

So I won a few hands and pretty soon, I can remember, somebody said, "I'll bet \$5." There was a chip here. And I said, "Well, I'll see your \$5 and I'll raise you \$5." And then, I said, "What in hell am I doing?" If that were a \$5 bill I wouldn't let go of it. But it was a chip, so it wasn't real money. That's the way I think many people think of the tax dollar today.

**Q: Republican candidates Denny Smith and Bill Sizemore lost to Gov. Kitzhaber. Have Republican candidates failed in recent statewide races because they are too conservative for voters?**

**A:** It's true that both Denny and, particularly, Bill Sizemore had very large speed lumps out there in terms of their election. They had some hurdles to get over, Denny less so than Sizemore. But nonetheless, it's true what you just said.

However, when you look at Norma Paulus and Dave Frohnmayer, those were entirely different cases, and we lost those. Certainly, for Dave Frohnmayer, the ultraconservatives actually beat Dave. It wasn't that he lost the race to Barbara Roberts, but the fact is that the other candidate in there swiped the votes that would have had Frohnmayer as our governor.

Norma ran a great campaign; she just happened to lose the race. So that didn't have anything to do with conservative or liberals. As a matter of fact, Norma would certainly be considered maybe on the liberal side of moderate.

But yes, you're right. Matter of fact, I would say to you that we should have done better than Sizemore, but people have to make their own decisions about running for office. There are several that I think would have made good candidates. I'm not going to tell you who it was. And

Incidentally, I want to tell you this: Denny Miles was a good media adviser. He said, "There are three answers you can give the media when they ask a question. One is, 'I know and I can tell you.' One is, 'I don't know, but I'll find out.' And the other is, 'I know, but I'm not going to tell you.'"

It's this last one that drives you nuts. But it was so much fun because they'd keep asking the question from different angles. And I said, "I know what you guys are doing. I already told you I'm not going to tell you."

**Q: Is fundamental tax reform possible?**

**A:** So far, no. I talked to Gov. Roberts. And I said to her, "Barbara, people don't think there's a problem out there." They were trying to find a solution to Ballot Measure 5 at that point in time. And I said, "Oregonians don't think there's a problem. You have to tell them there's a problem and get them to understand there is one, and they have to agree to it before they're going to vote for anything."

Even today, they don't think there's a problem. So as long as they don't think there's a problem out there, there's no hope for any change in taxation.

**Q: You traveled overseas frequently to promote international trade while you were governor and you were criticized for this. How did you deal with that criticism?**

**A:** I knew it was something that needed to be done, so I did it. They didn't know there was something that needed to be done, so they criticized me. Many take credit for it now that we're successful. That's all right.

They criticize you. It didn't bother me. It didn't hurt me. Dolores got upset from time to time. I told her many times, "Honey, don't worry. When they really take shots at me, they'll say nice things at my funeral. So don't worry about it."

**Q: What do you think of term limits? Have they changed governance?**

**A:** Someone came to me before the last election and said they wanted to have my support for a ballot measure that would extend the years that legislators could serve. I said, "No. I don't want to repair something that I dislike. If you come to me with a measure that's going to repeal term limits, I'm there."

It was incredible what the people of Oregon and the Legislature lost. And, as I said earlier, what's really going to happen is bureaucracy is really going to run government because they're the only ones that have any experience. The rest come and go.

People are elected to make these decisions. We didn't elect the bureaucrats to make the decisions. So, if somebody comes to me and says "We want to repeal it," I'm there right now. And I think we make good arguments for doing it."