

VICTOR ATIYEH
GOVERNOR
1979-1987



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Governor Atiyeh
INTERNATIONAL
CONSULTANT & TRADE

I want to make certain that at the very start you know how I feel about all of you.

First, I always believed that you did not work for me, I worked with you.

Second, as time went along I thought how amazing it was that we all came together from different situations, created a wonderful team and I was saddened at the end to have us scatter and break up. It interesting that our last day together after my successor was sworn in (and sworn at a few years later) was in this very same place---Illahe.

Memories? I have a ton of them!! I do not have to think back too much to recall our monthly birthday brown bag lunches. The cheesecake and chocolate *anything* always did me in. But the best dessert was the opportunity for us to get together at least once a month and just have a lot of fun.

Yes, we went through tough times then because of our recession. The Governor and Legislature today think the sky is falling at about 9% unemployment (and it is sad for those out of work). I wonder if they would—or could—do the same as what we did with our 12.7% unemployment, inflation at 13% and interest rates rising to over 20%. That part of our time together really showed the quality, intelligence, courage and conscience to do what was right not just what was politically right. I get great credit for how it worked out but I know in my heart it took all of us to get it done.

Let's see now---Oh yes, we had to deal with the Rahjneesh. How many times since I left office have I spoken of the monumental task it was to get through the recession---but did we also need the Bahgwan and his followers at the same time? It was a very intense period. We had good intelligence working and could tell how many guns and ammunition they had and we were able to keep track of their comings and goings (although their red dressing helped). It got so bad that we had the National Guard on alert in Redmond near the end. I carried an Executive Order with me wherever I was declaring a State of Emergency in two counties. This piece of news is only historic because I never had to sign it. I did not meet with them because I did not want to give them any bit of credibility. My shields were Gerry Thompson and Bob Oliver who said to them time and time again "Don't push us around"!!

Some things most of you did not get to enjoy as much as I did. These were the County Fairs and the parades in all kinds of conveyances---with one exception. We had borrowed a convertible in Joseph for the parade of "Chief Joseph Days". Almost immediately the car began to heat up and steam. The car was parked and Dolores and I began to walk in the parade. Finally she said "They don't know who you are" (this was my first campaign) and she slapped a bumper sticker across my chest.

I went to every County Fair—some more than once---and enjoyed every minute. Dolores and I (or sometimes one or the other of us) were in uncounted parades. There were the big ones like Albany Veterans, the Pendleton Round-Up and the Rose Festival parades and then the one in Fossil where we went through the route twice.

And then there was the joy of traveling the state and talking with Oregonians. There were the large communities of Portland, Eugene and Medford as well as the delightful places of

Condon, Ontario, Burns, Jordan Valley and Lonerock (and there really is a “lone rock” there). As I was leaving office the press asked “Will you miss it?” My answer was that I would only miss traveling Oregon and talking with Oregonians. As time moved along what I said then came to be very true.

Chapter One -----and now Chapter Two

We came home and like most people who move we had a garage full of boxes. As you know the problem with that is you knew where things were now you had to find them. I will always remember that, after about a month in our old neighborhood Dolores said quietly “It is so good to be home”. As you know, we had a very nice house in Salem----but it just wasn’t “home”.

I started my international trade business and in the ensuing four or five years traveled overseas a lot. Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon and even Iraq. All this worked our fairly well until Japan had what they called “The bubble burst” and even the Middle East had financial problems. However, I came to the office every day saying then “I come to work” now I say “I come to the office” and dropped the word “work”.

Dolores and I settled down and she began to get back to her artistic mode. For a long time she took classes in Ikebana and enjoyed that immensely. Of course, now she could spend some time (and worry) about our wonderful grandchildren-----three girls and two boys. One of the girls, Meagan, is Tom’s daughter and the other four are Suzanne’s---Sonia, Cody, Jimmy and Becky. Naturally, we became engaged in Little League, Football, Basketball and Lacrosse. Our regret was that Meagan has gone past those athletic times before we came home.**

As we watched television we see all those ads of a whole variety of medicines that will make you feel better, look better, climb mountains, run marathons, sky dive and eliminate trans-fat (what the heck is that) to make us live longer-----so we can suffer in our old age. The body machinery does begin to wear out but we keep on going. Maybe we walk slower and go to bed earlier but we are still together after 64 years of marriage-----which only goes to prove how very patient Dolores is.

I know each of you could write a book of our eight years together but Denny only allowed you one page. He said I could stray from that formula and what a book of memories that would be!!! There are so very many but the charity of Denny only goes so far.

My dear friends, I get emotional when I think of you all. There was so much that I wanted to do as Governor but I absolutely knew I could not do it all by myself. You----all of you---made what I believe to be the most remarkable eight years in the history of Oregon. There may be a whole lot of people who do not know this-----however. WE KNOW IT!!

Gratefully and Affectionately,

**** (“Don’t tell me worry doesn’t do any good. The things I worry about never happen” – Woody Allen)**

The “Guv”