

Dan Simmons interview on Atiyeh

An interview of Dan Simmons regarding Oregon's Governor Victor Atiyeh, recorded on June 14, 2015. Simmons served as an analyst in Oregon's Legislative Fiscal Office from 1969-1984. Atiyeh appointed him as Director of the state's Department of General Services in 1987. The interviewer, James Moore, was as professor of political science at Pacific University and was Atiyeh's biographer.

The interview includes discussion of: Oregon's political leadership and legislative dynamics from 1969 to 1984, highlighting the positive impact of leaders like Vic Atiyeh and Stafford Hansel; contrasts between that period's bipartisan culture versus later partisanship; the influence of money in politics; Atiyeh's ability to balance policy with political considerations; his effective executive leadership; the difficult transition from Atiyeh's administration to that of Gov. Neil Goldschmidt; the role of policy advisors; and the relationship between Atiyeh's policies and Oregon's demographic and political shifts.

Note on the text: This transcript was made through AI in 2025, with some manual corrections. It has been provided in order to facilitate research, but the text does contain errors and inaccuracies. Users should check the transcript against the recording before quoting the speakers.

[Recording begins mid-conversation.]

Dan Simmons 00:00

...For 15 years, from 1969 to 84. And it was really a neat time, I thought, because you had really good leaders, people that were successful in their community, and they were successful there, Vic Atiyeh, [Win Newbury?], Stafford Hansell, really, guys that were always interested in doing what was best for the state. There was politics involved, but it was a positive thing. I'll never forget the first time I went into Ways and Means Committee hearing. You know, I was new on the job. That's when I studied, you know, 24/7 right thinking I needed no more than anybody in the room, which I may have done at the time. But after about three or four questions, it was remarkable. The benefit of that diversified thinking, it may it honed legislation and ideas and concept that made them better. Yeah, and what I I perceive today, I haven't, I haven't been engaged in the Legislature for years, but it's a far different thing today. It's us versus them kind of thing, and we can never compromise. And so you don't, you lose that heroic benefit of diversified thinking at a time where our problems much bigger than they were then. Yeah. Do you see that? Or is that just--

James Moore 01:31

No, I definitely see that. And virtually everybody I talked to says, right? A week ago, I was talking with Earl Blumenauer, yeah, because Earl was -- Earl is the only person who served with Vic in the legislature who's still active in government, you know, but Peter Courtneys came on when Vic was discovered, right, right? And, you know, Earl said the same thing, you know, is a wet behind the ears. 2325 years ago, he was, he was sitting there in and staff. Hansel cubicle was next to his office. And, you know, so he had, he said, You know, I had a successful insurance executive, a successful doctor, and then the most innovative farmer I've ever met, yes, exactly. And then they were engaged at a very high level. And how do we solve these problems? And, yeah, and you don't see that anymore, yeah, that's that's too bad, yeah, part of it appears to be the partisanship, but the partisanship has been also reinforced. Single member districts that switch after 1970 have played a real interesting role, and then the rise of the environmental movement, the public employee unions and the business community funding one party or the other. Yeah, Ted Kulongowski was saying, and even in 82 he and Vic were going up exactly the same money, because we didn't, they those things didn't, haven't

Dan Simmons 02:59

split like that? Yeah, I think that's right. I mean, money has been it becomes such a major part of that it has widened the divide. Yeah, if I'm a Koch brother and I'm going to give you a million dollars, I want you to do this, yeah, can't do that, yeah? And if, on the other side, it's the same kind of thing. Gonna do this? You can't do that, yeah? And so their their cap is almost by contract, right,

James Moore 03:27

right? We're seeing that in the current legislature, where the the low carbon fuels, yeah, you know, that kind of stuff. The Oregonian editorial page is just hilarious to watch. There being two partisans like, you know, they ran on that. The money was for that. What did you expect them to do? They gained seats. This is not a mystery.

Dan Simmons 03:51

And then at the national level, you got the Grover norms that help most the people that have that have signed a contract they can't raise.

James Moore 03:59

Yeah, and it's not only taxes, it's, they've always fees, anything. Yeah, yeah. My daughter

Dan Simmons 04:05

works back there, and she was telling me about a guy. I can't remember his name, but he was a conservative, very conservative senator from Oklahoma that cut a budget and took the money and invested in something that he wanted to do, or the committee wanted, and he was excoriated because that was interpreted to be raising taxes. Don't you cut, you can't reinvest. Yeah? I mean, God,

James Moore 04:32

yeah, it's something. And then there's Vic, you know, among other things, is saying we do need to have a temporary income tax or charge? Yeah? And by the end of his, well, his seventh year, he says, You know, I've opposed the down sales tax all the time, but yeah, we have to have an income or a sales tax proposal, right? And it gets shot down totally, but

Dan Simmons 04:56

we have it's, it's, yeah, that's become an Oregon thing. Oh, yeah, yeah, absolutely,

James Moore 05:01

absolutely. Well,

Dan Simmons 05:03

how can I help you?

James Moore 05:04

Well, um, so you were legislative administration now as a legislative fiscal office, Legislative Fiscal office. Okay, so Vic is during most of that time, he's Minority Leader in the Senate of an ever decreasing number of Republicans, right? And then he becomes governor. So did you work with him, in working with him,

Dan Simmons 05:32

and this was he, he never was on the Ways and Means Committee, right, when I was there, and Wendy's starting 5959 Yeah, because I, I remember that he had about 20 years experience. Yeah, the governorship, which was a

James Moore 05:47

very real positive, yeah,

Dan Simmons 05:51

the legislature used, there used to be a legislative fiscal office. Well, there still is a legislative fiscal office, but there was a Legislative Fiscal Committee that's since went away when they expanded the emergency board, usually going to be a nine member emergency board. And what the Legislative Fiscal Committee did was that they went into detail on those issues that were discovered during the session, the six month session, by the Ways and Means Committee or other committees that they wanted to ferret out a little bit more. For example, you might see the Fish and Wildlife Commission, they had an issue about housing. Okay, well, let's take a look at that and really see if that's necessary things like that. And when I first worked with Vic, I think it was in 69 or maybe 71 he was on the Legislative Fiscal Committee, and he was a bright guy, and I remember distinctly the issue was used to be kind of a culture in state

government that you retain all the state lines. Now, not the state lands that the Division of State Lands has, but I'm talking about the prisons and you know, the department general services had isolated tracks. It was scattered all over you and nobody. There was never a clear policy as to what the hell you ought to do with that stuff. Well, Vic sorted all that out. He was chair of the subcommittee that had an assignment, and basically said, look, there's no reason to hold on to this stuff. Let's put it into productive use, unless there is a good reason, if you want it for a park or for transportation or something like that, or maybe an office building, go ahead and retain it. Otherwise, get rid of it. And it was one of those aha moments, something that sounds sounds silly, but it was that kind of stuff that's, that's the first time I ran into it work with him there. And that was, I think it was in 69 maybe, I think it was a 71 not sure. And then he would, he was always interactive with the staff back then. You didn't have the staffing to the degree have now, right? There was only two permanent staffs. It was legislative council and Legislative Fiscal. They didn't have legislative administration, all these other things. And so we, during the interim, particularly, we would field all kinds of questions. And he was always pretty curious,

James Moore 08:20

so I got to know him, yeah, yeah, yeah. The kind of his business mind adapting to government. It's just fascinating to watch, right? You know, he's elected in 58 and 59 he's on the, I think he's on the revenue committee, but he's, he takes homework home, you know, here are assumptions in a bill on fiscal stuff. And so we have his his legal pad where he's done the math and then myself and says, you know, it isn't what you guys think it is, right? Because he went home and did his homework. Yeah,

Dan Simmons 08:51

exactly. It's just, you know, the other guy that did that was Stafford Hansel. He knew more. I mean, he he would be the first guy to get the copy of the governor's budget, and he take it home and study it, and he'd be asking us about it. Nick did a lot of the same kind of thing. They were both very bright people, but they wanted to know so that they could make fact based decisions. Right political ones? Yeah, they had their values clearly, yeah, but he was, said he was an interesting guy, yeah, yeah,

James Moore 09:23

um, did any of that your work with him shift when he became minority leader in 71

Dan Simmons 09:29

No, I didn't. I didn't work that closely with him. Okay? When I, when I really worked pretty closely with him. Was started in 84 Okay, when I got recruited to go over to the Department of Human Resources, and I was a deputy over there, and Leo Hagstrom was a director, and we got to work hand in hand with the governor. He really was an executive. Yeah, he was probably the last i. A true executive in that office, yeah,

James Moore 10:02

yeah, talking both to Barbara Roberts and 10 colonoscopy, because Barbara Roberts was Secretary of State become Secretary of State 84 election, right? So she got to sit in on the meetings, the weekly meetings and things like that. And they both said, you know, we we all try to do what Vic did, yeah, and the pressures of time and things like that make it so hard now. So I don't know if it's a person, there's

Dan Simmons 10:26

a Yeah, I think there's another complicating factor in that Vic with 20 years experience, you get to see the executive branch and objectively and in detail, like you can't in any other way, because you see the leadership come over there under pressure. You know, before a committee, it's pressure cooker, yeah? And it shows your strengths and weaknesses pretty quickly, yeah? Because I, when I went over the executive department, I had to have that benefit, and I knew who were all the managers were real advantage, and I'm sure he had even more so, because he had more experience, and he knew who the leaders were, and he appointed Very good executives to direct organizations that he knew personally and he had confidence in, then he would, he would express what his boundaries were like a true executive, but he'd never gotten your way. You knew where he was. He was very clear on that. Now, the reason I say it was the last one is that in 87 when Goldsmith succeeded him, Neil was he didn't have that benefit. He came from a from an he was sort of an outsider. I mean, he had some insight, as a consequence of it, as mayoral, yeah, experience and the interaction, but he didn't have that same knowledge of state government. And as a consequence, Neil brought in a whole cadre of policy

advisors, if you remember that, he was the first governor to do that. And I'm not criticizing him, maybe from where he sat, that was a good thing to do, but that has become a permanent fixture, and it's actually expanded dramatically from where he started. And so with Barbara, there was a filter in between those, and it gets pretty blurry, and you can't execute quite as clearly and crisply as you can when you when you're the direct contact to the key guy running the agency, right? He eliminated all those right? So he, he had that advantage as

James Moore 12:45

well. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Vic was actually pretty ticked off at what Neil did so but with Barbara, and even she's, she's quite upfront about the fact that eventually her staff was running things and not even keeping her

Dan Simmons 13:00

in the loop. Yeah, she I worked. I worked for her. I was the very long two year period when she came in. Well, it was right on the heels of Bell measure five, right? And so there was a lot of stuff that had to be done. And so one of the things that that I was the director of the Department of General Services. So I recommended, you know, at that stage, let's merge those two things and get rid of some overhead, which we did. And then I became first director of the Department of General Services, Barbara, and you're absolutely right, and so is she, Patricia McCaig was very, very forceful, you know, this experience and for better, for worse. I mean, she, she was very, very aggressive, particularly with agency directors and Barbara, I think, lost that connection. And I think it, I think it hurt, yeah, and that's interesting that she said that, yeah. I never have talked to her about it, but that doesn't surprise me at all,

James Moore 14:15

yeah, so when Vic is Governor, are you going to those regular, weekly meetings? Yeah, so what? What took place during that? Were they truly substantive? Is it? I mean, I've seen the schedule while there were two

Dan Simmons 14:29

there were two parts to that, the weekly staff meetings. It was around the table. What are the key issues? And then if there was a key issue, he key in on that a little bit, but if it was really a significant issue, then you have follow up meetings directly, one on one with the governor. Give me an example. You may recall, there was a fellow out of the random Oregon State Prison. Forever, kind of trying to think, yeah, he's an icon. I mean, he's, he's been there forever, but he was corrupt, yeah, and that came out, and so we spent quite a bit of time directly talking with Vic about that, and it was interesting how he handled it. I mean, it was, it was, he said, Just do the right thing. Didn't get me your way, because he knew that we were going to do the right thing, but we would, we would deal with it. He had that confidence in us, rather than having a whole bunch of people, you know, swarming around. And we did, but we followed up on that as well. The other thing I remember clearly was in 19 it was during the session Oregon hadn't built a prison for forever, and they had prison overcrowding. We're stacking people on top of each other. When I was in the General Services corrections, reported to the Department of trust or the director of human resources. We had employment corrections, all of those, it was a big Yeah. And so we were suffering from overcrowding. And then during the session, they came up with a proposal to to change the Eastern Oregon mental institution into a prison. So we worked with the local leaders and all that other stuff, and actually developed pretty good package. Then it came time to implement that, and I was over there at the Department of Human Resources, and I was, I grew up in Pendleton, so they said, Okay, you go. They handle this. Well, the thing had passed the legislature by a voter too. It was, it was pretty universal at the time, and the deal had been made in terms of what the what we were going to do for the community and what they were going to do, etc, etc. Then you got to dealing with the local politicians. It was like dealing with the worst car dealer you ever imagined. Yeah. And so I finally had told dick. I said, you're going to have to arbitrate this. Because I said, I can, I can hold them, but they're going unless, unless you tell him. He says, bring him in, yeah. And he did. He says, No, we'll do this, but we won't do that. That's great, yeah. But it was that kind of involvement, and he any and he knew, he just knew, because he was, well, first of all, we kept him abreast. He was always accessible. And I don't know he was. He was just really a neat guy.

James Moore 17:45

That's fun. Next week I'm going to be going out to Mike and Joe thorns Ranch, yeah, which is basically go there, turn left.

Dan Simmons 17:56

Yeah, he's a good guy talking to him, yeah. Well, he was, he was engaged in that as well. Yeah,

James Moore 18:01

had he come over to the executive at that point? Had I No, no, Mike,

Dan Simmons 18:07

no. He was still in the legislature. So he went from, I think, did he go to port of Portland?

James Moore 18:19

Yeah, I think, I think, I think that's the direct thing. It's just he was so involved, whatever committee he had was so involved in the lottery, that I kind of mix him up when the lottery, when the lottery was implemented. There was a lot of negotiating with Mike to make sure that the lottery money went to economic development, certain

Dan Simmons 18:39

stuff. Yeah, that's true. That's true. Yeah, he was, he was on Ways and Means he was good, yeah, yeah, as I say, grew up playing baseball with him, went to grade school with him. That's great. That's great. So anyway, um,

James Moore 18:58

so you're there from 69 in the legislature's legislative size, 6984 or so, yeah, 1684. Talk about the differences in management style that you saw with McCall to Straub. Okay, to I mean, you talk about that. There's a change when you as I

Dan Simmons 19:21

say, I started in 69 and I had not extensive but enough interaction with McCall on his staff to kind of draw some conclusions of opinions. And that is that the way I would describe McCall is that he was an extraordinarily good judge of people, and he had really good people around him. And he was like, Vic, he was curious. You'd go to, I mean, hell, I'm just a legislative analyst, and you'd be in a meeting, and he'd always ask you what you thought he because he knew the value of, again, diverse. Fine thinking you get in a room and and you go around, and he'd ask everybody pretty soon, you had a pretty good, pretty good idea of what, what ought to be done. He was masterful of that. I can't speak to how he, how he was with his staff, but I, but I what he did. And you know all this anyway, but his, one of his initiatives was a kind of restructured government, and put him into kind of logical groupings, a bunch of boards and stuff. He put them into a group of people, like transportation. He didn't create the Department of Transportation, but he created a, kind of an office that kind of oversaw that stuff. Was a pretty good idea, the Department of Human Resources, he put that together. So he, I'm, I'm sure that he was really a pretty good executive, or he had confidence in the in the person that he had hired right to help him put that together, yeah, and there weren't any layers in between governors then, hell, the Department of Economic Development was one guy, yeah, and it worked pretty good, in my view. So that's what I'd say about him. As I say, I was just a kid. I didn't have all that much interaction with him. Straub. Was I like Straub a lot. He was really a decent guy, solid values, but I don't think he had the abilities that McCall or a TIA did in terms of judging people, because his nemesis was his staff, and you know that name, but I could, I could. And that was what some came to think. I mean, for an incumbent Democrat in Oregon to lose the second election, you got to be you got to the last

James Moore 22:00

time an incumbent has lost Exactly

Unknown Speaker 22:03

So,

Dan Simmons 22:06

as an executive, I don't know. I mean, he would make mistakes and he wouldn't correct him. Good executive does that, right? He didn't do that right. So, but I don't, I don't really, yeah, really, wasn't that close to their

James Moore 22:20

administration. You know, because Vic loses that election in 74 and it's funny, talking to Vic and the people around him, they were just, they just came out of that actually thrilled, yeah. And they lost by the biggest number that had since

1950 they got creamed. But they that's not how they saw it. They saw it as a real wow. This is a real interesting thing, and Vic, I can't remember the exact thing, but there was some Straub appointment, maybe even as Chief of Staff, there's a Straub appointment, and then a tax thing right at the beginning of Straub time. And Vic looked out there and said, Oh, there's two mistakes right there. Yeah,

Dan Simmons 22:58

I think that's right. And then Chief of Staff is who was referring to, yeah, as I say, he, he's a nice guy, bless his, bless his soul. Yeah, I'm down, but he was, he was not the guy for the job. Yeah,

James Moore 23:13

yeah, absolutely, absolutely, um, did you interact a lot with at staff. Mean, after, after you came over, were you playing around with Jerry and right? So,

Dan Simmons 23:30

well, he didn't have a lot of staff. He really didn't. You didn't have to go through anybody to get to him. Yeah, that was a that was a huge benefit, and just and just for context, when you were talking about Straub and and that interim Vic was also the perfect guy for the job in 1979 I don't know if you remember the numbers, or I can vaguely recall, and that is that from 1971 73 the state general fund budget was about \$750 million in 1977 79 it was 3.2 billion. And what was going on? I'm sure you know all this stuff is inflation and income tax. You had timber companies were harvesting a lot of their timber and private lands, and, you know, invest in southern pine forests, etc, etc. So there were a bunch of things driving that. And it was the legislature would have, they were, they had so much money, they had to kind of create ways to make sure that it doesn't backfire when you have the inevitable downfall. Yeah, they had property tax relief programs. They took the state police and parked out of the highway fund, which I think was a Roy mistake. We already missed that, but then the big collapse. So who should you turn to? You? He was perfect for that job. I don't think anybody else could have done it. I knew of it that had the the knowledge and the background, the perspective, the strength of character to do what you had to do, not standing the party line. Yeah. And like you said, you know, you put in a, you know, temporary tax, which you had to do if you're going to maintain any, any semblance system. So he was, he was ideal for the job,

James Moore 25:29

yeah, yeah, yeah. That's fascinating. You know, when I I got started sabbatical at the end of January, and because I do a bunch of media stuff, then I missed two weeks of working on the book because our governor was blowing up. In fact, I was interviewing Jerry on the crucial Thursday, so I interviewed her, then I had lunch with a former student just took a couple blocks from the Capitol, all the while checking is anything happening. Then I went up and went to a funeral at Lake Oswego. When I got home, my voicemail had exploded. It was just like, Whoa, there we go. But, but you're just thinking, what if all that had happened three years or four years earlier, when the recession was hard here, you know, I think Kate will do just fine. I don't know if she'll be spectacular, but I think she'll do just fine, but you need that experience, really to deal with that stuff.

Dan Simmons 26:27

Yeah, and as I say, I don't know anybody else that could have done that, yeah, yeah. I'm sure there were, but

James Moore 26:33

I don't know, yeah, well, it's interesting, because I haven't figured out the answer to this. But I mean, Vic always, no matter what he was running for, he didn't declare until late. Frustrated. His stabbed, in a way, because he was always in and he was one of his principles, don't govern for your next election. Govern to do what you think is right, right, but there's always a very real chance that he would not run again who would have been the Republican nominee in 82 there's no hint of anybody else. Will they come in? The Democrats were having, you know, eventually it's Betty Roberts and Jim Rudin. That's 7080 but any case, I mean, there's stuff there. Jim Weaver's name comes up, you know, all sorts of things in 82 but there's nothing on the Republican side. Well,

Dan Simmons 27:22

you know, guy like Stafford, yeah, but he didn't have the, he didn't have the base. No, I mean, he was, he was really good at that, but he didn't have the, he didn't have the statewide thing.

James Moore 27:36

The only thing I could think of it was, it'd be possibly a Hatfield or a pack would coming back. But you know that by that point they were well in scone in DC. Yeah,

Dan Simmons 27:46

exactly right. Well, what you say is, you know, he really did live the old adage of good policy makes good politics. I think he was right. He pretty good over and over again. That's all changed. But yeah, yeah. He was, he was, he was really

James Moore 28:03

good, yeah.

Dan Simmons 28:06

And then the other thing that he did, he the transition when Neil came in, he left him like a full tank of gas. He really did. I mean, and I don't know if he did that consciously or what? When, when he left? Well, I probably was conscious. I mean, he that was probably one of his principles, was to leave the yeah in order. And he gave Neil a great launching pad. Yeah. It was really, really something to see. Neil was an interesting one too. Even not withstanding all of the controversy. He was a brilliant guy. Wasn't an executive brilliant guy. Did

James Moore 28:48

you see? What was the dynamic you talked about McCall and Atiyeh as having great staff to go with them? What did you What was the balance that you saw with with Goldschmidt?

Dan Simmons 28:58

Well, I, I I didn't. He appointed me to the department General Services. He's a really fun guy to work for, and I didn't have a policy pilot per se, because it was he told me basically to make the agency work or close it. It's your choice. And so I had a pretty clear directive. And so I got along really well, and I liked him a lot, and got a lot a lot of things done in terms of accomplishment, when you know this from his Workers Compensation Reform, I don't think anybody else could have pulled that off. Yeah, he really that was an amazing Vic. Might have been able to but it wasn't. The time wasn't quite

James Moore 29:45

right, no. And you know, for seven years, he's basically dealing with the economy, right?

Dan Simmons 29:49

So yeah, but the interaction with the staff was, well, when I was a general server or human resource, I was throughout that i. A session. The first session, when you came in, I was a director, and I had a policy advisor, and other policy advisors were involved. And I can give you an example about a woman who was I liked her a lot. She was a young, sharp person, and they asked me what I thought about appointing her to be the director of the department of public welfare. And I said, big mistake. I said, That's the toughest job in the state government. You know, you got Medicaid, and boy, if you, I mean, it's, it's very complex, and it's demanding. You got all the pharmacists, doctors, all that stuff to deal with, plus all the vagaries of public assistance. It's a tough job of state government. Don't do that. Little destroyer did. They went ahead and did it anyway. So they didn't, and that was secondhand. If I could have talked to Neil, it might have been a different outcome. I don't know that was that filtering thing, yeah, and that kind of sour whole policy advisor thing, yeah, they're gonna like it still

James Moore 31:09

don't how easy was it to get access to Neil? Pretty easy.

Dan Simmons 31:14

If I needed to talk to him, I could. Okay, yeah. Fred Miller was the kind of his executive staff, and I could deal with him, but I could get an idea that on many occasions I got to talk to him, because we were, we were involved fairly controversial things on the Capitol Mall construction stuff, and then that Portland building blew up. Yeah, peace and

Morgan judge. But he was, he was accessible. Yeah, he was and then he was really accessible. I remember on workers compensation, he came over to my department, just kind of over for a walk through, and he says, I'm going to reform. I'm going to make a run to reform workers compensation. And when I do, I want to make damn sure that the state of Oregon's house is in order. I don't want to be accused of not paying attention to my own stuff. And at the time that General Services still does, we were kind of the risk manager for workers compensation, and so at the time, state managers really didn't understand workers comp very well. I mean, we look check the math now and then it was about it, so dove into that and made damn sure our house was in order. But it was that kind of stuff. Yes, he was good at that. Yeah. He was very good at explaining what he wanted to do and making it clear, yeah, but that was too bad, yeah. It was too bad he was a world class politician.

James Moore 32:48

Yeah. He's been described, I think, by people who hate him and people who love him. Well, actually, not that many people love him, but people who respect him. He's just a bright, bright guy. Oh, yeah, even with a bright staff, he was like, three or four steps ahead of them all the time, right?

Dan Simmons 33:05

So it was and sometimes, and people would reserve this, you'd get in a meeting with him, he'd go, go off on a rift. I mean, it was just brilliant. And then you won't leave the room. They said, Okay, now, what the hell am I supposed to do? Right?

James Moore 33:19

What's implementable about that you're

Dan Simmons 33:23

one of the few people that will ever ask you a question. Because, yeah, I don't know is my background in training or something, but I'd say, Okay, well, what about this? What about this? Yeah, I got along really well. I liked him a lot. Yeah, more fun. I had more fun in that job than anything I've

James Moore 33:39

ever done. That's great. Were you there? How long did you stay in secret? We did 9595 so kits just started,

Dan Simmons 33:48

yeah, but I knew kids Harbor, yeah, from the days in the Senate, yeah, yeah, Kulongowski as well, yeah. Worked really closely with both of them. Yeah,

James Moore 33:58

in looking at the 82 election, I just found a great column from the register guard. If cooling gossip did not get in, and it wasn't certain that he was going to get in, he didn't declare until like February or something. They were talking about kids hour, like, age 34 but this rabble rouser, who truly was a bright up and comer, yeah. And they were talking about, you know, maybe this gets over. A guy will get in. It's

Dan Simmons 34:29

like, jeez, gets over these days. I mean, he's just dropped off the face, drop the

James Moore 34:32

face of the earth at the end of May, he was spotted in a coffee house in northwest Portland. Someone took a picture. Yeah, I gotta shape my journalist connections, because I'd love to talk to him for the book. He and, well, during the time that you're in in the executive, he and Vera, kids and cats are the key players there. And Vera's not, I mean, she's kind of. Beyond that at this point, I'd love to be able to talk to kids over and love to be able to talk to she because she had cancer and so she's she's at the stage now where it's not quite dementia, but she's just really, really, kind of losing touch with reality. I happen to be meeting some of my departmental colleagues in downtown Portland, and there she was sitting outside, and you would barely recognize her

Dan Simmons 35:31

well. She was cloistered about 1012, years ago. Yeah, when she left, when

James Moore 35:39

she looked at Mayor's office because she her first cancer about was when she was married, yeah, then she kind of came out of it, and then,

Dan Simmons 35:48

because I I knew her staff, and I got her number after a time, I said I just wanted to go up and have lunch with her and thank her good things that she did. I was real fan of her. I watched her develop from from someone that was could find, hardly find the bathroom, to something that was really very in depth, yeah, in the legislature, and then what she did in the City of Portland, remarkable after, you know, I lived for over in the east, and got to see, you know, what influenced that and that I never could, I never could get a return from home. Phone call you, yeah, so that's too bad she's a special

James Moore 36:30

lady, yeah. So if I think at some point this summer I will just go, because I know where she hangs out, just go see if she's there. Norman Paulus is in the same situation. Sometimes she's really good.

Dan Simmons 36:41

I see Norma quite a bit. Roger Martin has this old timers club. I'll be there on Friday is my birthday. Okay, maybe that's where I've seen you. No, I haven't been there. Okay, well, Friday is my birthday, so I'm gonna go I play golf. So my son lives in Seattle, and I'm taking my son and grandson to chambers Bay the USO. Oh, great, great, fantastic. You'll see that. Yeah, that's where I see Norma. Norma, yeah. Now when you talk to her, she you that's not very apparent. I know that reports, but it's not very apparent. Yeah,

James Moore 37:26

Roger said the last time the last old timers gathering that she actually was, she told a good joke. Yeah, you know she was. She seemed really

Dan Simmons 37:33

with it. Martin, yeah. I mean, I talked to her either the last time or time before she was talking about reading the New Yorker in Burns, Oregon. And I said I used to read that in Pendleton, Oregon. I said we were probably only two people inside magazine east of the cassette, and we had a good laugh about about the stuff. Yeah, she told me all kinds of stories. She saved all the covers and paper, bathroom and all that's right. I mean, I thought, yeah, she's pretty Yeah, she handles it well. Yeah, she handles it very well. Yeah,

James Moore 38:11

yeah. Talk to her daughter and daughter in law. And, you know, sometimes she's there and sometimes she just doesn't. That's interesting.

Dan Simmons 38:17

Yeah, yeah, for sure. What else let's

James Moore 38:23

see here? Let's go back to the staff. So are you primarily dealing with Jerry, or is says that? Well,

Unknown Speaker 38:33

good question.

Dan Simmons 38:37

If Vic was on a tour or out talking to the customer base. It was Jerry, but it was there. It was, yeah, he was straight to Vic. He was, okay, well, I didn't, it wasn't straight to Vic. Jerry was typically there, yeah, but he didn't if it was a and we didn't bug him with them, with the Bucha. I mean, it wasn't, it would be a big deal, yeah, and he was there, yeah, that's my memory, okay, but it was really good because you you got one or the other always, and they always were clear on what the boundaries were. You know, he told you what to expect, he gave you feedback, and he gave you the tools to do

the job, and he stayed out of your way, that's the quintessence of a good executive. Yeah, he was really good. Yeah, he was really good.

James Moore 39:29

It's funny because at some point it's in his second term, I think, but at some point he decides he's not going back to the carpet business. And the reason was very simple. He liked making decisions by himself. He just wasn't going to go back to this three way thing.

Dan Simmons 39:51

He had a great line about one day

James Moore 39:54

you're you're, oh well, you're one of the peacock. The next day, you're the feather duster. Feather industrial. Yeah, great. He has a whole bunch of those. In fact, the day that he he told me that he wanted me to write his book. He was showing us his fishing licenses. Because when you're the governor, your fishing license 0001, or whatever, really, and then in 1987 your fishing license 3272 Well, there you go,

Dan Simmons 40:25

fish and wildlife. Lot of stories there too.

James Moore 40:33

Were you involved? Did the rashes wash up at all in anything

Dan Simmons 40:40

peripherally? Yeah. I mean, just like you. I mean, I read about it. I knew a friend of mine, Stan long and fone Meyer were engaged in that, yeah, and I know about it, because I've got, you know, yeah, I know Stan pretty, pretty well, got some explanation, but I wasn't engaged in that. Yeah, okay, it just, it was a subject,

James Moore 41:02

yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. The week when I had planned on Thursday to call Dave from Meyer, is the week that he

Dan Simmons 41:13

died. Yeah, Tuesday. He was surprised, as I was, Oh yeah, yeah. In

James Moore 41:17

fact, a year and a half ago, Vic, there was, there was an abortive attempt at a bibliography or a biography of him about 10 years ago, and the person who was doing that had sent him a list of people that she had interviewed, most of whom never talked to her. So Jerry's kind of ticked off about this, but Vic went through the list, and he wrote d for dead and F for frail. So my first job was to find all the F's I could to interview Sure, and then work my way. And you know, from our is clearly not on the frail list, because they kept it secret. Yeah, right.

Dan Simmons 41:56

You know I was, I was really stunned by that he, he worked in the same I've got a kind of a part time job for a company that is housed in the same law office building in Eugene. As rang along and I walked out, well, I saw him at the old timers and had a really nice catch up with him. I mean, really, it was animated and really, really good. And then on Thursday, maybe the same Thursday you're talking about, I ran or no, it was on Tuesday. I'm sorry, it was on Tuesday. I was down there, and I ran into him the hallway. And hi, how you doing? Great, and all this kind of stuff. Had another little catch up with him. The following, did he die on a he died on a Monday? Yeah, it was, like,

James Moore 42:45

Monday, late Monday. Yeah, we did, like, announced Tuesday morning or something. Yes,

Dan Simmons 42:50

exactly, yeah. So I'm at work, and the staff came in and he said, Did you know fort Meyer just died? And I said, that

can't be Yeah. I said, check and make sure it's the day for Meyer it was. And I was just blown away by that. And then Bill Gary was doing an interview and out in the hallway, and he finished the night, we had a little commiseration together, and he said the fact that you didn't know would have made Dave very, very happy, because he had gone through that trauma with his family. Didn't want anybody else be lingered by that. So boy that I was just

James Moore 43:26

shocked, yeah, yeah, yeah, his brother, at the big service they had at U of O, his brother was saying that, um, Dave went to sleep that night knowing that he was going to teach him the next morning. Yeah. So it was just, you know, his body just

Dan Simmons 43:40

just calm down. Yeah, he was an interesting guy. He would have been a good governor, yeah, yeah. He would have been, well, for Vic's time, like we talked about perfect. I thought the time was perfect for, for from our I'm taking anything away from Barbara, yeah, he would have been better suited for the job? Yeah, yeah. Ballot measure five. Perfect. Writing

James Moore 44:06

this biography is fascinating because I grew up in Southern Oregon. In fact, Dave was my first girlfriend's babysitter. So I was just there's so many things we had to talk about. But then I went off to college. And so when Vic is Governor, I'm not living here, I'm in college, graduate school and stuff. And then I moved back in 1990 and so the from Myer Roberts election is when I moved back, okay? And just watching that, and it was stunning to me. It's like, from our didn't really campaign very much. It was just like, you know, you you have to work for this. And the demographics have shifted. This is, yeah, this is a democratic this is becoming a democratic state. What we'd see with the Clinton election in 92 Sure. That's. You got to work for this, right? So it's just fascinating. And

Dan Simmons 45:03

then the other thing of the demagoguery hadn't really just starting to take Yeah, and that's what that got him, I think yeah. That was the Yeah, the right wing notes, yeah, yeah. Usually I was a big surprise, yeah.

James Moore 45:20

I'm talking to people about the shift in the Republican Party. Vic describes it very well, especially after he left office. He, for instance, ran to be was a Republican national committeeman, because the other option was a right wing. And he said, We just can't have that. But he was just appalled that all these people would get elected into central committee positions and then redefine what it meant to be a Republican. You know, these principles were just solid the whole time. And it's, it's just just an amazing change and

Dan Simmons 45:56

remarkable. It was just, I don't know I was, I remember about eight or nine years ago. I've got a friend of mine. There's a Denver home. I go to play golf with it every now and then. And because of Roger Martin, his name, Michael Hunter, how you may even know him? I mean, he knows what it seems like. And these guys came in and there was an old time legislator. Can't remember his name is at a steak house in Portland, that 72 ounce Steakhouse. What was that guy's name anyway? He asked me. He says, Dan. He says, When the hell are we going to do to get back on track? And I said, Well, you gotta, you gotta move a little closer to the center in Oregon with the demographic, just like you say, and you can't be clear out there on the right, because that's not where your constituents are. And then that night, the guy that he was with cornered me, and he says, We don't care. We don't care. We've gotten our values question. I gave you an answer Yeah,

James Moore 47:02

when the Tea Party first popped up, which has been spectacular, unsuccessful on the west coast, but I was on doing a Colin radio show with the person who said he was kind of the head of the Tea Party, and they adamantly were not going to run candidates like, well, then you're adamantly not going to have any impact. No, we'll hold people's feet to the fire, unless you've got people in office you're not.

Dan Simmons 47:23

Yeah, exactly, no. And that's kind of where we started out the conversation. So different today. Yeah, that's very tough. How'd you get into the job you're in? You said you went away to college, but how do you get into teaching political

James Moore 47:39

science. Well, I actually, as an undergraduate, hated political science, but then I'm an internationalist, and so when I was figuring out what I wanted to do, and finally said International is what I really, really liked, that's International Relations is in political science. Okay, so I got a master's degree from a place called the Monterey Institute of International Studies. So I actually had to live two blocks from the blocks from Pebble Beach. It was horrible. My wife and I go down every January. We go down and spend a three or four day weekend down there. And I say, you know, we can go to places where you used to live, if you want in January. No, no, this is fun. It's so nice to see flowers and you know, that kind of stuff. And then I got my doctorate at Northwestern and when I moved out here to teach, I taught at the University of Portland for 11 years. And my dad was a county commissioner. My grandparents, my my grandfather was one of the founders of the extension service in Oregon in the 1930s you know. So there's just all these, we knew these people. I wear bow ties. Why? Because John dellenbeck was a family friend, okay, you know. So, you know, that kind of stuff. And and it turned out, and it still is amazing to me, in academic political science, no one pays attention to actual politics, and so I just kind of got into it like that, cool. So, you know, great, you guys can go to your conferences and publish articles that six people are going to read. Sure, there's other things that need to

Dan Simmons 49:24

be done. Well, it's been nice talking to you.

James Moore 49:26

Yeah? This is great. This is good. Yeah, when Vic and I were talking about the book, the key thing is it's not necessarily about Vic, it's about the times, and this guy who was in it, and you're giving him some wonderful context,

Dan Simmons 49:39

if anything, any questions come up, call me, yeah, but because I he deserves

James Moore 49:48

special recognition, yeah, yeah, yeah. One of the fun things about politics, and I've been observing this now for about 10 years, and I finally was talking to Jerry about it in last time I talked to her, actually, I. Fateful February day said, you know, one of the reasons that this is now a democratic state is because of Vic because all that new economy is bringing in people who are moderate, and here, that means they're Democrats. And so that's Washington County. His hometown is clearly the poster child, but it's all anywhere where that new economy is, yeah, it's, it's Democrats, right? And

Dan Simmons 50:31

I mean all, I mean, imagine doing all that stuff, yeah, and then dealing with, you know, the problem of state government at the same time, yeah, and on and on and on. I mean, he was, yeah, he deserves a special place. Yeah, remarkable.

James Moore 50:48

Remarkable, for sure. And, you know, while Jerry was lying awake at night trying to figure out how to save the world, and oh my gosh, rajivs are doing this. The Taiwanese want this. She at one point, said to Vic, how do you sleep at night? Sid, I have my principles. I sleep like a baby.

Dan Simmons 51:07

Well, that was a that was a key appointment. Yeah, Jury is she was perfect for the job. Yeah. Still is, yeah. But they were very, very strong allies, yeah, perfect allies, yeah.

James Moore 51:24

And she's a classic example of what you were talking about with he would pick good people, but often the people like Jerry still doesn't really know why she was picked, because she was his first choice in 78 okay, it wasn't Lynn Newbury, it was Jerry, and the only experience she had with him was being married to Al and being peripherally involved in the campaign. But Vic talks to people, and even his 1978 campaign manager, Carol Whitney, she was just going in to see if he had ideas, and possibly a low level position, because she was interested in post divorce moving into something. And

he talked to her for an hour and a half and called her two days later. And so I want you to run this campaign. Just amazing. You

Dan Simmons 52:21

know, you mentioned Lynn Newbury. My recollection of that is that he was part of the transition,

James Moore 52:28

yeah, he and Travis cross were the transition guys, which is

Dan Simmons 52:31

another example, yeah. I mean, Newbury was, he was a remarkable ways, and means, Chairman. He really was, I owe a lot to him. He taught me an awful lot. And he, I mean, he, he was the perfect guy to bring in there, yeah, it really was. I mean, there wasn't anybody else that knew budgets any any better than he did, yeah. And it was a time when you needed that knowledge. Dick didn't have. Yeah, that knowledge, yeah, overall. But I didn't I, but the way you said that, I interpreted it to mean that he maybe was considering him as his chief of staff. Yeah,

James Moore 53:11

the number two choice, really, yeah. But Lynn family business and things he was,

Dan Simmons 53:16

I just assumed that he was the transition leader.

James Moore 53:19

No, no, we wanted him to be Chief of Staff, and then eventually you go down and get to Lee. I don't know how many were gone through, but Lee was not in the top five. Say I can understand, yeah, it's fascinating talking to Jack Faust about that, because Faust was really close to Lee and Fauci found out Fauci is the one who wrote Vic's first inaugural address. Really, yeah, which Vic says defines who Vic is. So it's just

Dan Simmons 53:57

interesting. History is history you can always learn, yeah,

James Moore 53:59

it's fun, and it's fun doing this project, because just by the way, this is all archival quality, and it's eventually going to go into the Pacific archives, where his archivist, but doing this, huh?

[Recording ends.]