

Office of the Governor State of Oregon



GOVERNOR VIC ATIYEH

(Republican)

March 1983

Pronounced: "Ah-tee-ah"

NOTE: This material includes the governor's detailed biography. If you are using the biography as a speech introduction, select information which is of special interest to your audience, then tailor your introduction accordingly. An example of a speech introduction has been included with this material, but we discourage its use verbatim. A localized introduction that suits your particular audience is better received, both by the governor and his audience. Most people believe a short introduction is best.

Governor's Communications Office

As Gov. Vic Atiyeh begins his second term as Oregon's 32nd governor, these are some of the things that have already been accomplished:

- He was re-elected as governor in 1982 by the largest margin in 30 years, gaining 62 percent of the vote and carrying all of Oregon's 36 counties.
- No governor has traveled the state more than Vic Atiyeh, who logged over 116,000 land miles in his first term.
- Committed to accessibility, Gov. Atiyeh holds weekly press conferences and daily open houses for the general public.
- Gov. Atiyeh brings to his office the longest legislative tenure of any governor in Oregon history. In the three terms he served as a state representative and four terms as a state senator, he played a significant role in the writing of landmark environmental legislation, including Oregon's famous clean air and water legislation.
- Long before it was popular to do so, Atiyeh declared that Oregon was "open for business," thus encouraging the relocation and expansion of businesses to help bolster Oregon's economy.

- As governor, his strong stand against racial harassment has earned him numerous state and national awards.

With his second term now underway, Atiyeh's priorities include economic development, property tax limitation and reforms in state land use planning.

His leadership responsibilities are not limited to state issues. Atiyeh currently holds several regional national leadership positions, which include serving as chairman of the Western Governors' Conference and vice chairman of the Republican Governors Association. He also holds several National Governors' Association posts, including serving as vice chairman of the Committee on State-Local Relations and as a member of the Committee on Energy and Environment and the Committee on International Trade and Foreign Relations.

Aityeh was a leader in business and in his community prior to becoming a leader in politics. Born in Portland on Feb. 20, 1923, to parents who had immigrated to the United States from Syria, Atiyeh was a standout football lineman at both Washington High School in Portland and the University of Oregon. He chose, however, to turn down an offer to play professional football with the Green Bay Packers so he could run Atiyeh Bros., the family rug business started by his father and uncle.

Atiyeh worked for the business until he became governor, when he resigned as president of the firm. He continues, however, to serve on its board of directors.

Atiyeh was the Republican candidate for governor in 1974, winning the primary against Clay Myers, then Secretary of State. In the general election, he suffered his only political defeat in his 19 political races, losing to Bob Straub in the general election.

In his second try for governor in 1978, Atiyeh won a three-way primary victory over State Rep. Roger Martin and former Gov. Tom McCall, tallying 47 percent of the vote. In the general election rematch, Atiyeh defeated incumbent Gov. Bob Straub by 90,000 votes, winning majorities in 33 of Oregon's 36 counties.

Atiyeh was re-elected as governor in November 1982, gaining 62 percent of the vote in a landslide victory over Democratic challenger, State Sen. Ted Kulongoski. This time, Atiyeh won majorities in all 36 counties.

Atiyeh has received scores of awards during his years as a state legislator and governor, especially for his effort in combating racial harassment. A partial list of his awards include: the Golden Aztec Award from the Oregon Human Development Corporation, a special award from The Oregon Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Community Relations Services' Meritorious Service Award - the highest honor for public service given by the U.S. Department of Justice, a special award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith of Oregon Distinguished Public Service Award.

Atiyeh is also active in many organizations and foundations and has volunteered most of his free time to the Boy Scouts. From scoutmaster to regional council president, he has served in most scouting leadership positions, earning the highest council and regional volunteer awards. He is a member of the National Board of Exploring, holds an honorary doctorate of public service award from Willamette University in Salem, Ore., and is a trustee emeritus of the University of Oregon Foundation.

The governor and his wife Dolores were married July 5, 1944. They have two grown children and two grandchildren. Atiyeh is an active antique gun collector, fly fisherman and golfer.