

## Tony Van Vliet interview on Atiyeh

An interview of Tony Van Vliet regarding Oregon's Governor Victor Atiyeh, recorded on March 11, 2015. Van Vliet served as a Republican in the Oregon House of Representatives from 1974-1995. The interviewer, James Moore, was as professor of political science at Pacific University and was Atiyeh's biographer.

The interview includes discussion of: Atiyeh's conservative background; his relationship with his Press Secretary, Denny Miles; his management style during budget crises; Atiyeh's willingness to create public-private corporations and his commitment to transparency; Atiyeh's influence on legislative decisions, particularly on tax reform and judicial reform; his honesty, his impact on Oregon politics, and his contributions to higher education; the evolution of the Republican Party; and the challenges of modern political fundraising.

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.

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[Recording begins mid-conversation.]

Tony Van Vliet 00:00

Um, my first contact really, with Vic, besides him being over in the Senate and me over in the House. Vic was known as a conservative, nice guy Republican over there who I did not hardly see at all. Yeah, when he ran for governor, Denny Miles became his communication person, and Denny was my communication person in my very first election. See, because that's how I got to know Vic better, because with Sue Denny, and we got to be very good friends with he and Doris and just got to really, really admire his work. And I happen to be on ways and means that at the time of the crisis of the budgets, yeah, but Denny was very close to him. And of course, Denny had been with the communication department down here, which with news services, right? So we were close friends for many, many years.

James Moore 00:59

Yeah, he's he talks about his boss, and his boss was trained by my friend Fred Scheidler. So, so there you go.

Tony Van Vliet 01:06

Oh yeah, you had Fred Scheidler. I didn't have for each other. I know my grandmother is Harriet Moore. [Van Vliet says: This is the librarian?]

James Moore 01:17

Yeah, exactly. In fact, I just was at the Benton County Museum making sure that her ashes are sprinkled properly. She's fertilizing the plants on the outside. [Van Vliet says: Oh, bless you.] So I grew up with the Scheidlers, were my second family, and so their kids, Betty Sue, who just died, but the grandkids now. So like at Thanksgiving and Christmas, we go over to the Sheidler house in Waldport where she retired, which is now a rental place. And so, yeah, yeah.

Tony Van Vliet 01:46

Well, Betty was my classmate. And I got to -- I mean, not Betty -- Sally. But I got to know Betty when she was a vice president of, of Wells Fargo. But Fred and Mrs. Scheidler were in our church. They were in the First Presbyterian. So that's how we got to know them. And Fred was, he was Mr. Communications and Journalism, man, honest right down the middle. Yeah, yeah. He and Wally Johnson, Sam Bass, all those guys were a great information department.

James Moore 01:56

Yeah. I remember having a fascinating talk with Fred, who couldn't understand why people didn't support Denny Smith as strongly as they supported his dad. And it's like, Well, Fred, politics have changed. [Van Vliet says: Yes, they had.] And, you know, that's the way it is.

Tony Van Vliet 02:37

That's the way it went. Right, that's right. It's changed a lot for Vic Atiyeh's time.

James Moore 02:42

Oh, yeah, absolutely, yeah. So you got to know Vic and Dolores through Denny...

Tony Van Vliet 02:47

Through Denny. And then when he became governor, of course, we were working hand in hand, right, being down in Ways and Means. We saw Vic a lot in the and I think it was his management style. It got us through that first crisis that was a lot of people talk about the 208 one, but it was nothing compared to what the cuts had to be made. Even though this, the budget was much smaller, 2.8 billion, we were told to cut 600 million out. And yeah, we cut 300 with people like Vera Katz working hand in hand, and all of those down in Ways and Means, and did the best we could. We said, you know, we're going to tear it up if we take another 300 out. And he said, Stop, we're going to -- we're going to raise taxes. We're not going to rip the fabric of the state apart. And this is where I gained a great deal of admiration for him. And then we had some bills. I can't even remember all of them that we used to have that went through, we would discuss up in his office. I think the only time I had an argument with Vic is I was not a strong fan of public corporations. And I wasn't strong fan of safe developing a public private corporation out of state, but they had such a the private sector had done such a lousy job and had really never leveled with folks about what they were doing, that it turned a lot of people against them. And I think we finally said, Yeah, okay, Vic, let's go ahead and try this. And it's, it's worked out, all right. It's been good competition for the private sector. But I think that's the only time I ever really sort of edged away and said, you know--

James Moore 04:32

Was he totally private or totally public? Or how was he on that?

Tony Van Vliet 04:37

Well, he was willing to buy into a public, private corporation. Model, which was, you know, it's a, it's a habsie, have you? It's like, OSHU, yeah, which, I wrote a letter when I was Kitzhaber's half-time education advisor, and I said, you know, I said I wouldn't do this, and but it had to do with the medical school and kids. How. Was off and away, yeah. And those are things have haunted us ever since you gave away the farm, yeah, took away all the transparency, and the legislatures have simply gone to sleep on their fiduciary responsibility, yeah, on that area,

James Moore 05:16

Yeah. Seems like the only person who's there is Mitch watching it.

Tony Van Vliet 05:20

Yeah, yeah. [Moore interjects: But he's part of it too.] So he's part of it too. He's got his own ax to grind in that area. And, yeah. Well, anyway, that's, I think, I think the steady hand on the ship is what people got to admire Vic the most on and his general way, his office was open. You could always get to see him. You knew that the press releases coming out were going to be not tilted one way or the other. You going to get a straight shot. And I think, of course, Denny had a lot to do with advising him on that kind of stuff too. Denny was, is, was a good -- was a good governor's communication person, and so we could always march in. And he was -- he did not play favorites between Democrats or Republicans. If a Democrat had something to really talk to him about into the office, he could go and the same with any of us in the Republican side.

James Moore 06:21

So in your Ways and Means, so you're in the middle of budgets and tax cuts and all that stuff. And especially after, I mean: the first session has been described to me by several people as the apogee of Oregon income, and then it fell apart by the end of '79 because Paul Volcker raised interest rates. And from there until the end of Vic's time, it was...

Tony Van Vliet 06:47

Oh, well, Vic never got to really manage anything that was likable, yeah, that he could have. He could have a little fun being a governor with -- But I don't think we saw it coming for some reason. And in the '79 session, we were pretty

oblivious to what was going on nationally, and we were trying to get people interested in taking a hard look at the tax structure in the state of Oregon. And that was going nowhere. And in the 80s interim period, I remember going in and doing my favorite three stools schtick on the need for a sales tax at that time. And Young Vic and young young Peter Courtney came up to me in the hall and said, You know, I'd like to join you on this. I said, Fine, go with Richmond, lock ourselves in the closet and try to see if we can get a bill out. That bill 2001 Vic thought so much of, because we had researched so completely that he put his horses behind it. And then Barbara Roberts used the same. But you know, going against goes nowhere, goes nowhere, yeah, it goes nowhere, yeah. When you have people like McIntyre coming along and say, Well, I'm going to lower your taxes, you know? And everybody says, Oh, hi, great. Never thought about the responsibility went with it. But Vic had a great sense of responsibility to the state. He was a real Oregonian from that standpoint, he was not going to harm the state. He was going to do his best to keep the very best parts of it. I know that he felt sometimes your the shadow of Tom McCall was above the whole spectrum of things. Everybody thought that Tom walked on water, but the grunt work, the grunt work, the hard thing of doing the things that were right I put right square in Vic's domain.

James Moore 08:50

Yeah, Vic tells a funny story, which I actually corroborated. Tom and Vic going back to DC to testify on land use and Tom didn't know anything about the bill, so the night before, they're in a hotel room in Washington, and Vic is just training them on this and also saying, I'm big right next to you. So if you you know gracefully, defer, I'll just come in. But classic Tom. Classic Tom.

Tony Van Vliet 09:22

Well, I you know you have to love, you gotta love Tom McCall, because he really put Oregon on the map, from the standpoint of things he said. But you know, you do need people like Vic in politics who are basically willing to do the quiet work that needs to be done in keeping the state going. And Vic was that.

James Moore 09:50

So tell me about the actual management style with the committee. I've talked to Hardy Myers, and when Hardy was Speaker, he worked well with whoever what was Gary Wilhelms. Wilhelms was the Minority Leader in the House at that point. This is like '81.

Tony Van Vliet 10:14

Yeah, I think that's correct.

James Moore 10:16

And -- but then Gary left. Talking to Gary, he actually just became, he came and lobbied you guys as of January 1. But Hardy didn't work well with whoever the next minority leader was, and so hardy was talking about he was able to work, in effect, through Vic, to work with the Republican caucus.

Tony Van Vliet 10:41

I can believe that mainly because of the type of person Hardy Myers is. Hardy -- Hardy is also gets way up on the pedestal in my idea of a good public servant. Hardy got beat up in his caucus all the time for doing fair things. In fact, how I got on Ways and Means as a second Republican was due to Hardy Myers holding out. And we used to go to lunch together once in a while, and we would say, you know, Hardy, if we could pick the very best people and make them committee chairs, wouldn't it be marvelous? And he was in total agreement with that, and he tried to do that, and they, they just about killed him in his own party. And so the night that we were signing Diane and picking the members for the interim period of 1977 emergency board. Hardy had put my name forward to go on that and the person who held that up was May, May you wanted that job, and she held us there until three o'clock in the morning. They had to make go into caucus time after time and make her some concessions in order to get her out of ways, and means she eventually got on through the Senate, but that's how I got on Ways and Means I stayed there almost the entire time. And Hardy was that kind of person that could work with people like Vic, because they both were like minded, And believe it or not, Vera Katz was too. She had more knowledge about the human resource. In fact, that was our big, tough job in the recession period, to try to keep the wheels on without hurting education too badly, because ballot measure 5 wasn't in, we had a little bit of wiggle room there. But in the human resource area, trying to take care of the huge number of people that were out of work and were needing help, we met night after night in small groups, just trying to figure out,

what the hell can we do in committee to alleviate that? And Vic was always with us on that. He says, Go look what you can do. Bring it back to me. We'll look it over. We'll talk it over. That's the way you ought to go.

James Moore 13:17

What was the role of his staff in all of this? Were they substitutes for him, or were they staffing you? In effect, I mean, how did his staff...

Tony Van Vliet 13:27

I'm trying to remember who in the hell were on the staff at that time, because they basically might weren't people that were pushing for a personal attention, because I would have remembered them. But they were basically laid back type of folks. I think I saw more of Denny than I did of any of the others, mainly because whenever there was a crisis coming up in a particular area, there was going to have to be a press release. Denny was down there listening in committee. I can remember Vic's team basically being well, let's see his chief of staff was Gerry Thompson.

James Moore 14:03

She came in in 1980-ish Lee Johnson was the first one.

Tony Van Vliet 14:07

Lee Johnson. Well, Lee Johnson had some of his own problems, so tell me about those. Well, I remember he had some trouble with some of the things he said as attorney -- he was Attorney General, wasn't he, and he had stepped down, or he was going to run for Attorney General, but...

James Moore 14:24

He was, I'm just picking up on the things he was doing before, because I just know him as Chief of Staff. And it turns out he was this, that and the other. So, yeah, he had delusions of grandeur.

Tony Van Vliet 14:34

Yes he did. Yes he did. And, and, and he wasn't the most well liked Republican among the moderates. Okay? And anyway, so when Gerry came in, she was a breath of fresh, fresh air, because she was like, open, like Vic. You know, if you had a problem in this committee, go talk to Gerry. And if Gerry thought, well, you ought to sit down with Vic too. Let's go in and sit down with him and talk it over. Most of them were problems that could be solved because they were financial budgeting problems. Yeah, I can't even at this moment in time... can't even think some of the big pieces of legislation that we we put through in those sessions, most of it was so concentrated on the budgetary crisis.

James Moore 15:18

Yeah, like Hardy remembers the judicial reform because that was his base. Yes, yeah, but yeah. And everybody describes that time as either the spec in '79 the specter of tax reform from measure or Prop 13 is hanging over everything. And then after that, it's crisis, crisis, crisis, right? So--

Tony Van Vliet 15:39

Right, and, well it -- By the way, that was the best judiciary committee that was ever in the legislature, because it had Hardy Meyer-- [?] from down in Ashland. Lombard... I'm not sure. It may have had Blumenauer, but I'm not sure whether it was Blumenauer or Kulongowski at that time that got on there. But there was a -- it was, it was a great Judicial Committee, and they, you know, you could, you could make sure that anything that came out of that committee was going to be with the I's dotted and the T's crossed, and there wasn't a hell of a lot of argument with... I think, at that time, they were going for basically having the sentencing structure be somewhat uniform, because we had the hanging judges in the East and the more moderate ones in the West. And we weren't getting equal sentencing done and and then the uniform sentencing, where, for this thing, you got so many this and this and this, judges didn't like that. They wanted the freedom to do their own thing. But it was, I think, sort of to level the playing field. Rutherford....

James Moore 16:54

Yeah. Then the funding as well moved it from counties to state.

Tony Van Vliet 17:01

Well, in that time too, we were -- the argument between district and circuit judges was going on, and trying to merge those into one system. Then there was always the argument of whether the Supreme Court should be elected or whether it should be basically appointed only. But those arguments go on forever.

James Moore 17:19

Oh, yeah, absolutely. And then we look at West Virginia Supreme Court elections, and we start thinking about them again. When were you first elected into the House?

Tony Van Vliet 17:30

'75. '75. Okay, there were three of us Republicans, all -- two moderates and one very conservative, one from my from Myron. I were the only two from metropolitan areas Republicans that that fought uphill against the Nixon tag. You know, the Republicans got pretty well wiped out across the country, but we had a great caucus with 22 people in the Republican caucus. I think we got more accomplished because it was predominantly a moderate group. Norma Paulus was in there. Stan Bunn was in there at that time, Billy from Albany, who was a delight, Bill Kinsey. It was a great it was a great caucus. It had just a nice little conservative Southern Oregon, Eastern Oregon, but never to the obnoxious level you see today on the ultra-conservative side.

James Moore 18:31

So talk about that change. You make a good argument that when Vic is elected governor in '78 things like the Moral Majority, the overt social conservative stuff just getting started right by the time he leaves in '87 firmly in there. The Republican Party is moving towards the total social conservative takeover that happens in the 90s.

Tony Van Vliet 19:03

Well, I can almost tell you that besides time in 1988, I remember sitting in one of the Republican get-togethers. And the -- at that time, I think Larry Campbell was starting to flex his muscles. They decided they would accept the RNC to come out and give them advice on how to run elections. The -- I'm convinced, if you wanted to make an interesting book, I've often thought it'd be a hell of a story to write how -- what the real game plan of the Republican conservative party is starting back at that moment in time. And it was probably more than anything, we must take over state legislatures, because that has the, basically the apportionment of districts, and what if we can control that? To control votes. If we can get that, we can put in our own bills that were basically coming out of ALEC, and we eventually would have a farm club for presidency and key offices in the country. Was a hell of a game plan, and it was well thought I was just like a bunch of generals getting together. The one thing that pulled the moderates away, why we could, why we started to get squeezed out, is their intent was always key point: no new taxes. Tattoo it on the top of your forehead. Second was last minute blow-down campaign, demonize the opponent, find something nasty about them and coming out the last minute so you can get them. And that was the keystone of their argument. And most of the moderates -- shoot, we, at that time at the state level, we were putting up with people like Walter Huss and some of those way-out people. And your moderates would show up at the state party meeting. And in Bend or Seventh ... in Seventh Mountain. And we, we put up a proposal, we get booed. So most of the moderates walked out said, Let's go have fun in town. And hell with these guys. And the the tone just constantly got worse and worse where it was win at all costs. The hell with the state. You know, basically it's get the power, and once you got the power, use it. And that really, to me, turned me off. And I know it turned a lot of the people off who were moderate in their persuasion.

James Moore 21:41

Yeah, I know my own family, which is Republican, back to Lincoln. That's when, like, my mother started switching, and Mary Jane [Delapat?], actually. "We need you in the party!" This is my mother finally said, I just can't stand it.

Tony Van Vliet 21:57

Yeah, yeah. Well, what you do is you drift to the independent side, and then you can watch what goes on, but it's not a good place to be either.

James Moore 22:06

Yeah, I discovered in talking to one of Vic's nephews -- Vic's older brother, Edward is still with us, and Edward voted for Obama twice. He never told ... [Both laugh.]

Tony Van Vliet 22:24

But Vic's brothers, geez. They saw a lot of action in World War II.

James Moore 22:28

Yeah, they were both POWs out of the Battle of the Bulge.

Tony Van Vliet 22:31

Yeah, they're lucky to be alive. There's a lot of -- a lot of the captured guys were shot. Yeah. Well, Vic, the other thing that always was, I appreciated Vic never, never placed in higher ed, at least his own alma mater. Have everybody else the state system to him, was the best way to go. It worked good. We had good chancellors, and it wasn't until there was, there was some shenanigans that... It had been a constant battle since 1929 when they were formed up,, as you know, yes, shoot. And there's always this pissing match going on, and who was going to have to give their president the most pay and all of this. But it became fairly obvious -- it wasn't showing up in Vic's time. But with the crisis in higher ed going on ,gradually, what we got into... In fact, this is my next article. I'm writing on right now is, I'm building it around... If you say fee, if you say fee and I say taxes, or do you say taxes and I say fees, let's not do it again. You know, the old Fred Astaire thing, "Let's call the whole thing off." It was at that time of night, in 1981 when to get out of the jam, agencies that basically had the ability to raise fees: We said, Okay. Our intent was not to continue that, But because it became an art form, and it took the legislature enough off the hook in all of the tight budgets that it has gained momentum. So this is why you have the high tuition in higher ed. This is why OPB went out. This is why people were questioning DEQ. When I was on DEQ, more and more of our fees were tied to the ability the people we were basically had our fee structure on, and they were calling the shots about how things ought to be run. And you start to become a servant, then of people who are paying those fees, dictating legislation. Now, the students weren't powerful enough to do this. They couldn't really squawk enough to get the fees down. But you get large corporations in there that were benefiting from fee structures, and they saw their fees going up. They wanted to have more say-so at the table. And so we basically have been lucky. We've gone along on these rollercoaster gradually up, but we sit out here now with some horrendous problems that I'm sure Vic never thought that the fee structure way back here in 1981 would evolve into that correct? Yeah,

James Moore 25:40

yeah. You know, he did an oral history in 1993 with the Oregon Historical Society, hundreds of pages, of which I read every single one. But it's interesting, because we look at things we understand the past and where we are in the present, yeah. And so he's looking there, and he talks a lot about major five, because it just hit. We're trying to figure out the all those things, but what I'm discovering is what you described, this is something that was embedded 10 years earlier and still with kind of like the kicker is still with us, right, which saw the 1979 problem, but it has taken on a life of its own.

Tony Van Vliet 26:21

I went back and looked at the kicker piece of legislation, because most of the Republicans voted for it, and I did too at the time, everything sounded okay. The it's Vic's bill, if you ever look at it, but the guys that were behind it were Markham and the three guy from Grants Pass, Jason boat, well, Jason wasn't one of the ones House of Representatives, okay, and so it was. It was Douglas County and Grants Pass, and not even Medford, but those that down there, they thought that that was a fair way to go. We'll put in this because that's the only way you can get people to control the growth of government. And rich fund used to tell us in revenue Committee. He said, You know, you got to be careful with that, because when you start tying things to something that is measurable out here by a group of people, that is strictly supposition of where things are going to go economically, it's going to get you nuts. And if you look at the other thing, it never goes up in a straight line. And these guys were absolutely convinced of the laugh work occurred, oh yeah, that the thing was going to go up like this. And and consequently, could always give people back the money that the rightly and people are absolutely convinced now the taxes collected for running government basically always need to be returned if there's an excess and it just doesn't work. But anyway, once that got entrenched, and then when they stuck it in the Constitution, it became a Bearcat to get rid of. I can't remember who put that in, but they sure did run it through,

James Moore 28:21

yeah, that, and then the Gordon Smith variation that had us get a check, although that's gone now. So if we have a kicker this year, it's going to be a tax thing,

Tony Van Vliet 28:34

yeah, because you save a lot of money mailing it out, I remember I have, I wanted to talk to Gordon Smith about a particular bill one day, and I marched into his office with senate president that time, I think

James Moore 28:52

or so, Majority Leader, yeah, yeah, yeah. I still vividly remember that, because that's kids hovers first term, and Gordon gave a speech that was about as long as kids hovers. I wouldn't have it's like, you know, you're just the president of the Senate. You already have a speech over here. Shut

Tony Van Vliet 29:10

up. When I marched in the office and here all of these cameras around, I said, Gordon, I thought we were going to just have a nice, quiet little talk about a piece of legislation. He says, Well, I thought just bring these guys. I'll see you around. He was a piece of work. Yeah, politics is strange game, yeah, oh, ballot measure five really did us. I'll tell you what really picked us off too. Was we decided to do school equalization. At the same time we were absorbing ballot measure five, yeah, and I was co chair of Ways and Means, just tearing my freaking head out on what the hell to do with that. Because here we were, had all the school districts coming in, everybody. From poorer, smaller school districts who had always wanted to have bands and music and art, and were pointing to those big school districts that had those programs, and they said, now under school equalization, you're going to get some more money and you can put those kind of programs in. No these cotton pickers never did. What they did is they slammed their money in the bank. And when all the rest of us were cutting school, like the Corvallis, Portland, Eugene, or cutting these guys had enough money to run through and weather the storm. Yeah, but and then when delna got up on the floor and said, Now we know that you big school districts have given in church, I'm paraphrasing basically. We're going to try to bring you up next time around to where you work. And once this equalization is shoot, we never came close. Yeah, came close. The leadership changed at that time, and there wasn't any attempt to do it, and we still weren't out of the woods. And then putting in ballot measure five changed the whole world. Yeah.

James Moore 31:22

So talk about Vic as an ex governor. One thing that he says which, and this is a 9293 and I think it's wrong, but he said no one ever came to him to ask about how to run a campaign, even though he'd won twice at the statewide level. So what was that all about, yeah, um, but talk to talk to me about him as an ex governor.

Tony Van Vliet 31:44

Well, my contact with him when he left office was only a few times that Denny and and Doris and Vick, we were out sitting having a picnic or something like that, and would talk. So I didn't see him very much, because being down here in Corvallis, you know, ex governors became almost invisible, mostly, and most of the time, unless they were somebody like Tom McCall, always making press. But Vic was, I think, if people wanted to, I really think people didn't appreciate what a great contribution Vic had made as a manager, and had not gone up and said to him, Well, look at we're in another jam. How would you manage this now and gain some of the little tidbits that would have gotten you through some of the tough jams. You certainly didn't find that from Neil Goldsmith, no. And you certainly Barbara, even though she was good, she had her Princess of darkness, who worked with us. She and Vic were, I think, pretty good friends, but I don't think, I don't know if she ever asked anything of them, and it would be a good question to ask of Norma Paulus, yeah, because Norma, probably, at the time she was really thinking about running for governor, should have probably been picking Vic's brains a little bit about how to do it. Because I don't even know if Roger Martin ever went up and asked Vic, you know, how'd you do this? But I think Vic had such a, what I would call almost a Boy Scout, image of honesty, that people, in some ways, may have been afraid to really ask him something like that. Say, you know, You're so honest. How are we going to win this thing with your right of honesty? Right?

James Moore 33:52

Yeah, I can understand that. One person, I think Vic worked closely with Chris Dudley and so that he's, he's somebody I'm going to talk to. I was trying to talk to him at the memorial service, but Monica Webb and Dennis Richardson were hovering around him. And I don't talk to anybody who's running for office while they're running. Yeah, no, no, I go by your public statements period. Yeah, that's it. Yes. And both of them were getting trying to get eye contact with these. Yeah. So I finally got to Chris Dudley, and I'll be talking to him, but you just don't hear

Tony Van Vliet 34:30

I don't even know if Chris we known him at all. I don't know either. I don't

James Moore 34:33

know either, but it was amazing. I mean, Chris took the time to come up to this memorial service. He's living in San Diego, yeah. And so that's pretty amazing. So, you know,

Tony Van Vliet 34:44

he was sort of a Bill Bradley type of guy, I think if you never had a chance, yeah, yeah. But yeah, no, I really the most times I've seen Vic recently have been at the. Roger Martin old timers luncheon that is put on about once every couple of months. And in fact, I saw him, gee, it had to be the last one. And then he passed away right after that, yeah,

James Moore 35:12

because there was a spring one, yeah.

Tony Van Vliet 35:17

And I thought he looked all right at that time. And it's interesting because the ex governor's like kung gusky huddle around him, looking in and sort of admiring the fact that he's still going and doing it, doing his thing. And they wish they had some of his stuff rub off on him.

James Moore 35:38

Yeah, absolutely. But he was of the age that, you know, boy, when it goes, yeah, it's just a cascade, yeah, which is, you know, that's a good way to go,

Tony Van Vliet 35:49

yeah, it is. It is. You would never, you would not have picked him as an athlete,

James Moore 35:54

no, but we do have a signed Green Bay Packers contract. Yeah,

Tony Van Vliet 36:00

yeah, played football and he didn't get his brains knocked out to where he couldn't think. No, those were, I think, I think some of the most productive years at the legislature were during that period, that Vic was, I think there was the best learning period and the most congenial period that I saw in all 20 years I was in. I never saw that kind of congeniality with any of the other governors. And that's funny, because I thought kids harbor was going to be that way. In fact, I think he was probably his very first year term as governor, but he did some strange things. I guess they're turning out to be even stranger. So, yeah,

James Moore 36:57

yeah, yeah, with him, because kuwagoski is kind of the same way. It's fascinating to look at the campaign style. Cooling goski and Kitzhaber both kind of gave the impression they didn't really like to campaign. Yeah, whereas Vic, or he'll go anywhere to talk to anybody about anything, he just loves that stuff. Yeah, yeah. And yet, clearly, we in Oregon, reward did kids harbor and cool and gossip overwhelmingly here. Great. We're lucky time and time again. Yeah, but it's fascinating to look at the personalities. And you know, does that make a difference? It clearly does in terms of ease of getting things done. But does it make a difference in policy, or does it make a difference in Well, I think it's

Tony Van Vliet 37:39

the big deterrent right now in running for office is the fact that you spend all your time raising money. Oh, yeah, yeah. It takes all the fun out of it, yeah, if you, you know, you, you feel like you're a huckster going out there and asking for a contribution. Unfortunately, I this district is the greatest district to serve. I never had to worry after my first election. I never had a race. You know, we were running \$6,000 races, \$10,000 races and so on. Now, if you want to run for this job, I would have had to have 25, 3040, \$50,000 even to get my stuff printed up.

James Moore 38:14

You weren't in the Senate race. Yeah, yeah. When Vic won in 78 he raised a record amount of money, over \$500,000 and the equivalent of that today is \$2 million. Yeah, yeah, that's one of these Oregon State Senate races. Yeah, that. I mean, it's a different world.

Tony Van Vliet 38:34

It's a different world, wildly different world. And I think it is. It is corrupting that world pretty good, yeah, yeah, yeah, when the Koch brothers can start putting money into a Commissioner's race in Minnesota, you have to wonder about what the hell is happening exactly,

James Moore 38:51

exactly, and we've got all the Betsy Johnson bill goes going through, but it's because part of it is Michael Bloomberg and Tom Steyer, billionaire out of California, put their money into Oregon State Senate races to win those to go around Betsy Johnson. And you bet Kate's gonna sign those bills. You bet

Tony Van Vliet 39:13

she's, she's a tough person, yeah, her father and mother were, well, they were just total opposites. Personality wise. Sam was the low key sat behind me. Fatherly type of guy, type of guy you'd like to have pat on your back when you're a young legislator. Elizabeth was a bulldog. She dug into education and she chopped us up in little pieces and spit us out. She didn't like what we were doing. And I think Betsy is like her, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

James Moore 39:50

So anything else about jumps out.

Tony Van Vliet 39:58

I will miss him. I will. This talking to him, because he was always a delight to talk to. And I think that if I could sit him over in the couch there, we could probably solve the majority of problems around in state government. And I think he would probably even propose ways to probably really get us back on a solid track, tax wise in the state, he probably would have some ideas on that. He fought hard on his sales tax. He took that sales tax, which was well written. We basically had Barbara Seymour, look at every sales tax in the United States and pick out the best and the worst features that had to be avoided. And the time we put it in, we had only, we call them the snapping turtles, are going to come up on the beach the minute where we dropped the bill, the only ones that came up for the aluminum companies who didn't like the tax on the carbide route Rods, and we're going into the smelters business community, basically our sales tax, other than the collection aspect of it, they're rather neutral about sales. And I think Vic ran with that. I think he got talked into that comic book, which he today says was a poor decision on his part. He says, you know, that just wasn't the right thing. I thought at the time it was a good thing to educate the people in sort of a humorous way and talk about taxation. But he said, You know, I just backfired. And I think he was always disappointed that the campaign hadn't run the way he would have liked to run it, because at that time, he thought of sales tax was probably the other leg of the stool that would get us through. Yeah, yeah.

James Moore 41:56

And that's one reason, from what we know, why kids Hopper didn't push tax ideas because, yeah, doesn't pull at all.

Tony Van Vliet 42:07

I frankly think that's probably not part of your record about big but I frankly have thought about the fact that if Washington can get along with the B and O tax and we're always between the two states playing games, between the black market stuff going back and forth, and people saying it's cheaper on that side of the border and this side of the border, and start lowering income taxes a little bit down, and that that may be a better route to go. B and O is not too bad. It's sort of a corporate sales tax type of an approach, but maybe somebody might bring it up.

James Moore 42:54

Yeah? Marquez says he's looking at things well, yeah, Mark, so we'll see. We'll see Absolutely. Well, great.

Tony Van Vliet 43:02

Well, thank you very much. You're welcome. You're welcome. I'm glad you're doing this for Vic. Are you going to put

this in a sort of a book form?

James Moore 43:09

Yeah, this will be an OSU press. Vic wanted a book, okay? If I were doing it by myself, it would be much more of a website out of which you could, you know, take and publish things, yeah, but Vic really wanted a book, and I'm honoring that good, good and, you know, I don't care if there's a run of 504 190 of them go into libraries and 10 go to the 10 people who won. Yeah. You know, that's great, but it's going to be, basically, the idea is, there's eventually going to be a huge web thing so that people can go on and play around with it. And it's also pushing the limits. There's the straw archive, which has now been there. They're backing away from that, but the Hatfield archive, Barbara Roberts at Portland State. They're electronically connecting all of them. Oh, good. And so I'm kind of the first one to really rattle this electronic cage and see what can really be done with this super and so, so it'll, it'll be, you know, a book to honor Vic. And then I hope moving into the future, yeah, with what we can really do with this stuff.

Tony Van Vliet 44:21

Well, I think it's great. I just think that him leaving his things to Pacific University made quite a statement about Victor Mann, because he could have, well given it to his album. And he basically, I think he's thought so well of that university. And, of course, I dearly fell in love with your president up there when she was on, she was representing the Oregon Health Sciences at the state board. I think Wesley was just great, yeah, but I think that was says, says a lot of his feeling about i. You know, let's do something with the other universities. We don't always have to be playing games with the big ones. Yeah,

James Moore 45:07

yeah. And trying to really track down why he did that. Because he was always kind of, well, I just like the place. But from his family and from some other people from the 1950s and 60s, it was his district, because he was just before, it was before the single member districts, yeah, and so he represented Pacific University for 12 years. I didn't he also has some fascinating things to say about the multi member districts versus single. He likes multi members and didn't ever like the single Yeah, from his point of view, it made it affect the constituents. Became near because you were personally theirs, yeah, whereas with a group, it was a different, different feeling. So that's some things that's going to be really fun to explore. It is and, you know, just look at it and say, you know, in the future maybe, right? You know those kinds of things, great, great, great. Well. Thank you very much. Thank you.

[Recording ends.]