

Atiyeh treated media right

Little more than a week ago something truly rare occurred at the Capitol: The press corps honored a politician for his long record of accessibility.

This sort of thing doesn't happen often. For one thing, reporters, living up to their irreverent anti-authority image, pay honors to hardly anyone. And more and more, politicians are less and less accessible.

The occasion was Vic Atiyeh's final press conference as governor.

In his eight years as governor, Atiyeh put on about 400 of these weekly shindigs. Usually, they were culminated by the reporters running out of things they wanted to ask about.

At the close of this meeting, Associated Press reporter Charles Beggs, outgoing president of the press corps, presented the Republican politician a plaque paid for by the reporters.

"I've covered three governors," Beggs told Atiyeh, "and you've been the most accessible. And that includes Tom McCall."

Atiyeh's eyes watered. The presentation was obviously a surprise. Clearly, he was moved.

One broadcast journalist noted that Atiyeh surely had put on a bunch of media availabilities in his tenure as governor.

Well, of course he had. These weekly press conferences were certainly important to radio and TV types as well as the rest of us looking for a governor's reaction to whatever was in the news at the time.

But 400 or so media availabilities isn't what political accessibility is about. What made Atiyeh unusual in today's political climate was his willingness to return reporters' phone calls.

Reporters from news outlets big



Commentary

Ron
Blankenbaker

and small have all had experiences in which Atiyeh returned their calls. He did it even if they were late at night or on weekends. He did it even if the questions to be asked were losers for the politician to answer.

The current occupants of the Capitol, including new governor Neil Goldschmidt and 90 legislators, may not admire Atiyeh. But they may want to think long and hard about providing Atiyeh-style accessibility.

It's probably too soon to judge Goldschmidt, but if the performance of his transition effort as well as his first few days as governor is any sample, it doesn't get the job done.

Contact with Goldschmidt, once he won the election, has been for most reporters purely an exercise in interview-by-appointment — except that no appointments were made.

This is too bad, because most reporters don't need formal interviews most of the time. What they need is timely responses to questions in order to inform the public.

So far, though, the Goldschmidt administration seems intent on limiting media contact to press conferences loaded up with so many members of the administration that actual reporters often can't get into the room, much less get a question answered.

When Goldschmidt called a press conference to announce his plans for the state's Corrections Division, the regular press interview room wasn't big enough.

It was plenty big enough for the press. What it couldn't house was the peanut gallery that Goldschmidt brought with him, a sort of Greek chorus at the ready to imply agreement by its presence.

At a recent budget briefing, also overcrowded with administration hangers-on, one of the administrative types out of camera range had a large sign made up with questions — a device to prompt the press toward a helpful context.

But Goldschmidt is new here. Perhaps time will temper the governor and his team into more informative and less exploitative modes of communication.

Legislative leadership has no such excuse. Press contact with House Speaker Vera Katz and Senate President John Kitzhaber wasn't good in the 1985 session. Now it seems to be worsening.

Contact with Katz is almost impossible. One reporter has observed that it might be easier to dial the White House for a quick comment from Ronald Reagan.

The occasional dog-and-pony shows for the press when Kitzhaber or Katz wants to promote a personal agenda, such as last session's sales tax, are hardly open communication with the public.

And these feeble efforts at stage management, which more and more legislative types seem intent on emulating, don't cut it as accessibility with the public.

That's all that returning a reporter's phone call is really about — communicating with the public

Ron Blankenbaker is a Statesman-Journal writer

Atiyeh rates A for candor

Former Gov. Vic Atiyeh, who stepped down from office last Monday, ran an open office as far as the press is concerned. During his eight-year tenure, he conducted about 400 "media availability" sessions for reporters and editors. That figures to nearly one every week.

Shortly before he completed his final term of office, Atiyeh was given a plaque by Chuck Beggs, Associated Press reporter at the Capitol. Beggs is president of the Capitol press corps, a loose-knit group of press and electronic news people who work full time covering state government in Salem. The association numbers about a dozen people most of the time, but membership doubles when the Legislature comes to town.

The nicely designed plaque was in recognition of Atiyeh's enlightened attitude toward the news media. He or his press chief, Denny Miles, was available almost day and night to answer questions from reporters. In fact, on some



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major stories, one or the other has called the Statesman-Journal to volunteer information.

We in the news business deeply appreciate that openness.

This willingness to be available and to talk about events and issues has been a service to all Oregonians, not just the news media. Atiyeh realizes far more than most public officials that reporters in a large sense represent the public, which depends on newspapers, radio and television to learn about government.

Atiyeh also has been available to meet with our editorial board many times during his years in of-

fice. At those sessions we always found him to be candid and well-informed.

All but one of those sessions were in the Statesman-Journal conference room. On that one occasion, however, the board arranged to visit with the governor in his office complex in the Capitol. That was our idea, as I recall, in recognition of his willingness to come to our conference room to visit with us whenever we invited him.

While the Statesman-Journal at times has been a bit unkind in its editorial comments about Atiyeh, we will remember him as a fair and candid governor who didn't duck the tough questions we put to him. That's high praise for any political figure.

We hope that same pattern of openness and candor will continue in the news media's relationship with Gov. Neil Goldschmidt and his press chief, Floyd McKay.

Van Eisenhut is senior editor of the Statesman-Journal.

DEC 28 1986

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

"Atiyeh Era" ends in Oregon

TOM TOWSLEK ³⁶⁶
United Press International

SALEM, Ore. (UPI) — Gov. Vic Atiyeh sat in his paneled office in the State Capitol, looking back over his eight years as governor with the same business-like, managerial style manner that became the trademark of his two terms.

"You can't be a Rambo out there," Atiyeh said in an interview with United Press International as he prepared to turn over the reins of state government to Neil Goldschmidt Jan. 12 and open a private consulting firm on international trade.

"A lot of people talk about doing things for people and didn't get them done," he said. "I haven't talked about it, but I got it done."

To Atiyeh, 63, "getting it done" means a governorship that restored Oregon's reputation as a good place to do business, managed a state government hurt by a lingering recession and laid the groundwork for economic growth that he believes will come after he leaves office.

It also means achieving those goals without the self-serving glare of publicity and in the face of criticism that he was a lackluster, do-nothing governor who by his own assessment will leave office with a "50-50" rating by the people of Oregon.

"It is just not my style," he said of his refusal to seek publicity for his accomplishments.

"I find that those who talk a good game are considered charismatic, but no one ever looks at what they've done," he said. "I honestly believe that I did what the people of Oregon wanted me to do and they respect me for it."

Atiyeh said he has mixed emotions about leaving the job he has held for eight years and compares it his children growing up and leaving

home. "You look forward to it, and then that day comes and you find it's not that great," he said.

"I expect some adjustments and that it will be tough for me," he said. "I had eight grand years as governor of Oregon, and that is quite an honor."

Critics and friends agree that Atiyeh was the right governor at the right time for Oregon: a steady hand on a ship of state that was being rocked by repeated blows from a national economy over which he had no control.

They also marvel at his political resilience, noting that in 1982 he called the Oregon Legislature into session twice to cut state budgets and raise taxes — yet still won reelection by one of the largest margins in state history.

"Atiyeh comes in for more criticism than he just deserves," said Ted Kulongoski, the Democratic candidate who lost to Atiyeh four years ago. "His problem has been that he did not exemplify the leadership that people wanted."

"There were no peaks or valleys in his administration," he said. "If you plotted it out, it would be a straight line. He has a caretaker image that is a valid one — and not a negative one, given the circumstances."

"I'm glad we had Vic as governor during those difficult years," said state Sen. Tony Meeker of Amity, Republican leader of the Senate and a long-time personal friend of Atiyeh. "We could not have made it through those times with a governor like Tom McCall."

"You have to hand it to the electorate for electing a guy like Vic Atiyeh to lead the state when they didn't know those tough times were coming," he said. "McCall wouldn't have made it."

Throughout his two terms, Atiyeh relied on his conservative Republican background of 35 years

in the family rug business and 20 years in the Oregon Legislature.

Much like the fatherly owner of a family business, he was slow to criticize loyal employees and quick to defend state workers who became targets for politicians.

When he came into office in 1979, Atiyeh acknowledged the strides Oregon had made in protecting the environment and turned his sights on restoring the state's reputation as a good place to do business and in bringing some reform to social service programs.

The effort spawned two phrases: "Oregon is open for business" and "Trader Vic."

The first was his effort to welcome business back to Oregon. The second was pinned on him for his frequent trips overseas to woo Japanese and other foreign businesses.

Atiyeh has always expressed disappointment at not having the chance to be governor when Oregon's economy was booming and the state had money to spend.

Instead, he was forced to cut budgets, raise taxes and at the same time try to attract business to Oregon in a process that by its very nature had to be discreet to be successful and thus occurred outside the public view.

"We all want to be loved," he said, "and to the degree that Oregonians know what we did, they don't think it was all that bad."

"I believe that if you do what you think is right that Oregonians may not agree with you, but they will respect you for doing it," he said.

"I wanted to be governor because I knew I could run it better than it was being run," he said. "I didn't just want the title. I knew the things that could and should be done and I knew I could do it."

"There is no better job than being governor of a state," Atiyeh said.

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Vic worked for state

³⁶⁶Endorsing Vic Atiyeh for governor in 1978, The Oregonian expected from him "hard work, honesty and careful decisions, slowly developed." And that's what Oregon received during his eight years in office. We had many disagreements with him over those years, but never doubted that he was working as he thought right on Oregon's behalf.

Atiyeh's time as governor was a difficult period for Oregon for reasons largely out of his control, as the state plummeted from prosperity into a deep, stubborn recession. It was a period that focused the governor's attention on the nuts and bolts of government and on the need for diversifying the state's economy by recruiting new business.

Economic development is a long-term proposition. Atiyeh acted on the idea that the Far East, especially Japan, is a natural business partner for Oregon and that regular, personal salesmanship is needed. It is easy to disparage a politician's overseas travel, but it also is easy to overlook the benefits that high-level contacts produce.

Those contacts, for instance, convinced Atiyeh that Oregon's unitary method of taxing multinational corporations doing business in the state was a major barrier to attracting Japanese plants, and he called the Legislature into special session to repeal it. The gambit worked; at least some of the additions to Oregon's so-called Silicon Forest were dividends from that policy change.

On other matters we and others criticized the governor for failing to take the lead or follow through in resolving difficult state problems.

Sometimes the governor responded that maintaining a high profile was not his style and that he preferred to work out of the limelight. He certainly was right on that self-appraisal, but his low-key approach and preference for letting his managers do the managing make it difficult to judge where credit is due.

Oregonians should not forget Atiyeh's leadership in the fund-raising drive for public purchase of the banks of the lower Deschutes River, his important support of state funding of a portion of the cost of Portland's light-rail line, and his recognition of the need to work with Washington to obtain a bistate proposal for preserving the Columbia River Gorge. Even though we disagreed with the approach favored by Atiyeh and then-Washington Gov. John Spellman, the governors' proposal was one of the key steps in the eventual passage of a gorge bill.

Atiyeh also recognized the threat to Oregon's land-use planning effort and appointed a respected former legislator, Stafford Hansell, to head a governor's task force to hear complaints and recommend corrective steps. That credibility-building effort helped defeat a proposed repeal of the state planning laws.

In sum, Atiyeh's period as steward of Oregon government largely was one of forced retrenchment rather than advancement. It is time for a new leader, a new style and new directions in the governor's office. But as Vic Atiyeh — a very decent man — leaves his post, the difficulties of his job and his successes in spite of them ought to be appreciated and remembered.

JAN 5 1987

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Atiyeh had misfortune to lead at wrong time

The days in office for Gov. Vic Atiyeh have dwindled to a precious few.

Soon, Neil Goldschmidt will take over in Salem. He's promised efforts to spark the Oregon economy and he's started replacing Atiyeh department heads.

Fate wasn't kind to Vic Atiyeh in his two terms as governor.

He faced a declining economy that twisted state government every way but loose.

He won the office on his second try, defeating incumbent Gov. Bob Straub in 1978, then won convincing re-election in 1982 over Ted Kulongoski.

A thoroughly decent, though unexciting, office-holder, Atiyeh faced a declining economy that twisted Oregon state government every way but loose.

Programs were cut, employees laid off and others demoted, and taxes raised as the Legislature and the governor struggled to keep the budget in equilibrium. It didn't happen without rancor, though, all things considered, it could have been worse.

Atiyeh and the Legislature faced repeated special legislative sessions, including the longest ever — 37 days in 1982.

All major Oregon institutions

suffered as the state agonized through the worst timber recession since the Great Depression.

It was not a time when most would want to be governor but, as Atiyeh said recently, "you take the years you get."

Atiyeh did his best with a difficult situation and generally handled the cuts with compassion and competence.

Atiyeh had some difficulties with some of his early appointments, but his biggest failings were those he simply couldn't help: he had a bad economy and he lacked the crowd appeal that can contribute greatly to a person's leadership. That was a telling weakness in his relationship with the Legislature.

The governor made strenuous efforts to promote Oregon as a good investment for foreign high-tech firms and that seems to have paid off, though Oregon high-tech facilities in general took a beating in 1986 with thousands of layoffs. Visits he made to Pacific Rim countries will continue to pay off in the future, he said recently. We hope so.

We see Atiyeh's tenure as one of earnest attempts to deal with frustrating circumstances largely beyond one person's control. Good economic times would have helped him immeasurably, but that was not to be.

Atiyeh did his best for Oregon. Between his eight years as governor and his 20 in the Legislature, he gave the state a lot and, even though times weren't the best, he deserves thanks. We wish him well.

JAN 4 1987

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Editorials *8/6/87*

Steady economic progress

Governor sets pace

Public opinion polls reveal high expectations for Gov.-elect Neil Goldschmidt's performance in office. People want his campaign themes of action and achievement to come alive and transform the state.

Gov. Vic Atiyeh leaves office with Oregonians nearly evenly split in their opinion of his record the past eight years. These are the same people who gave Atiyeh unqualified support with 61 percent of the vote in the 1982 gubernatorial election.

We all stand to benefit from a Goldschmidt success story, but none of us should nurse great hopes for miraculous turnarounds and instant economic recovery.

Goldschmidt does not assume the governorship with a burden to save the state, any more than Atiyeh leaves holding the bag for eight years of lean times.

Economic forces beyond the control of both men and their administrations shape — and occasionally jerk and yank — the state's economy. How Oregon reacts to those changes and prepares for other changes is something for which they are accountable.

Oregon was at the peak of an up cycle when the bottom dropped out of the lumber market. Half a dozen years later an automated timber industry is producing the same amount of lumber with a third fewer workers.

Atiyeh reacted to the plunge with a tight rein on state spending and a commitment to smooth out the peaks and troughs of those timber cycles. The strategy he chose was diversification of the economy by attracting new employers.

As Atiyeh leaves office, he is somewhat like an orchardist who retires years before he gets to see how the seedlings he cultivated will grow and bear fruit. Work in the orchard is not as colorful and immediately rewarding as selling fresh-cut flowers, but the benefits are longer-lasting.

Atiyeh's labors should not be overlooked or forgotten when the harvest comes.

Likewise, Goldschmidt must be allowed to proceed at his own pace. No miracles are expected; no quick fixes or patch jobs are wanted.

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(Deschutes County)
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He did as well as possible

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Vic Atiyeh will be governor of Oregon for one more week. Oregonians are ambivalent about his record, if we can believe the polls. Half the residents of Oregon think he's been a good governor. Half don't. The first half is correct.

Atiyeh's critics, and obviously there are many of them, have been led by those who have demanded more, more of lots of things, from the state. But the voters have been unwilling to give him the essential tool of "more," which is money, spelled m-o-n-e-y.

Had the state had more money, lots of it, it could have increased the state's share of school costs, thereby lowering property taxes. Had it had more money it could have built more prison cells, thereby keeping more criminals off the streets. Had it had more money it could have kept the tuition at Oregon's colleges and universities lower. Had it had more

money it could have brought every highway in the state up to interstate freeway standards. And on and on and on.

The public perception of Atiyeh as a governor who didn't do much came alive just as the state's economy went dead. Voters refused to pass a sales tax, and the state's income tax already was one of the very highest in the nation. The state couldn't "soak the rich" because to get the necessary funds from still higher income taxes it would have had to declare every family with more than \$10,000 annual income to be rich.

Atiyeh is not a flamboyant guy by nature. Voters knew that when they twice elected him to the state's highest office. They expected him to do as well as possible with the resources they gave him. And he did that.

JAN 1 1987

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

Assessing the Atiyeh years

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The first day of 1987 is a good time to reflect on the eight years of Vic Atiyeh's service as Oregon's 32nd governor. He will turn over the job to Neil Goldschmidt on Jan. 12.

A recent poll commissioned by The (Portland) Oregonian shows Oregon citizens evenly split, with 45 percent saying Atiyeh has done a good or excellent job and 44 percent saying not very good or poor. Pollster J. Roy Bardsley says, "This is a weak rating . . . certainly no better than mediocre." That assessment is a little harsh.

Atiyeh himself concedes the accuracy of the poll but argues that his ratings would be better if the public knew more about all the good things he has done. He claims that he has never been good at blowing his own horn. He takes a kind of defensive pride in differing from other politicians by being more interested in results than publicity.

While this may reflect admirable human modesty, it is a handicap for a governor. If he had possessed a better knack for public relations, Atiyeh could have been more effective in drumming up support for his ideas in the Legislature and beyond. Even strong supporters criticize him for lacking a desirable dimension of leadership, something many hope to see restored to the office by the more dynamic Goldschmidt.

This legitimate criticism notwithstanding, no fraud was perpetrated here. Atiyeh never claimed to be exciting, and when they voted for him in 1978 and again in 1982 Oregonians did not have the mistaken idea that they were electing a movie star. They wanted a stable, knowledgeable manager who could run the state government, and that's what they got.

The most important thing that happened to Oregon during Atiyeh's tenure was a devastating economic recession. This was beyond any governor's power to control. Oregon's economy went down with the national economy, and because of its peculiar dependencies Oregon went down deeper and stayed down longer. It is still not all the way back to normal.

During the recession years, it became Atiyeh's task and that of the Legislature to adjust state government to constricted fiscal realities. Allowing for the normal quota of false starts and missteps, both met the challenge. They made painful cuts in state programs, but protected essentials. And they did what a President and Congress have

lacked the courage to do at the national level — raise taxes to help close revenue gaps.

The recession made economic diversification Atiyeh's highest priority outside of keeping a firm hand on the state budget and the bureaucracy. He launched a series of business-promoting trips abroad, concentrating on the Far East. It's impossible to say how much good these have done, but Atiyeh's missionary work could pay off in expanded Pacific Rim trade and investments in Oregon long after he is out of office. He deserves credit for trying, and for realizing that this selling job could only be done by the governor, especially in the Far East.

On more traditional issues, the Atiyeh record is mixed.

● Taxes and tax reform: He switched around a surprising amount. He supported the 1½ percent property tax rate limit that was on the ballot when he was first elected in 1978, then opposed its four biennial successors. He floated a giant, instantly doomed "net receipts" tax proposal in 1983 after having been re-elected on a no-new-taxes platform. And he introduced and campaigned for a sales tax plan in 1985 after opposing sales taxes throughout his previous political life.

● The environment: He didn't tinker much with the broad statutory protections that were generally in place by the time he took office. Predictably, he sided with the timber industry on forest management issues such as wilderness expansion. But he gets less credit than he deserves for giving firm and constant support to the state land-use planning program, steering it toward needed compromises to protect it from a potential citizens' revolt.

● Education: He could not solve the puzzle of a perverse state school finance system that allows some schools to close in the middle of the year, although hope of doing so helped persuade him to try for a sales tax. And he proved a better friend of higher education at the end than in the beginning, giving the public college and university system budget priorities in the 1983 and 1985 sessions that halted a serious, long-term erosion of state support.

All things considered, Atiyeh has been a good governor. Not great. Certainly not colorful. But solid, steady and competent. In a variety of ways, he was right for the times.

Atiyeh remembered

La Grande Observer
December 30, 1987

866
Call it the agony of the final four years.

President Reagan enjoyed smashing popularity in his first term, easily defeating Walter Mondale in 1984 to sail into his second term. The Iran affair has tarnished his effectiveness; and with the new Democrat-controlled Senate in place, it will be much more difficult for Reagan to achieve his aims in the next two years.

Gov. Vic Atiyeh, too, enjoyed a good measure of success in his first term (1979-82). His achievements included improved state management, reforms in workers' compensation and the welfare system, and the establishing of energy and economic development programs. He was reelected by a large margin in 1982, a year that Oregon was battling a recession.

BUT HOW QUICKLY popularity fades in political life. Atiyeh in the past four years has become known as a "caretaker governor," holding on to the wheel while Oregon rides out an economic storm. The state has been strapped for funds during the recession and has not taken on many new programs. As Atiyeh leaves office Jan. 12, the school funding dilemma persists.

A recent poll, conducted for *The Oregonian*, showed only 3 percent rating Atiyeh's job performance as "excellent." Another 42 percent said he has done a "good" job, while 28 percent rated his performance as not very good and 16 percent called it poor.

In four years, Oregonians are growing weary of a slow economy. While Gov.-elect Neil Goldschmidt may not be a miracle worker, people are hoping he will provide effective leadership in economic development. (The state's economy may be getting set to rebound anyway. Any governor in Salem - Democrat or Republican - would be able to drink from the cup of improved conditions.)

THOSE REFLECTING on Atiyeh's service to the state should consider his performance over both terms. Here is a native Oregonian and Portland businessman who has made a solid contribution to political life, serving 20 years in the Legislature before being elected governor.

Atiyeh, who will open a private consulting firm on international trade, should be remembered as the man who helped undo the "Visit Oregon, but don't stay" impression of an earlier governor. Gov. Atiyeh made several trips to the Orient, trying to attract industry to Oregon and sell our goods overseas. The phrase, "Oregon is open for business," has gained notoriety because of his efforts.

In his quiet, unassuming way, Atiyeh has served Oregonians honorably ... and well.

JAN 10 1987

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A final moving experience

After speeches,
Atiyehs pack

By Mary Parkinson
Of the Statesman-Journal

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Eight years of commitment-filled 17-hour days are over for Dolores Atiyeh, Oregon's first lady since 1979.

"I'm ready to be mama again. To get to know my grandchildren. To become reacquainted with my old neighbors and friends," she said.

But early Friday another long day stretched ahead.

Cardboard boxes were piled high on the green carpet of the brick house at 796 Winter St. NE, the Atiyehs' residence during his two terms as governor.

By late afternoon the Atiyehs were moved out, preparing to reverse the process in their Beaverton home.

A moving day is no different for a first lady than for anyone else, Dolores Atiyeh said as she paused on the stairway leading to the second floor of the Salem house.

"Getting things packed right is always a concern," she said. "You want to be able to know when you're done where things have been packed.

"Where I differ from most people, perhaps, is that I have larger



Statesman-Journal photo by Ron Cooper

Friday was moving day for Dolores Atiyeh. She said she didn't have a lot of help.

amounts of certain kinds of things, such as china place settings for 36, lots of linens and cardtables."

She's faced with getting those belongings and the furnishings

they have gathered during their years in Salem into a house that is smaller than the 2,649-square foot Winter Street residence.

While preparing for the move she sent loads of discards to com-

munity service organizations. She still has some of the inevitable leftovers with which she doesn't know quite what to do.

Turn to **Move**, Page 2A.

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Dolores Atiyeh judges

8610
A Statesman Journal article on Gov. Vic Atiyeh asked the question: "Are you the best governor Oregon ever had?"

The governor replied: "Ask Dolores."

So I did.

In the midst of moving on Thursday, Dolores Atiyeh, Oregon first lady for the past eight years, had time to reply:

"He has been a super governor. He cared and devoted his life and time trying to make government work well for the people of Oregon.

"He's a sincere person and feels one of his pluses is that he delegated and expected good work from his people."

Dolores Atiyeh will be remem-



Gloria
Bledsoe
Goodman

bered for her many interests. She is a warm and sincere person and was always very accessible.

During her First Lady stint, there were many times she definitely did not delegate. An excellent hostess, but always the thrifty wife, Dolores helped cater many of the countless functions at the governor's Winter St. home, and did

much of the gardening in the yard.

However, there were times she did complain about the home, which was fine for a family home but sub-standard for a governor's abode.

I remember one day she coped beautifully as a gracious hostess for an afternoon coffee and never let it slip that a crack in the basement floor had the room below flooded.

The governor says he's going to go fishing after the transition is complete, but friends say a trip to Hawaii for the Atiyehs might be on the calendar.

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There's a comedian working under the cloak of darkness, reports John Ahlbin.

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The Goldschmidt era begins

Two separate but related moods — excitement and expectation — permeated the State Capitol Monday as Democrat Neil Goldschmidt was sworn in as Oregon's 33rd governor. The immediate challenge for Goldschmidt is to sustain both moods for as long as possible.

Political, economic and social realities have a way of intruding on the euphoria that always accompanies change. Goldschmidt is realistic enough to understand that, but his inaugural day was energized by his youth, his enthusiasm and his potential. Few of the two thousand or so people who filled the Capitol could escape the sense that this 46-year-old dynamo is ready — even eager — to take charge. And the whoops and cheers and applause indicate that a lot of people are ready for him to do just that.

Monday was, appropriately, Goldschmidt's day. But as is usually the case in these events, when the new order enters the old order exits. Vic Atiyeh, as decent a man as ever held the state's highest office, was uncharacteristically emotional in his farewell message. It was a personal, touching speech designed not to detract from Goldschmidt's celebration but to put the finishing brushstrokes on a 28-year career of public service. The applause that swept over Atiyeh when he entered the House chamber and later when he finished speaking was a sign of genuine and deserved admiration for a man who did his best under trying, often agonizing circumstances.

Other ties to the past were also in evidence. Audrey McCall, widow of one of the most popular governors in Oregon history (and the governor to whom Goldschmidt is most often compared), brought a special poignance to the inaugural. Con-

gressman Denny Smith, son of former Gov. Elmo Smith, was there. And there was former Gov. Bob Straub, Oregon's last Democratic chief executive before Goldschmidt, greeting old friends and having the time of his life. One wished that U.S. Sen. Mark Hatfield, the only other living ex-governor, could have attended to complete the roster. But he was tied up in Washington, D.C., and sent his top assistant, Gerry Frank, as his representative.

For the record, at 46 Goldschmidt becomes the seventh youngest governor of Oregon. The youngest was Jay Bowerman, who was only 33 at the time he assumed office in June 1910. Bowerman was president of the Oregon Senate and ascended to the governorship when Gov. Frank Benson resigned because of ill health. More recently, Hatfield was 36 when he became governor in January 1959.

Some faulted Goldschmidt's inaugural address because it lacked specifics. We found its generalized, inspirational theme appropriate to the occasion. There is plenty of time for specifics and for the day-to-day grind of political reality. Monday's speech was designed to set a tone and it did that. It was designed to lay out the new governor's overall philosophy. It did that. It was designed, in a way reminiscent of a young John F. Kennedy's inaugural 26 years ago, to foster the idea that a new vitality has assumed power. It did that.

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Eugene Register-Guard

115

JAN 7 1987

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

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By JEFF MIZE
Of the Times

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Turn to ATIEYH/page 2A

Atiyeh

Continued from page 1A

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866

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JAN 8 1987

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

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By TOM DETZEL
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opinion

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JAN 10 1987

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

A final moving experience

After speeches, Atiyehs pack

By **Mary Parkinson**
Of the Statesman-Journal

866

Eight years of commitment-filled 17-hour days are over for Dolores Atiyeh, Oregon's first lady since 1979.

"I'm ready to be mama again. To get to know my grandchildren. To become reacquainted with my old neighbors and friends," she said.

But early Friday another long day stretched ahead.

Cardboard boxes were piled high on the green carpet of the brick house at 796 Winter St. NE, the Atiyehs' residence during his two terms as governor.

By late afternoon the Atiyehs were moved out, preparing to reverse the process in their Beaverton home.

A moving day is no different for a first lady than for anyone else, Dolores Atiyeh said as she paused on the stairway leading to the second floor of the Salem house.

"Getting things packed right is always a concern," she said. "You want to be able to know when you're done where things have been packed.

"Where I differ from most people, perhaps, is that I have larger



Statesman-Journal photo by Ron Cooper

Friday was moving day for Dolores Atiyeh. She said she didn't have a lot of help.

amounts of certain kinds of things, such as china place settings for 36, lots of linens and cardtables."

She's faced with getting those belongings and the furnishings

they have gathered during their years in Salem into a house that is smaller than the 2,649-square foot Winter Street residence.

While preparing for the move she sent loads of discards to com-

munity service organizations. She still has some of the inevitable leftovers with which she doesn't know quite what to do.

Turn to **Move**, Page 2A.

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Dolores Atiyeh judges

A Statesman Journal article on Gov. Vic Atiyeh asked the question: "Are you the best governor Oregon ever had?"

The governor replied: "Ask Dolores."

So I did.

In the midst of moving on Thursday, Dolores Atiyeh, Oregon first lady for the past eight years, had time to reply:

"He has been a super governor. He cared and devoted his life and time trying to make government work well for the people of Oregon.

"He's a sincere person and feels one of his pluses is that he delegated and expected good work from his people."

Dolores Atiyeh will be remem-



Gloria
Bledsoe
Goodman

bered for her many interests. She is a warm and sincere person and was always very accessible.

During her First Lady stint, there were many times she definitely did not delegate. An excellent hostess, but always the thrifty wife, Dolores helped cater many of the countless functions at the governor's Winter St. home, and did

much of the gardening in the yard.

However, there were times she did complain about the home, which was fine for a family home but sub-standard for a governor's abode.

I remember one day she coped beautifully as a gracious hostess for an afternoon coffee and never let it slip that a crack in the basement floor had the room below flooded.

The governor says he's going to go fishing after the transition is complete, but friends say a trip to Hawaii for the Atiyehs might be on the calendar.

• • •

There's a comedian working under the cloak of darkness, reports John Ahlbin.

You know with interlocking the inters High and I

Well, Jo day for a w a funny sig Such as:

"Thumb here."

"So now And last: "What' once?"

John ca day's offeri

John Naoma, a ing the Or for license

The Goldschmidt era begins

Two separate but related moods — excitement and expectation — permeated the State Capitol Monday as Democrat Neil Goldschmidt was sworn in as Oregon's 33rd governor. The immediate challenge for Goldschmidt is to sustain both moods for as long as possible.

Political, economic and social realities have a way of intruding on the euphoria that always accompanies change. Goldschmidt is realistic enough to understand that, but his inaugural day was energized by his youth, his enthusiasm and his potential. Few of the two thousand or so people who filled the Capitol could escape the sense that this 46-year-old dynamo is ready — even eager — to take charge. And the whoops and cheers and applause indicate that a lot of people are ready for him to do just that.

Monday was, appropriately, Goldschmidt's day. But as is usually the case in these events, when the new order enters the old order exits. Vic Atiyeh, as decent a man as ever held the state's highest office, was uncharacteristically emotional in his farewell message. It was a personal, touching speech designed not to detract from Goldschmidt's celebration but to put the finishing brushstrokes on a 28-year career of public service. The applause that swept over Atiyeh when he entered the House chamber and later when he finished speaking was a sign of genuine and deserved admiration for a man who did his best under trying, often agonizing circumstances.

Other ties to the past were also in evidence. Audrey McCall, widow of one of the most popular governors in Oregon history (and the governor to whom Goldschmidt is most often compared), brought a special poignance to the inaugural. Con-

gressman Denny Smith, son of former Gov. Elmo Smith, was there. And there was former Gov. Bob Straub, Oregon's last Democratic chief executive before Goldschmidt, greeting old friends and having the time of his life. One wished that U.S. Sen. Mark Hatfield, the only other living ex-governor, could have attended to complete the roster. But he was tied up in Washington, D.C., and sent his top assistant, Gerry Frank, as his representative.

For the record, at 46 Goldschmidt becomes the seventh youngest governor of Oregon. The youngest was Jay Bowerman, who was only 33 at the time he assumed office in June 1910. Bowerman was president of the Oregon Senate and ascended to the governorship when Gov. Frank Benson resigned because of ill health. More recently, Hatfield was 36 when he became governor in January 1959.

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Turn to ATIYEH/page 2A

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Continued from page 1A

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Atiyeh rates A for candor

Former Gov. Vic Atiyeh, who stepped down from office last Monday, ran an open office as far as the press is concerned. During his eight-year tenure, he conducted about 400 "media availability" sessions for reporters and editors. That figures to nearly one every week.

Shortly before he completed his final term of office, Atiyeh was given a plaque by Chuck Beggs, Associated Press reporter at the Capitol. Beggs is president of the Capitol press corps, a loose-knit group of press and electronic news people who work full time covering state government in Salem. The association numbers about a dozen people most of the time, but membership doubles when the Legislature comes to town.

The nicely designed plaque was in recognition of Atiyeh's enlightened attitude toward the news media. He or his press chief, Denny Miles, was available almost day and night to answer questions from reporters. In fact, on some



Commentary

Van Eisenhut

major stories, one or the other has called the Statesman-Journal to volunteer information.

We in the news business deeply appreciate that openness.

This willingness to be available and to talk about events and issues has been a service to all Oregonians, not just the news media. Atiyeh realizes far more than most public officials that reporters in a large sense represent the public, which depends on newspapers, radio and television to learn about government.

Atiyeh also has been available to meet with our editorial board many times during his years in of-

fice. At those sessions we always found him to be candid and well-informed.

All but one of those sessions were in the Statesman-Journal conference room. On that one occasion, however, the board arranged to visit with the governor in his office complex in the Capitol. That was our idea, as I recall, in recognition of his willingness to come to our conference room to visit with us whenever we invited him.

While the Statesman-Journal at times has been a bit unkind in its editorial comments about Atiyeh, we will remember him as a fair and candid governor who didn't duck the tough questions we put to him. That's high praise for any political figure.

We hope that same pattern of openness and candor will continue in the news media's relationship with Gov. Neil Goldschmidt and his press chief, Floyd McKay.

Van Eisenhut is senior editor of the Statesman-Journal.

Atiyeh treated media right

Little more than a week ago something truly rare occurred at the Capitol: The press corps honored a politician for his long record of accessibility.

This sort of thing doesn't happen often. For one thing, reporters, living up to their irreverent anti-authority image, pay honors to hardly anyone. And more and more, politicians are less and less accessible.

The occasion was Vic Atiyeh's final press conference as governor.

In his eight years as governor, Atiyeh put on about 400 of these weekly shindigs. Usually, they were culminated by the reporters running out of things they wanted to ask about.

At the close of this meeting, Associated Press reporter Charles Beggs, outgoing president of the press corps, presented the Republican politician a plaque paid for by the reporters.

"I've covered three governors," Beggs told Atiyeh, "and you've been the most accessible. And that includes Tom McCall."

Atiyeh's eyes watered. The presentation was obviously a surprise. Clearly, he was moved.

One broadcast journalist noted that Atiyeh surely had put on a bunch of media availabilities in his tenure as governor.

Well, of course he had. These weekly press conferences were certainly important to radio and TV types as well as the rest of us looking for a governor's reaction to whatever was in the news at the time.

But 400 or so media availabilities isn't what political accessibility is about. What made Atiyeh unusual in today's political climate was his willingness to return reporters' phone calls.

Reporters from news outlets big



Commentary

Ron Blankenkaker

and small have all had experiences in which Atiyeh returned their calls. He did it even if they were late at night or on weekends. He did it even if the questions to be asked were losers for the politician to answer.

The current occupants of the Capitol, including new governor Neil Goldschmidt and 90 legislators, may not admire Atiyeh. But they may want to think long and hard about providing Atiyeh-style accessibility.

It's probably too soon to judge Goldschmidt, but if the performance of his transition effort as well as his first few days as governor is any sample, it doesn't get the job done.

Contact with Goldschmidt, once he won the election, has been for most reporters purely an exercise in interview-by-appointment — except that no appointments were made.

This is too bad, because most reporters don't need formal interviews most of the time. What they need is timely responses to questions in order to inform the public.

So far, though, the Goldschmidt administration seems intent on limiting media contact to press conferences loaded up with so many members of the administration that actual reporters often can't get into the room, much less get a question answered.

When Goldschmidt called a press conference to announce his plans for the state's Corrections Division, the regular press interview room wasn't big enough.

It was plenty big enough for the press. What it couldn't house was the peanut gallery that Goldschmidt brought with him, a sort of Greek chorus at the ready to imply agreement by its presence.

At a recent budget briefing, also overcrowded with administration hangers-on, one of the administrative types out of camera range had a large sign made up with questions — a device to prompt the press toward a helpful context.

But Goldschmidt is new here. Perhaps time will temper the governor and his team into more informative and less exploitative modes of communication.

Legislative leadership has no such excuse. Press contact with House Speaker Vera Katz and Senate President John Kitzhaber wasn't good in the 1985 session. Now it seems to be worsening.

Contact with Katz is almost impossible. One reporter has observed that it might be easier to dial the White House for a quick comment from Ronald Reagan.

The occasional dog-and-pony shows for the press when Kitzhaber or Katz wants to promote a personal agenda, such as last session's sales tax, are hardly open communication with the public.

And these feeble efforts at stage management, which more and more legislative types seem intent on emulating, don't cut it as accessibility with the public.

That's all that returning a reporter's phone call is really about — communicating with the public

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Atiyeh remembered

La Grande Observer
December 30, 1986

866
Call it the agony of the final four years.

President Reagan enjoyed smashing popularity in his first term, easily defeating Walter Mondale in 1984 to sail into his second term. The Iran affair has tarnished his effectiveness; and with the new Democrat-controlled Senate in place, it will be much more difficult for Reagan to achieve his aims in the next two years.

Gov. Vic Atiyeh, too, enjoyed a good measure of success in his first term (1979-82). His achievements included improved state management, reforms in workers' compensation and the welfare system, and the establishing of energy and economic development programs. He was reelected by a large margin in 1982, a year that Oregon was battling a recession.

BUT HOW QUICKLY popularity fades in political life. Atiyeh in the past four years has become known as a "caretaker governor," holding on to the wheel while Oregon rides out an economic storm. The state has been strapped for funds during the recession and has not taken on many new programs. As Atiyeh leaves office Jan. 12, the school funding dilemma persists.

A recent poll, conducted for *The Oregonian*, showed only 3 percent rating Atiyeh's job performance as "excellent." Another 42 percent said he has done a "good" job, while 28 percent rated his performance as not very good and 16 percent called it poor.

In four years, Oregonians are growing weary of a slow economy. While Gov.-elect Neil Goldschmidt may not be a miracle worker, people are hoping he will provide effective leadership in economic development. (The state's economy may be getting set to rebound anyway. Any governor in Salem - Democrat or Republican - would be able to drink from the cup of improved conditions.)

THOSE REFLECTING on Atiyeh's service to the state should consider his performance over both terms. Here is a native Oregonian and Portland businessman who has made a solid contribution to political life, serving 20 years in the Legislature before being elected governor.

Atiyeh, who will open a private consulting firm on international trade, should be remembered as the man who helped undo the "Visit Oregon, but don't stay" impression of an earlier governor. Gov. Atiyeh made several trips to the Orient, trying to attract industry to Oregon and sell our goods overseas. The phrase, "Oregon is open for business," has gained notoriety because of his efforts.

In his quiet, unassuming way, Atiyeh has served Oregonians honorably ... and well.

JAN 1 1987

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

Assessing the Atiyeh years

866

The first day of 1987 is a good time to reflect on the eight years of Vic Atiyeh's service as Oregon's 32nd governor. He will turn over the job to Neil Goldschmidt on Jan. 12.

A recent poll commissioned by The (Portland) Oregonian shows Oregon citizens evenly split, with 45 percent saying Atiyeh has done a good or excellent job and 44 percent saying not very good or poor. Pollster J. Roy Bardsley says, "This is a weak rating. . . certainly no better than mediocre." That assessment is a little harsh.

Atiyeh himself concedes the accuracy of the poll but argues that his ratings would be better if the public knew more about all the good things he has done. He claims that he has never been good at blowing his own horn. He takes a kind of defensive pride in differing from other politicians by being more interested in results than publicity.

While this may reflect admirable human modesty, it is a handicap for a governor: If he had possessed a better knack for public relations, Atiyeh could have been more effective in drumming up support for his ideas in the Legislature and beyond. Even strong supporters criticize him for lacking a desirable dimension of leadership, something many hope to see restored to the office by the more dynamic Goldschmidt.

This legitimate criticism notwithstanding, no fraud was perpetrated here. Atiyeh never claimed to be exciting, and when they voted for him in 1978 and again in 1982 Oregonians did not have the mistaken idea that they were electing a movie star. They wanted a stable, knowledgeable manager who could run the state government, and that's what they got.

The most important thing that happened to Oregon during Atiyeh's tenure was a devastating economic recession. This was beyond any governor's power to control. Oregon's economy went down with the national economy, and because of its peculiar dependencies Oregon went down deeper and stayed down longer. It is still not all the way back to normal.

During the recession years, it became Atiyeh's task and that of the Legislature to adjust state government to constricted fiscal realities. Allowing for the normal quota of false starts and missteps, both met the challenge. They made painful cuts in state programs, but protected essentials. And they did what a President and Congress have

lacked the courage to do at the national level — raise taxes to help close revenue gaps.

The recession made economic diversification Atiyeh's highest priority outside of keeping a firm hand on the state budget and the bureaucracy. He launched a series of business-promoting trips abroad, concentrating on the Far East. It's impossible to say how much good these have done, but Atiyeh's missionary work could pay off in expanded Pacific Rim trade and investments in Oregon long after he is out of office. He deserves credit for trying, and for realizing that this selling job could only be done by the governor, especially in the Far East.

On more traditional issues, the Atiyeh record is mixed.

● Taxes and tax reform: He switched around a surprising amount. He supported the 1½ percent property tax rate limit that was on the ballot when he was first elected in 1978, then opposed its four biennial successors. He floated a giant, instantly doomed "net receipts" tax proposal in 1983 after having been re-elected on a no-new-taxes platform. And he introduced and campaigned for a sales tax plan in 1985 after opposing sales taxes throughout his previous political life.

● The environment: He didn't tinker much with the broad statutory protections that were generally in place by the time he took office. Predictably, he sided with the timber industry on forest management issues such as wilderness expansion. But he gets less credit than he deserves for giving firm and constant support to the state land-use planning program, steering it toward needed compromises to protect it from a potential citizens' revolt.

● Education: He could not solve the puzzle of a perverse state school finance system that allows some schools to close in the middle of the year, although hope of doing so helped persuade him to try for a sales tax. And he proved a better friend of higher education at the end than in the beginning, giving the public college and university system budget priorities in the 1983 and 1985 sessions that halted a serious, long-term erosion of state support.

All things considered, Atiyeh has been a good governor. Not great. Certainly not colorful. But solid, steady and competent. In a variety of ways, he was right for the times.

JAN 4 1987

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

Editorials *8/6/87*

Steady economic progress

Governor sets pace

Public opinion polls reveal high expectations for Gov.-elect Neil Goldschmidt's performance in office. People want his campaign themes of action and achievement to come alive and transform the state.

Gov. Vic Atiyeh leaves office with Oregonians nearly evenly split in their opinion of his record the past eight years. These are the same people who gave Atiyeh unqualified support with 61 percent of the vote in the 1982 gubernatorial election.

We all stand to benefit from a Goldschmidt success story, but none of us should nurse great hopes for miraculous turnarounds and instant economic recovery.

Goldschmidt does not assume the governorship with a burden to save the state, any more than Atiyeh leaves holding the bag for eight years of lean times.

Economic forces beyond the control of both men and their administrations shape — and occasionally jerk and yank — the state's economy. How Oregon reacts to those changes and prepares for other changes is something for which they are accountable.

Oregon was at the peak of an up cycle when the bottom dropped out of the lumber market. Half a dozen years later an automated timber industry is producing the same amount of lumber with a third fewer workers.

Atiyeh reacted to the plunge with a tight rein on state spending and a commitment to smooth out the peaks and troughs of those timber cycles. The strategy he chose was diversification of the economy by attracting new employers.

As Atiyeh leaves office, he is somewhat like an orchardist who retires years before he gets to see how the seedlings he cultivated will grow and bear fruit. Work in the orchard is not as colorful and immediately rewarding as selling fresh-cut flowers, but the benefits are longer-lasting.

Atiyeh's labors should not be overlooked or forgotten when the harvest comes.

Likewise, Goldschmidt must be allowed to proceed at his own pace. No miracles are expected; no quick fixes or patch jobs are wanted.

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JAN 5 1987

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He did as well as possible

866
Vic Atiyeh will be governor of Oregon for one more week. Oregonians are ambivalent about his record, if we can believe the polls. Half the residents of Oregon think he's been a good governor. Half don't. The first half is correct.

Atiyeh's critics, and obviously there are many of them, have been led by those who have demanded more, more of lots of things, from the state. But the voters have been unwilling to give him the essential tool of "more," which is money, spelled m-o-n-e-y.

Had the state had more money, lots of it, it could have increased the state's share of school costs, thereby lowering property taxes. Had it had more money it could have built more prison cells, thereby keeping more criminals off the streets. Had it had more money it could have kept the tuition at Oregon's colleges and universities lower. Had it had more

money it could have brought every highway in the state up to interstate freeway standards. And on and on and on.

The public perception of Atiyeh as a governor who didn't do much came alive just as the state's economy went dead. Voters refused to pass a sales tax, and the state's income tax already was one of the very highest in the nation. The state couldn't "soak the rich" because to get the necessary funds from still higher income taxes it would have had to declare every family with more than \$10,000 annual income to be rich.

Atiyeh is not a flamboyant guy by nature. Voters knew that when they twice elected him to the state's highest office. They expected him to do as well as possible with the resources they gave him. And he did that.

JAN 5 1987

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

Atiyeh had misfortune to lead at wrong time

Bob
The days in office for Gov. Vic Atiyeh have dwindled to a precious few.

Soon, Neil Goldschmidt will take over in Salem. He's promised efforts to spark the Oregon economy and he's started replacing Atiyeh department heads.

Fate wasn't kind to Vic Atiyeh in his two terms as governor.

He faced a declining economy that twisted state government every way but loose.

He won the office on his second try, defeating incumbent Gov. Bob Straub in 1978, then won convincing re-election in 1982 over Ted Kulongoski.

A thoroughly decent, though unexciting, office-holder, Atiyeh faced a declining economy that twisted Oregon state government every way but loose.

Programs were cut, employees laid off and others demoted, and taxes raised as the Legislature and the governor struggled to keep the budget in equilibrium. It didn't happen without rancor, though, all things considered, it could have been worse.

Atiyeh and the Legislature faced repeated special legislative sessions, including the longest ever — 37 days in 1982.

All major Oregon institutions

suffered as the state agonized through the worst timber recession since the Great Depression.

It was not a time when most would want to be governor but, as Atiyeh said recently, "you take the years you get."

Atiyeh did his best with a difficult situation and generally handled the cuts with compassion and competence.

Atiyeh had some difficulties with some of his early appointments, but his biggest failings were those he simply couldn't help: he had a bad economy and he lacked the crowd appeal that can contribute greatly to a person's leadership. That was a telling weakness in his relationship with the Legislature.

The governor made strenuous efforts to promote Oregon as a good investment for foreign high-tech firms and that seems to have paid off, though Oregon high-tech facilities in general took a beating in 1986 with thousands of layoffs. Visits he made to Pacific Rim countries will continue to pay off in the future, he said recently. We hope so.

We see Atiyeh's tenure as one of earnest attempts to deal with frustrating circumstances largely beyond one person's control. Good economic times would have helped him immeasurably, but that was not to be.

Atiyeh did his best for Oregon. Between his eight years as governor and his 20 in the Legislature, he gave the state a lot and, even though times weren't the best, he deserves thanks. We wish him well.

JAN 9 1987

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Vic worked for state

⁸⁶⁶Endorsing Vic Atiyeh for governor in 1978, The Oregonian expected from him "hard work, honesty and careful decisions, slowly developed." And that's what Oregon received during his eight years in office. We had many disagreements with him over those years, but never doubted that he was working as he thought right on Oregon's behalf.

Atiyeh's time as governor was a difficult period for Oregon for reasons largely out of his control, as the state plummeted from prosperity into a deep, stubborn recession. It was a period that focused the governor's attention on the nuts and bolts of government and on the need for diversifying the state's economy by recruiting new business.

Economic development is a long-term proposition. Atiyeh acted on the idea that the Far East, especially Japan, is a natural business partner for Oregon and that regular, personal salesmanship is needed. It is easy to disparage a politician's overseas travel, but it also is easy to overlook the benefits that high-level contacts produce.

Those contacts, for instance, convinced Atiyeh that Oregon's unitary method of taxing multinational corporations doing business in the state was a major barrier to attracting Japanese plants, and he called the Legislature into special session to repeal it. The gambit worked; at least some of the additions to Oregon's so-called Silicon Forest were dividends from that policy change.

On other matters we and others criticized the governor for failing to take the lead or follow through in resolving difficult state problems.

Sometimes the governor responded that maintaining a high profile was not his style and that he preferred to work out of the limelight. He certainly was right on that self-appraisal, but his low-key approach and preference for letting his managers do the managing make it difficult to judge where credit is due.

Oregonians should not forget Atiyeh's leadership in the fund-raising drive for public purchase of the banks of the lower Deschutes River, his important support of state funding of a portion of the cost of Portland's light-rail line, and his recognition of the need to work with Washington to obtain a bistate proposal for preserving the Columbia River Gorge. Even though we disagreed with the approach favored by Atiyeh and then-Washington Gov. John Spellman, the governors' proposal was one of the key steps in the eventual passage of a gorge bill.

Atiyeh also recognized the threat to Oregon's land-use planning effort and appointed a respected former legislator, Stafford Hansell, to head a governor's task force to hear complaints and recommend corrective steps. That credibility-building effort helped defeat a proposed repeal of the state planning laws.

In sum, Atiyeh's period as steward of Oregon government largely was one of forced retrenchment rather than advancement. It is time for a new leader, a new style and new directions in the governor's office. But as Vic Atiyeh — a very decent man — leaves his post, the difficulties of his job and his successes in spite of them ought to be appreciated and remembered.

DEC 28 1986

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"Atiyeh Era" ends in Oregon

TOM TOWSLEE
United Press International

866
SALEM, Ore. (UPI) — Gov. Vic Atiyeh sat in his paneled office in the State Capitol, looking back over his eight years as governor with the same business-like, managerial style manner that became the trademark of his two terms.

"You can't be a Rambo out there," Atiyeh said in an interview with United Press International as he prepared to turn over the reins of state government to Neil Goldschmidt Jan. 12 and open a private consulting firm on international trade.

"A lot of people talk about doing things for people and didn't get them done," he said. "I haven't talked about it, but I got it done."

To Atiyeh, 63, "getting it done" means a governorship that restored Oregon's reputation as a good place to do business, managed a state government hurt by a lingering recession and laid the groundwork for economic growth that he believes will come after he leaves office.

It also means achieving those goals without the self-serving glare of publicity and in the face of criticism that he was a lackluster, do-nothing governor who by his own assessment will leave office with a "50-50" rating by the people of Oregon.

"It is just not my style," he said of his refusal to seek publicity for his accomplishments.

"I find that those who talk a good game are considered charismatic, but no one ever looks at what they've done," he said. "I honestly believe that I did what the people of Oregon wanted me to do and they respect me for it."

Atiyeh said he has mixed emotions about leaving the job he has held for eight years and compares it his children growing up and leaving

home. "You look forward to it, and then that day comes and you find it's not that great," he said.

"I expect some adjustments and that it will be tough for me," he said. "I had eight grand years as governor of Oregon, and that is quite an honor."

Critics and friends agree that Atiyeh was the right governor at the right time for Oregon: a steady hand on a ship of state that was being rocked by repeated blows from a national economy over which he had no control.

They also marvel at his political resilience, noting that in 1982 he called the Oregon Legislature into session twice to cut state budgets and raise taxes — yet still won re-election by one of the largest margins in state history.

"Atiyeh comes in for more criticism than he just deserves," said Ted Kulongoski, the Democratic candidate who lost to Atiyeh four years ago. "His problem has been that he did not exemplify the leadership that people wanted."

"There were no peaks or valleys in his administration," he said. "If you plotted it out, it would be a straight line. He has a caretaker image that is a valid one — and not a negative one, given the circumstances."

"I'm glad we had Vic as governor during those difficult years," said state Sen. Tony Meeker of Amity, Republican leader of the Senate and a long-time personal friend of Atiyeh. "We could not have made it through those times with a governor like Tom McCall."

"You have to hand it to the electorate for electing a guy like Vic Atiyeh to lead the state when they didn't know those tough times were coming," he said. "McCall wouldn't have made it."

Throughout his two terms, Atiyeh relied on his conservative Republican background of 35 years

in the family rug business and 20 years in the Oregon Legislature.

Much like the fatherly owner of a family business, he was slow to criticize loyal employees and quick to defend state workers who became targets for politicians.

When he came into office in 1979, Atiyeh acknowledged the strides Oregon had made in protecting the environment and turned his sights on restoring the state's reputation as a good place to do business and in bringing some reform to social service programs.

The effort spawned two phrases: "Oregon is open for business" and "Trader Vic."

The first was his effort to welcome business back to Oregon. The second was pinned on him for his frequent trips overseas to woo Japanese and other foreign businesses.

Atiyeh has always expressed disappointment at not having the chance to be governor when Oregon's economy was booming and the state had money to spend.

Instead, he was forced to cut budgets, raise taxes and at the same time try to attract business to Oregon in a process that by its very nature had to be discreet to be successful and thus occurred outside the public view.

"We all want to be loved," he said, "and to the degree that Oregonians know what we did, they don't think it was all that bad."

"I believe that if you do what you think is right that Oregonians may not agree with you, but they will respect you for doing it," he said.

"I wanted to be governor because I knew I could run it better than it was being run," he said. "I didn't just want the title. I knew the things that could and should be done and I knew I could do it."

"There is no better job than being governor of a state," Atiyeh said.

Our Views

866 Nice job, Gov. Atiyeh

Medford Mail Tribune
January 2, 1987

When Gov. Vic Atiyeh leaves office Jan. 12, after having served a pair of four-year terms as the state's top elected official, he should depart with his head held high. His dedicated service as Oregon's 33rd governor was in the best tradition of the office.

That observation might come as a surprise to some who have listened to the governor's critics in the past few years. To hear them talk, Atiyeh has done little or nothing, thus leaving a leadership void that created many of the state's current problems and woes.

Don't believe it. Atiyeh kept Oregon's ship of state afloat through some of the worst gales ever to drive it toward the reefs of economic disaster.

Someday, soon we hope, he'll get the credit he deserves. His steady, underpublicized leadership prevented us from heading for the lifeboats in panic, though at times that seemed like the most reasonable thing to do.

Unlike many today, who seem eager to criticize the man, we're proud to say we liked him from the very first, and we endorsed him with confidence in 1978 and 1982. Although the governor and this writer didn't always agree, we'd like to note for the record that he never disappointed us.

Oregon was rolling along when he took office in 1978 — after he defeated Democrat Bob Straub . 498,452 to 409,411 — but the state's economic engine was running on fumes. The huge budget surplus of 1979 soon was nothing but a fond memory.

High oil prices hit the United States hard when 1980 arrived. The nation's economy ran out of gas, and sputtered into a deep depression/recession. In Oregon, where housing and lumber set the pace for everything, the bottom fell out. Instead of discussing ways to use surplus funds, state officials were soon meeting with the legislators in special sessions to make budget cuts and decide on layoffs.



Gov. Atiyeh