

Hardy Myers interview on Atiyeh

An interview of Hardy Myers (1939-2016) regarding Oregon's Governor Victor Atiyeh, recorded on Feb. 19, 2015. Myers was an attorney who served as a Democrat in Oregon's House of Representatives from 1974-1985, including as the Speaker of the House from 1981-1985. He later served as Oregon's Attorney General from 1997-2009. 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 interactions with legislators; his role in addressing property tax limitations and budget deficits; his involvement in judicial reform; Atiyeh's post-gubernatorial activities, particularly his advocacy for Native American causes; his flexibility in taxation and budget matters; and his collaborative approach to governance.

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

[Recording begins mid-conversation.]

James Moore 00:00

[Atiyeh] asked me to write the book in October of 2013 and he and I totally agreed on what the book should be, which is basically placing him in a particular time, and warts and all. He doesn't think of any warts. But, you know, warts and all, I may have found evidence that he smuggled currency [laughs]... inadvertently, but he might have done it, but, and so I was able to interview him several times before he died. Last time was in June, just before I left for a big trip in Europe. And then he died right after I got back, and then in all of this, it was putting together the time and so, like, my sabbatical just started three weeks ago. Oh, so that's hugely helpful. Yeah, it's been I was able to interview him several times. I've got maybe 10 other interviews in, but, you know, it's kind of like vacation time, and then the first four weeks of the semester, and after that, it's just, there's just no way.

Hardy Myers 01:08

Well, you know, as long as his career was, he's intersected with a lot of people. Probably has.

James Moore 01:13

A lot of them are still alive. Yeah, yeah. Very funny. There was, there was an abortive attempt to write a biography about 10 years ago of Vic, and he, about a year ago, sent me -- he'd been in contact with the person who had not written the biography, and she had sent him a list of people she'd interviewed. And interestingly enough, about 75% of the people on the list that I contacted had never heard of her, so that's another issue. But he went through the list and he wrote D for dead or F for frail. And so my first priority was hit the F's! Hit the F's. And at least one his two closest friends has died just since it's memorial service. So So yeah,

Hardy Myers 02:01

it's, do you have interns working with you? Assistants?

James Moore 02:04

I just hired a research assistant. Oh, that'll be helpful, yeah, who's got a master's degree, and so he's doing some great stuff. And then as we get into it, I'll be hiring undergrads for specific projects like, you know, tabulating who he saw and what he did on every single international trade trip defined things like that.

Hardy Myers 02:25

Did he keep a diary?

James Moore 02:26

He did not, but the people around him didn't keep a diary, but like Jerry Thompson, had daily briefing notes for many of which survive.

Hardy Myers 02:43

Well, I assume the governor's office has a daily log of what the governor does by way of appointments.

James Moore 02:49

Yeah, yeah, so that, so that's in the State Archives. But she's got, she's got the dirt. And then Denny miles, his, his press guy. He lost his wife. They were married, and then she died suddenly, and it's a coping mechanism. His grief counselor said, Write down everything you remember about her. And so he did, and then he just kept going. So he has notebooks of his recollections in excruciating detail. Wow. And it's all, it's all 20 years later, but it's, it's pretty darn good. And so what he has done on some things, he gives me his notebook for x, I can't cite anything, but then I can ask him questions, and I can cite the answers, which is, so there's that kind of stuff as well. And then the rajneeshees, I hope it comes through. Jerry Thompson was at the center of that, and that story has never been told. And I hope that I can talk her into partying with some boxes and things. She's she's really, really close. So

Hardy Myers 04:05

she in good health. Yeah, she's

James Moore 04:07

in great health, Denny as well. Oh, yeah, yeah, it's nice. Yeah, that's great. And Denny has remarried and is now living as I tell people, a Frisbee throw away from Jerry. I live in the same place in a while. How good a Frisbee throw are you doing? Pretty close, pretty close. Yeah, maybe two frisbee throws for a regular person, yeah. So they're, they're, they're neighbors. So it's pretty amazing. So this is all archival quality stuff. So eventually this is going to go into the archives. I take it and I convert it to MP threes, and then what I do is that your answers, I cut up so that a particular topic I have, and put it in my bibliography and I cite it. And if I needed to have it transcribed, I can get it quickly transcribed. Right, all those kinds of things. So

Hardy Myers 05:02

they grab something and holding her right, just scratch a

James Moore 05:05

few notes down. Yeah.

Hardy Myers 05:14

So what's your target completion date?

James Moore 05:16

I hope to have it done next year. I think there'd be really interesting things, resonances with a presidential election going on about what the Republican Party used to be like and how to govern when you know Vic was always the minority in the legislature, and never had a Republican legislature when he was in governorship. That's true. So I think there's some good residences there. And if the Rajneeshee thing comes through in this post 911 world. You know, here was a time when the feds, the state and the local all worked on the same page, and we still haven't seen that in the post 911 world, everybody's kind of still off, you know, arguing about the Terrorism Task Force, but at all levels. So I think there's some really neat residences, if I could get it out next year. Yeah. How long is your sabbatical? Just this semester. So this semester into summer. So I have a good six and a half seven month shot. So I'm hoping this kind of stuff for two months solid. Yeah, and then get into writing. So tell me your first encounters with Victor, a

Hardy Myers 06:33

Vic and I served two years in the legislature. He and the Senate. I in the house before I became speaker and he became governor, and those two things occurred to the same I have no real memory of any particular interaction with Vic in those two years before I became speaker. I don't think I had any legislative issue that I was working on that engaged him. I simply don't remember that there was any occasion for us to actually come together as legislators.

James Moore 07:14

You didn't have to grapple with that seven person caucus

Hardy Myers 07:19

the Congress and the telephone booth. Yes,

James Moore 07:21

exactly. So talking to Wally Carson, I got the exact story of that as he was unwrapping the poster.

Hardy Myers 07:31

So that's, you know, I've been thinking about that very question. I simply don't remember. I certainly knew Vic, and I imagine we had some, some kind of casual interaction, but I certainly don't remember anything substantive. Yeah,

James Moore 07:45

so were you involved? I mean, you're in the house, so you obviously have your own election as we get in the 78 but were you involved in the statewide election with Straub and Vic in that 78 election?

Hardy Myers 07:58

Not to any great extent. If I remember, I was running my own campaign for the first time, yeah, and I'm, you know, I might have attended a function or two for Bob, but I had my own fish to fry, yeah? And I don't think that he was expecting candidates like myself to be right. Particularly engaged with his race. He had his own apparatus, of course, yeah,

James Moore 08:25

yeah. So he becomes governor. When exactly do you become speaker?

Hardy Myers 08:33

Well, in January, 79 okay, but we were delayed about a week because the the run up to the speakership had been an extremely contentious process, and I was the majority candidate of the majority of the majority caucus from the very beginning. But we had intense factualization in the caucus, the Hornets, so called, led by Jim McGregor, Dick McGregor, and then there was a coastal Clackamas County group of maybe five legislators. So there were at least three different groupings, and it just took a while to work through all that and finally get to a point where we could gradually bring the caucus together and and elect me, right? And it was really a matter of working through, ultimately, a matter of working through the distribution of positions within the committee structure, yeah, what it came down to, but so that the Constitution cuts off legislative salaries, I think if the house fails to organize within five days. So that act is a little bit of a stick there, a little bit of a deadline. So coincidentally, we

James Moore 09:55

so were you in place by the time the inauguration took place.

Hardy Myers 09:58

I know I. Think I was okay? I think, I think that. Well, I'm,

James Moore 10:05

that's a good question, because it's usually the inauguration. Seems a little bit later. Yeah, I'm,

Hardy Myers 10:11

yes, I may have been. I'm not sure now that you mentioned

James Moore 10:13

it, I just remember the one where maybe held out in the in the Senate, and they didn't have, it's like, for two weeks they didn't have anybody in charge in the Senate in like, 9395 sometime in there, was it 95 because that Bill Bradbury's, let's, yeah. Bill Bradbury, yeah, ultimately, yeah. So it might have been, it might have been 90 like that, but yeah, they just, they're nothing.

Hardy Myers 10:40

So in any event, no, I don't think I had been elected yet, because I have a recollection of sitting on the floor of the house at Vic's inauguration, as opposed to being up on the podium. And that was also Todd McCall's departure. So it was quite a momentous, memorable day, really, but I remember sitting on the floor during the process, so I may not have been in office yet. Okay,

James Moore 11:16

so there's a new governor, Republican, there's Democrats running the Senate and the House. What was your legislative agenda? As you remember it? Was it? I mean, in Oregon, it's a lot of times it's the legislature is reactive to the governor. So were you as a group of Democrats, had your own ideas that you were moving forward? Were you reacting at that point? A T is budget, is Straub budget? Yes, too. So, you know, it's a complex time. Yes,

Hardy Myers 11:49

well, it was a time of tremendous revenue growth. We hit the apple G, I think, in 79 and well, I don't recall the Democratic agenda in any great detail at this juncture. I do know that a dominating concern in that 79 session was to try to stave off the success of yet another property tax limitation issue. Right? That was the overweening public finance concern that we had. And so incident to that, we horribly enacted the kicker as one way of trying to address public concern, and we remitted to the taxpayers a substantial amount of income tax revenue, refunded it. Can't remember the dollar amount, but it was, I think it was somewhere in the neighborhood of, I want to say, \$100 million but and then we we tried to buttress the homeowner renter Relief Program, the HARP program, all of these in combination, hopefully sufficient to prevent the property tax limitation measure. The newest iteration of it, which I think was making its way, had been defeated in 78 if I remember correctly, or 7078 but another one I think was coming down the pike, back

James Moore 13:30

in the works again, and prop 13, it just passed in California. Yes,

Hardy Myers 13:33

that's right there. 7478

James Moore 13:38

Yeah, when Vic talks about property taxes and that whole thing. He's one of the big successes of his governorship. He says, is stopping each of those as they came up. And then major five is after he's out. But no, yeah, boy, it took him a lot of his time too

Hardy Myers 13:54

well. And it was, it was a, it was a, it really, in my recollection, it really was an overshadowing kind of thing. Now for myself, my principal interest was judicial reform. We have been working. We that is I, various judges, county officials, others, have been working to transform the finance of state courts from a situation in which each county was responsible basically for the operational costs of the courts within that county, and thus The adequacy the stability of the funding for the courts depended upon the willingness of homeowners to tax their homes. Yeah, it was an idiotic arrangement. So beginning head of 79 I was the leader of the. Effort to create a shift of the court, basic court finances to the general fund, with the counties retaining the responsibility for the court houses themselves. That was the split that was basically in the offing from the beginning, and that I'm trying to remember how far we got in that process. In 79 we didn't enact it, but it was, it was it was moving forward. And I think it was pretty clear that the decisive action would be coming in the in the 81 session, which was which was the case? Yeah, absolutely. Now I'm trying to remember if at that particular period, what Vic may have been emphasizing. I don't know whether your own research is so far given you the answer to that question. Well, my memory is a little hazy. Yeah,

James Moore 16:07

no, that's the that's why we do this and we dive into the archives. You know, general impressions were that it was a time, as you said, the apogee of state finances. It was it was a time when it was time to figure out how to invest and and figure out what the state ought to really be focused on. So Jerry Thompson, who was not as Chief of Staff at that point. Jerry Thompson's recollection is really a time to push natural resources, kinds of things, to modernize. It was really time

to look at laws out there and see how they work with investments and that kind of thing, things that then become much more crucial when the economy collapses. Yeah, but it was, it was kind of rearranging the deck chairs to make it more, make it better than it already was, well, and

Hardy Myers 17:01

I think a major tension too, was with this relative affluence at that particular point, how much of the budget to devote to, basically, income transfer, if it's that is the, say the Heart program, for example, yeah, as well as remittance to the taxpayers versus nourishing and improving investments in education or other state services. That that, I think, was a major ongoing change on how that how to divide between those two large areas. Yeah, of commitment, yeah, with a lot of detail within each one. But I think that the and there was a lot of strain, if I remember, within the Democratic caucus, and I think some of them between the two caucuses as to that question, right? The Democrats were, were maybe more committed to homeowner relief, somewhat more than the Republicans, but I could be miser calling that, but it was a it was a struggle,

Unknown Speaker 18:08

yeah, yeah, prompted

Hardy Myers 18:09

by the happy coincident, happy circumstance of having having good resources, yeah,

James Moore 18:15

yeah, absolutely, which, soon Enough, changed, yeah, just coincidentally. Can you imagine if Kate Brown had become governor, say, three years ago, with the economy falling apart and the budgets being hit? I mean, it's a shock and an interesting change, but if it had happened much earlier, if you would have been in a world of hurt Marlon,

Hardy Myers 18:40

you know, she's got big imponderables now, ahead of, I think the revenue forecast comes out

James Moore 18:46

today. Yeah, exactly. And if there's a kicker hit, and

Hardy Myers 18:49

then you've got the Supreme Court decision still pending on PERS, exactly, exactly. So some big shoes can drop here, big legislation. I um,

James Moore 19:03

so what was it like working with the governor during that time?

Hardy Myers 19:11

My recollection is that in that particular juncture, we were able to fashion a pretty easy, personal working relationship. I think we liked each other all right. And I think while we were working across party lines, I think I was able to develop a basically trusting relationship with Nick. That is to say, he trusted me. I trusted him. I think, I think both of us were, I certainly wouldn't say guileless. I don't think anybody in politics is guileless. But I think we both were fairly sort of what you see, what you get, kinds of politicians. I don't think we were. I. Are really into a lot of circumlocution and game playing, frankly, with each other. So I think back with positive feelings. I think as a whole, in that first year or so of the relationship with Nick and of course, we were both learning our way along. We were both in new roles and a new relationship. To define, not one I'd ever had, not one that he'd ever had. But all in all, as I say, I I recall that period with generally very positive

James Moore 20:36

feelings. Did you meet with him consistently, a weekly meeting, for instance, or was it as things came up? I've been

Hardy Myers 20:43

thinking about that as well, without being completely certain about my memory, I think however that Vic established a

practice of meeting, I don't know if exactly weekly, but regularly, with Democratic leadership. And I think both parties were there. I imagine he had meetings with Republican leadership, you know, obviously separately from us, but, but I think we were on a more or less sort of regular, recurring get together basis. And I think our staffs like very important level, of course, I think our staffs were able to establish good working relationships as well. Pat McCormick. Do you know Pat Yeah was my Chief of Staff, yeah. And I think he, for his part, had had pretty good relations with the governor office, yeah, his counterparts, yeah, so

James Moore 21:41

anything else in that first, first time around 79 just let it go to voicemail.

Hardy Myers 21:58

You know, I don't, I don't. Nothing jumps right at me. I'm gonna, I'm gonna go back over some of my own records at some point, I hope. And I'll drop, I'll sit a lot with some, yeah, if I think you find something that are really big that yes, here it's the, it's the whole property tax limitation, the idea, the effort, praying out of that, yes, really, really stands out in my memory. One thing on that,

James Moore 22:23

what's your impression and recollection of where that originated, where? What a good kicker? The kicker? Yeah,

Hardy Myers 22:35

pretty sure it was within the assembly itself, then maybe the leadership. But that's about as specific as my memory goes right now. Okay, I do remember Jack Ripper. I don't know if you remember Senator Ripper was vehemently opposed to it. He was the one voice that was really, really warning us that this was going to be a big mistake and and he was, I can't remember if he was the only opponent, but he was a pretty lone voice at that point. There was a momentum behind that, among the other initiatives like returning money to the taxpayers. Yes, driving off that. Yeah, almost obsession about the property tax limitation question, but he was very, very vehement and very prescient.

James Moore 23:24

Well, it's fascinating. When people talk about the kicker, they always kind of assume it's been in the form that it is forever, and they forget that Gordon Smith is the one who pushed to have checks sent out as Gordon was beginning to think about higher

Hardy Myers 23:42

office. So about.

James Moore 23:46

And another fascinating thing, when people are remembering that kind of stuff, and especially with all the kids Hopper things right now, his first inaugural address, which is basically overshadowed by Gordon as the newly elected President of the Senate, gave a speech that was like 20 minutes long. It's like, sit down. It's not your speech fascinating. So let's go to 81 anything in the in the 80 elections pop up at you,

Hardy Myers 24:18

I suppose Reagan elections obtaining control of the House of Representatives on the face of the Reagan lands.

James Moore 24:24

Was that? Was that a hard job to do? Well,

Hardy Myers 24:28

it was closely run. We lost. I think, I think we came out of that. Let's see. We were at 3426 I believe when I was elected speaker, or that was, or that maybe that was after the 80 session, 8080 election. But it was close. I was concerned with the National tide seemed to be running. We could be swept out. Yeah, but I. Um, we hung up. I think the other thing I would mention in 1980 was that that was the start of the budget adjustments required by the economic downturn. Okay, that was that fall of 79 then Volcker on the Fed began driving the interest rates through the ceiling. Yeah, terrifically hurtful for Oregon, of course, of our natural resources, interest sensitive kinds of economy. And so we had a special

session in the spring or summer of 1980 for Budget Adjustment, I believe, primarily, and my recollection is the fact we were able to work very smoothly with Vic to work out a consensus proposal that we could take to The members and get them to commit ahead of time, so that when we came into session, basically the game plan was laid out and agreed to. And I think that session was very short and very, very closely coordinated with the Senate too. Yeah, it was a, it was a very well managed session, and I could still remember that Pat McCormick and his counterpart in Jason Bowes office, they had an understanding by which, when the Senate passed a bill, I can't remember how many different measures we were dealing with when the Senate passed a bill to come over to us and we to hook over them, Pat and his counterpart would meet in the rotunda of the Capitol and exchange The bills. It was kind of a little yeah ceremony indicating careful coordination, yeah. Anyway,

James Moore 27:06

the management of that session. Was it primarily out of the governor's office? Was it the three working as equal partners? How did that dynamic work? Yes,

Hardy Myers 27:17

good question. I'm not sure I remember specifically. I think the Governor, I think the governor conferred with leadership to talk out a collaborative approach. I don't believe it was something. He just sent it in. I think we had, we talked it out ahead of time, explored options and came to a working understanding of what we felt we could support visa VR caucuses and what the governor felt okay with, okay. Now I don't remember what role the Republican caucuses were playing in that. Yeah, yeah. I will say this is something I forgot to mention. I will say that in 79 in late 79 Gary Wilhelms, who was the Republican House Leader, left the legislature because he had a promotion within quest or Pacific Northwest Bell, whatever company he was working for that was sending him to Denver. So he had to resign. Paul Han Cloverdale, much more conservative, I think, in many ways, became the House leader. And really from that time forward, I think I came to think of Vic as the leader of the House Republicans with whom I was dealing as much as with Paul, because I just felt, I felt it was easier to talk with Vic, from a policy standpoint and more congenial standpoint, than to talk with Paul. I don't mean that snide wave. I like Paul on personal level, and I think he was a very responsible public servant, but he was, I think Vic was just closer to where I my caucus was on, perhaps various issues than Paul was, and some number of his caucus, yeah. So there was a more. I think there was that. I think the departure of Wilhelms for me, at least, sparked a kind of a new growth in the relationship I had with the governor. I

James Moore 29:32

remember that when I talked to Gary Bell Helms. So it turns out lives right over by me. Is that right? Yeah, so I'm doing all these interviews all over the place and his I will put approximately two and a half miles on my car. Okay, that's great. So special session 80 Little did you know that this was preparing you for several to come? Was there, was there a sense, as Volcker is doing, that was there a sense that this is. The beginning of something big, or was it a sense that this is like other recessions that we've seen?

Hardy Myers 30:09

I think can't be certain memory, but I think there was a fair amount of apprehension this was going to be a long, a long haul, long haul. I all

James Moore 30:24

Okay, so let's get to 8181

Hardy Myers 30:28

session. I can't remember how we emerged from that, budgetarily, compared to where we started. I don't remember that we encountered huge downturns in that period of time while we were in session. It's possible we had some but I but we were that was a somewhat longer than usual session, in any event, and for me, it's highlight. Was the was the emergence of the judicial reform measure to action by the Senate and the House, now that itself carried within it the seeds of further drama, because one of the elements of the package was investing the Chief Justice with true civil administrative authority, right over the system, right and Vic, very who, I think, after some reluctance and persuasion eventually came behind the package. Very strongly wanted the governor to be able to appoint the Chief Justice, as opposed to being elected by the court, by the court right. That was the form in which it cleared the house gubernatorial appointment, and when it went to the Senate, the Senate changed that provision and went back to election by the court. Now that was, I

don't know if that was the only change they made, but it was the, the really politically Paramount one. And so when the measure came back to the house for concurrence, the House, the House, the House did concur.

My own role in that was one that I recall with great regret, because I had pledged to Bill Rutherford, representative, Rutherford one of my closest friends in the house, an important figure on the Judiciary Committee and very active in support of the whole proposal that I would that I would support non concurrence with the Senate change and force the matter into A conference committee, and I broke my word to Representative Rutherford when the concurrence vote came up, I just thought back over all the work that had gone into that, years of work, hours and years of work just that's the only time I think in my public career, I ever went back on a commitment to a member, pretty sure. I hope it was, and was that a big one, because it led to the veto of the measure. Yeah, the Governor vetoed it with the judicial the chief selection still left with the court, and that was the major drama in my political life with Vic, right in the period after the session adjourned, yeah, and the veto occurred, and going forward from there to what then eventually occurred, which Was that we talked out with Vic and reached a compromise, to his credit, that he accepted, which was that we would refer to the ballot that fall. I believe it was 81 a question, the question of, should the governor make the appointment, or should the court elect? I promised Vic and this I did do, I would, I would visibly associate myself with supporting the gubernatorial selection. I believe I even signed a voters pamphlet argument in its favor. I think I may have made some public appeal. Says, I mean, it wasn't a high profile campaign, you know, a lot of money, rattling around and so forth.

But the people, by a pretty substantial majority, rejected the measure, and so it stayed with the court. But the the agreement with Vic included repassage and signing of the operative measures with that provision left unresolved and contingent on the outcome of the election, and then the measures to become effective upon well, they were, whatever the specific game was, but that would be effective in any event, yeah, so, so the reform survived, yeah, which then took us into 82 which is when the ship really, excuse me, hit the fans, budgetarily, yeah. Huge, huge deficit emerged, yeah, and that caused the first special session in 82 which was the longest in history to that point. The thing about that session with Vic that I most remember is that in submitting to the legislature his proposal for the resolution of the deficit, there was absolutely best I could recall. There was absolutely no consultation with legislative leadership, at least not with the Democratic leadership about that. And the resultant proposal was highly unpopular with a lot of the Democratic caucus, at least because it concentrated all of the cutting, substantially all of it into the into the direct services portion of the budget, particularly human resources. I believe it left homeowner relief unreduced, so that large component of the budget was left held harmless, essentially. And I remember that when we opened that special session, instead of just kind of making some little pro forma statement, I made a somewhat more extended statement, in which from a substantive standpoint, in which I remember saying that I thought the deficit had to be thought of as a burden, and it was every body's burden, not just the rich, and certainly not just the poor, and that our job as a legislature was To try to distribute that burden equitably.

And I think I was intending to try, to some extent, set the framework of the debate for around the governor's proposal. Yeah, that it was just not fair. Yeah. So I well, it was a very, very difficult session, and I we finally got to some resolution. I can't now remember the details. I don't believe that session, it involved any any tax changes, yeah, not yet. That was the next session. But before I think we could even adjourn that session, a new revenue forecast issue, and we were down another two to 300 million now in this instance, so I don't know that we actually even adjourn formally, as opposed to just recessed. But in any event, in that next chapter, so to speak, and with Vic's support, to his credit, we did enact a temporary income tax adjustment as one of the things we did right as part of an effort to try to allocate the burden of the deficit fairly, as we said, so. Part of it went to income taxpayers. Part of it went to, I think we had a heart reduction. Some of it went to property tax. You know, there were obviously budget reductions, but all in all, I think we emerged feeling that it was a much better outcome, fairer outcome, not very desirable. But yeah, what you're going to do? So then, I'm sorry this is going on. Oh, that's good. That's great. We then had a third special session, and I forget the interval before it was convened, but in that special session, in complete contrast with the start of the first one back in January. Okay, we work very closely with the governor and the entire proposal much more like the 1980 precedent. The entire proposal was worked out in detail, agreed to by Governor, Governor and the leadership, and then each of us went to our respective caucuses, member by member to line up commitment. So that when the governor actually called the special session, I think we had everything ready to go, lined up, and that session lasted

Speaker 1 40:40
one day, yeah, yeah. So from the

Hardy Myers 40:43

longest to the short to the shortest in history. What's

James Moore 40:46

your sense of why the governor didn't consult in that first January session?

Hardy Myers 40:53

I don't know. I have often thought about that. I don't know if there was, if there was some residual pique toward me or any others in my caucus about the court, yeah, hoopla, whether I just don't know. It's been a mystery to me. I frankly, have often wanted to sit down with Vic and talk about it. Yeah, it, it was really disastrous miscalculation. Well, I should add to one of the things that happened in that first law session was, if I remember correctly, Vic, I think, was being resistant to making any significant changes to the proposal he sent him. And ultimately, and I think I engineered this, whether rightly or wrongly, from a tactical standpoint, I engineered a reporting of Governor's budget as proposed by the Ways and Means Committee to the floor with a do not pass recommendation. Rather unusual procedure, like it wasn't tending to be cute. I was looking for a way to try to clear the air and move on here. We seem to be high centered with the governor, yeah. And that step aroused a lot of some approval and some certainly disapproval, but it did. We did move. We did move on and ultimately get to an agreed resolution, but that was a point of significant strain in our relationship. Needless to say, Yeah, imagine

James Moore 42:33

during those special sessions, what was your working relationship with Republican Caucus in the House. Did you need their votes? You know, in effect, did you have the Betsy Johnson issue from last session?

Hardy Myers 42:52

Well, I think the answer is, to some extent, yes. I think we had the our margin of control at that point after the 80 election was had been reduced some so it was. It was 3327 or 3426 and there were certainly more than three fairly conservative writers right by the same token, though, within the Republican caucus, there were, I'd say, six to seven, what I consider to be real moderates, Bugis, Rutherford, Lombard, Nancy Ryles, a nice Tony van Lee, yeah, very importantly, a nice coterie of moderates with whom it was at least possible, I think, to have intelligent, right conversations and feeling along for a comment for common ground. And I made a I think I tried to be very careful about staying in close, close, close touch with them. And I think to some extent, when we got to the more collaborative stage of affairs with Vic I think that he became also a conduit for our leadership in the House, to those members of his caucus, Republican Caucus. But I certainly, I certainly had good personal relations with three or four of those members, particularly Bill Rutherford and Tony Van Vliet, yeah, and Bill and Kip Lombard. Oh, yeah,

James Moore 44:39

familiar names, actually Tony Van Vliet. Knew my grandmother at Oregon State. For you, he was

Hardy Myers 44:45

one of my three or four favorite members. Yeah. So anyway,

James Moore 44:52

yeah, so three special sessions, uh, cutting through a lot of stuff there. Uh. Up in 1982 there's this, it's in the Republican Party. We're seeing a shift. The shift starts in kind of the 70s, Reagan's inauguration and election kind of accelerates it. Agreeing to see the Moral Majority types come into the Republican Party, as Vic explained it in an oral history to the historical society in the early 90s, he said people were joining the Republican Party and then redefining what a Republican was frustrated no end Did you see any evidence of that coming in and looking looking at the legislature? So it's still kind of outside the legislature, clearly, by the 90s, that's that's a major part of what the legislature is about, and the leadership that when the Republicans take over, reflect that, yeah, I

Hardy Myers 45:57

don't think that during the time I was there, I felt that impacting the assembly all that much as yet, I think that was later, and so The relative, the relative strength of the Republican moderates, so to speak, compared with the more conservative

members, I don't think underwent all that dramatic change during during my service, my service, what really has changed over time is the is that during my Service, the Democratic Party was a much more truly statewide party, exactly. That's my next question. Yeah, yeah. We had members from the Baker City area band, trying to remember where a couple of we had three. Well, we at least we had three or four Eastern Oregon. Memories, Clement falls, chocolate was blocked from Douglas County. Good, imagine it. Yeah, and then one Jason Bose, Senate seat, yeah, an imaginable, yeah, at least that House race. Now, I mean, so but, but as far as the as far as the relative strength of the moderate contingent in the Republican Party, as I was saying earlier, I think it, it seems to me, it didn't change all that much while I was still aware, yeah,

James Moore 47:43

some point in there there's a pivot, oh, yes, point, yes. And I want to peg down when that happens, because this happens, well, well, at he is in the governorship.

Hardy Myers 47:52

Let's see, Vic was in eight to 86

James Moore 47:55

Yeah, yeah. And you know, Norma is, well, Dave is the last kind of strong, moderate who runs Norma gives it a shot. Had an interesting talk. I talked with David Sarason The Oregonian editorial board, and his impression of Norma running in 1886 was, it'll be a continuation of competence. And the state was looking for flash and new directions. You referred to Neil, yeah, exactly. So interesting to take that down personally, enormous. Not she. I talked to her daughter and her daughter in law, and apparently Norma, on some days is pretty good. But when I talk to Norma, I gotta do, she did oral histories and stuff well, so I gotta do all that cognitive Yeah, yeah, I'd have very specific questions for and so we'll see if I talk to her or not. So 82 is done.

Hardy Myers 49:06

I decided not to seek re election as speaker, because I think I could have been reelected, but I knew that pretty sure that next session was going to be my last, because two of our sons were at college age. One was going to Georgetown. The other one had been admitted to Stanford. This is all getting very spendy. Serving in the legislature is an expensive hobby, yeah. So I decided that I wanted to go back and chair the Judiciary Committee one more time, because the judicial reform measure had created a number of one time only kind of transition issues, right? That that 83 session had to settle, right? And I wanted to be in charge of that in a first hand way. And I was really tired from at.

James Moore 50:01

That was the speakership that wouldn't end. That was a

Hardy Myers 50:04

long, long, long ordeal. So anyway, I'm babbling, but that I decide I would rather go back and do that. And so I was told, if that's what I wanted, I would get that. And so indeed, I was able to go back and present. Preside over that part of the agenda that was of the implement importance to me that the judiciary committee's agenda, yes, and I knew the judiciary would be the committee, I'm sure to which the measures would be referred right raise those issues my relations with Vic from that point, I think, were colored to some extent by the fact that I involve myself somewhat visibly in the campaign of 82 when Vic was running for re election And Ted Kulongowski was running, involved myself on behalf myself on behalf of Ted. I don't mean to overstate my own significance in the universe of Vic Atiyeh, but I think, I think it really annoyed him. He may have seen it almost as a sort of a betrayal, in a way, because we had formed a pretty good working relationship through the travails of the two years we'd share, the four years actually we've shared since he became governor, ups and downs, But and the reason I mention that is that during my tenure as the Judiciary Committee Chair, we developed, spent a lot of time on, developed 234, different measures, an ombudsman related measure, and I've been trying to think of the others, every one of which the Governor vetoed, each one of which passed the legislature and the governor vetoed. And the thing that really cut from a just sort of process standpoint was that as far as I can remember, at no time did the administrative T administration ever communicate to me informally or much less appear formally in the committee by way of testimony, communicate an opposition To the measures being evolved a dislike of them, some warning that we were heading down a road toward executive disapproval. And for my part, I thought that was terrible, terrible politics. Yeah. I mean, just a terrible way to govern, yeah, because each of those measures, and I'm

sorry I can't remember the specifics now, but each of them took a fair amount of time and were carefully worked on.

James Moore 53:13

So did that kill them, or was it like the other ones, that we were renegotiated and No,

Hardy Myers 53:18

no, I didn't think I pursued it further, yeah, the margin was too close to override. And while I think, I think the measures passed, perhaps by a vote large enough to override, obviously, you know, once a veto occurs, the politics around completely changed every

James Moore 53:37

universe. So anyways, yeah,

Hardy Myers 53:42

that but I had, I think I had, I don't remember how much interaction on any kind of ongoing basis I had, from the vantage point of that committee chairmanship that session, I I might say, too, if I could rewind for just a moment along the way of dealing with the budget deficits we had, and I forget exactly when in the sequence of crises that occurred, we had the transfer of the funds from the

James Moore 54:23

safe rate. Please,

Unknown Speaker 54:25

please.

Hardy Myers 54:27

Jim, the terminology, yes, we were careful to get an opinion from the attorney general that this action would be lawful. And I'm not saying that to be snide, because obviously any attorney general's analysis can be incorrect. But guess the point I want to I'm doubling back to make, is that Vic to his. Credit, as we worked on these different traces, was really, quite, really, quite open to different he was open or very open to the income tax increase. He was open to other tax changes that were made like, I think limiting the deductibility of federal income tax on the state return this particular action, if I may use that term, as opposed to read, I'm quite sure that came straight out of the out of the governor's office. That was at the proposal, yeah, and I now, whether he thought of it himself, or whether it came to him from staff or from even somebody within the government, I don't know, but it was Vic I'm pretty sure, who put it on the table one day, to our somewhat great surprise, because I think we were all at a point of figuring out, where do we go from here? Now just run out of options, and lo and behold, this,

James Moore 56:12

this emerges, yeah, yeah. The dynamics around that are fascinating. So it was to his credit,

Hardy Myers 56:16

yeah. The thing I'm going to underscore was that that in a way that might be hard to imagine among some Republicans today, Vic was quite flexible about revenue and about and about taxation, specifically

James Moore 56:41

Wally Carson's first major decision is the supreme court justice was safe. And then Vic's treasurer in the 82 campaign was safe, guy who was ticked off for an entire day and then came back and said, Okay, what do we have to do to win this election? But dynamics of it are just fascinating, just fascinating. I bet that must

Hardy Myers 57:04

have happened in the as part of the may have happened in that one day, part of that one day session in 82

James Moore 57:12

I think it does short session, because that's when you when you were saying that you were public out there for

Kulongwoski. That last session is in the middle of the election.

Hardy Myers 57:24

And, well, when you say middle wasn't it was like the summer, August, I think might be later than that, really, yeah, because we did have a special session to reenact the court package. Okay, so that might have been that, that's the one that October. Okay, yeah, that maybe what you're thinking, yeah, because I think there's budget socialists earlier. Yeah, because

James Moore 57:43

the conversations between Denny Miles is actually running a Tia's election, and so his Conversations with Jerry Thompson, who would call him and say, we have to have a special session in the middle of the election. You know that was the court. Yeah, that's the court. Okay, okay, I'm pretty sure, yeah, but dynamics that we just wouldn't normally, just wouldn't dream of

Hardy Myers 58:12

well, of course, that one was all worked out ahead of time too. So I think that was a one day get together. Yeah, very quick in, quick out. So I guess I think those constitute kind of the high points. Okay,

James Moore 58:30

so talk about Vic as an ex governor, or, you know, you go to the sidelines, and then you eventually take on your own statewide office, and do those kinds of things. So talk about him as you know, kind of the he doesn't like to be called the last Republican governor, but the latest Republican governor, the most recent Republican governor, but talk about his, his post gubernatorial role.

Hardy Myers 58:57

Well, it seems to me that it has been, I guess, from my perspective, I think I don't know if exemplary is quite the right word, but it seems to me that he has associated himself with, continue to associate himself with one or another public cause or issue that he's concerned about. I think Native American matters comes to my mind particularly, yeah, and he is a, he's a hallowed figure, I think, among the tribes.

James Moore 59:28

When the tape turns off, I'll tell you some interesting things about that. Yeah,

Hardy Myers 59:32

maybe that's a misunderstanding. But no, no,

James Moore 59:38

no, no, no. Springs lifetime fishing license, other treasured possessions. When he was governor, his fishing license was always 000001, and then when he left the governorship, he has his fishing license. It's 3598 or whatever it is. Says, Oh, I'm just one of the regular people now.

Hardy Myers 1:00:04

Well, and, you know, it seems to me that he hasn't, I'm not aware that he's tried to kind of trade on his past notoriety or prominence for personal gain of some kind of, you know, he doesn't try to go around making \$100,000 speeches or whatever. Of course, that's probably more the province of presidents, like, yeah, the governor, but it seems to me that he has continued in a way that reinforces the price the impression of a very fundamentally decent human being and and I don't think has done anything that I'm aware of to detract from the dignity of the Office of his Former of his status as a former governor, seems to me it's been very appropriate at all times. And I'm glad that he his health allowed him to live as long as he has since he left office,

James Moore 1:01:13

yeah, yeah. And he was active all the way up until he fell on his anniversary. It's just amazing.

Hardy Myers 1:01:20

Yeah, I used to encounter him every now and then on the street, and sometimes we could talk, and sometimes I maybe was across the street or whatever, but he seemed, he seemed to be doing very well. Physically. His mobility looked good. Yeah,

James Moore 1:01:37
yeah.

Hardy Myers 1:01:40
And I encountered him at one or another conference from time to time while I was attorney general, particularly at some conference related to Native American matters, right, where he would be present and yeah,

James Moore 1:01:55
yeah, very close to his heart. Glad to see that. With cakes and swearing in yesterday, they had a select tribe person do the benediction. Oh, really good. Yeah, yeah. And it was very Christian. And the person I was on a live set, and we didn't have our mics on the person I was with her and said, Christian. Said, Oh, believe me, the missionaries have done a very, very good job. Don't find that much traditional traditional religion out there anymore.

Hardy Myers 1:02:35
I'll be happy to send along any further notes if I think of something significant I really missed. These are high point kinds of things, but I hope they've captured at least, yeah, some of the significant aspects of my interaction.

James Moore 1:02:51
Yeah, it's good. What's really good is the the ups and downs and the seeming personality kinds of things. Some people who are really close to him are now opening up about things like that for the first time ever. But it's when I talk to family. It's interesting, you know. Well, you know, Uncle Dick could be petulant, yeah, and that kind of thing. And, and when I tell other people that, they say, oh, yeah, you know, I think I saw some of that. And so those kinds of things, it's a human he's a human being. Of course, he's a human being. So putting that together and then seeing what the impact is and if it makes it in the book or not. But

Hardy Myers 1:03:33
I think it could be stubborn. Yeah, I think it could be very stubborn for one but also, as I tried to emphasize earlier, he also could be very flexible and right and and very reasonable, I mean, to accept the compromise proposed about how to resolve the issue of the appointment the Chief Justice. Yeah, not everybody would have done that. You might have just stood firm and say, No, yeah, that's, that's the end of it. Move on. Go on to something else, but I'd like to think he had enough appreciation of the magnitude of the change and the amount of work that involved that he and maybe he had a measure of real confidence that he could win that fight with the people. Yeah, but, but I greatly appreciated, especially once we got over that initial budget problem, his flexibility and looking for solutions that we could arrive at collaboratively, right, and feel reasonably good about, yeah, not that anyone was gonna feel good about any outcome, but because you're hurting people. Yeah, exactly, exactly the problem is the problem

James Moore 1:04:47
exactly you don't get to go out of it. Oh, were you there when the lottery came in? That was after that. It's 84 isn't it? I think it's after you leave.

Hardy Myers 1:04:57
Well, I was in, I was in the session 84 but. I was, I mean, my service expired at the end of 84 first of 85 what

James Moore 1:05:06
was the lottery? I think, I think it might have been the 84 election. So it comes in 85 Yeah, right.

Hardy Myers 1:05:11
I voted against the lottery in the assembly. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Pretty sure I did.

James Moore 1:05:18

Yeah. This Vic was proud of voting against lottery every single time, but I was, I was talking to Jerry last week when that thing came in. I mean, the next day, he called her in and said, I want to make sure that everything goes into economic development, and also trying to make sure it's because you can't have long term programs based on lottery funds. So that kind of stuff, which got him into fights with people who had different visions of the lottery and things like that.

Hardy Myers 1:05:52

Yeah, that's right. Initiative Measure voted on, yeah. Follow me in

James Moore 1:05:56

84 Yeah, put it in place. All right. Great. Well, thank you very much. Well, I've

Hardy Myers 1:06:00

enjoyed it so much. It's wonderful. Well, as I say, supplement my comments. If is there an address you could leave with me? Yeah? Wanted to communicate with you by email? Yeah? Well, an email address too, and a hopeful address.

James Moore 1:06:14

Do all of that. Okay? I just have to see I've been handing out so many cards in a variety of ways. I may not have my home stuff here. Oh, wait, no, I do, because I put some of it in my bag.

Hardy Myers 1:06:26

Gonna have to get a new printing of your card. There we go. Nice.

James Moore 1:06:33

That's for me at home. Since I'm on sabbatical, I am pointedly not going into the university because of the light, although that's where because Vic, over the past three years, gave us his archives.

[Recording ends.]