David Atiyeh Interview on Governor Vic Atiyeh

Recorded on July 30, 2015 in Oregon
Interviewer: James Moore, Pacific University Professor

Note on the text: This transcript was made through AI in 2025 with some manual corrections. We recommend checking this text against the audio recording before quoting the speakers, as it may contain errors.

James Moore 0:00
October, early October, 2013. [Atiyeh: '13?] Yeah.

David Atiyeh 0:04
We were back east there, on a trip there, both for our 40th wedding anniversary. And also, I had a graduate school reunion end of September and first couple weeks of October. We went back to Maine and Nova Scotia, and then by school there in New Hampshire. But no, I remember there was something that took us out of town where we didn't make it. And it was a wonderful evening, and everyone enjoyed...

James Moore 0:29
Yeah, it was great. The previous four years before that, I had been one of the lead people with Pacific talking to Victor as he was getting his archives. [Atiyeh: Okay, yeah, leading up to...] His idea of archives is very different than archivists. So archivists usually when somebody says, "I'm beginning, my archives," a truck pulls up, and delivers everything. Victor, on the other hand, had us come down to his office and gave us one box at a time. And so I went for the first five or six times because I knew the questions to ask him, you know, he wanted to tell stories [Atiyeh interjects: Draw it out, yeah.] And I'll ask you about this, I was talking to David about this too, you know, his stories become locked in stone. They're word for word the same.

David Atiyeh 1:14
Are they? Yeah, you'd heard them repeated.

James Moore 1:16
And so I would be there to kind of knock him off of that. And, interesting things. But, so that was happening for several years. Then we had the big thing at Pacific in October 2013 and a couple of weeks later, we went over to his house, the librarians, he was in charge of the thing. And he asked me to write his biography at that time.

David Atiyeh 1:36
Because, but you had gotten to know him through these box by box... well yeah, I know you guys would have, yeah.

James Moore 1:44
And so that's when he asked me. So I was able to interview him four times before he died, officially, with this fancy recorder. And then I've been on sabbatical since the end of January this year. And so...

David Atiyeh 1:57
You've been able to really concentrate.

James Moore 1:57
You're the fifty-fifth person I've talked to. So it's really, really, really fun.

David Atiyeh 1:57
But you were out for another visit with Tom on Tuesday, I think, when I called, and yeah...

James Moore 1:58
Yeah, Tom. In fact, when I opened up my recorder, I still had grass in it because we were sitting down on the grass. [Both laugh.]

David Atiyeh 2:12
Okay, it's a beautiful location up there on, you were out...? Yeah, his place there in Newberg, enough along the hillside.

James Moore 2:19
To him, it's strength is, because, you know, up the hill in the back of his house, you can see Mount Hood. And I interviewed your brother, Bob, and you sit in his living room and look out at Mount Hood, they're just on different [unintelligible.]

David Atiyeh 2:30
You're on quite different spots there. Oh, yeah, for Bob, the mountains are kind of his second home, or maybe his first home, really. And Westland is maybe the second home with all the mountain climbing and hiking he's done over the years, so that's been his great, great love in life to do that. And, yeah, I know Bobby, he had some good experiences when he served, I think, as a driver for, you know, Vic and taken... and I think it was something that came to him at a right time, and it was a good eye opener and matured him.

James Moore 3:02
I told him, politics is not what he wants to do. [Both laughs.]

David Atiyeh 3:12
Yeah, well, I think Vic convinced pretty much the whole family of that. So none of us were line enough to follow him.

James Moore 3:13
It was striking when I was talking to David...

David Atiyeh 3:16
Or Tom or Bob?

James Moore 3:18
Yeah. When I'm talking to your father, I say "Ed, Bob..." [unintelligible.]

David Atiyeh 3:17
You need a whole family tree to keep us all...

James Moore 3:30
Well, I got the family tree that somebody back in Beirut did.

David Atiyeh 3:30
Yeah, of all the men.

James Moore 3:30
Well, how all the names are exactly the same.

David Atiyeh 3:32
Yeah, how the names just keep repeating... how the names just just keep repeating throughout. Yeah, because my cousin, you know, George, you know Richard's son. Well, his first son, he named Aziz. He was, you know, at the time here. And this was back, let's see, maybe 40 years ago, but then that was named after George's brother, the original A. Atiyeh, with the name of the company.

James Moore 4:03
Exactly, but it struck me looking at how this business is now going into the fourth generation, which is just stunning, and yet politics has not caught on. It's the rug business. And then people, who in the generations, they do all sorts of other things. But no one else has really [unintelligible].

David Atiyeh 4:23
Although I think one thing that's been common is the fact of the community and civic involvement. And I think if you look at the politics, you know, for Vic's end, there's this one part of that, because, you know, their dad and mom were so active. And I know my brother, Bob, he asked Dad, in fact, just, I think that last year, he said, "You know, what was it? Because all of you were engaged in the community." And really, as far as a number of things that Richard and Dad did was right there with, you know, a lot... I mean, Vic got on all sorts of boards and this and that it, you know, but as far as what, what the other two did. He said, "Well, what was it? It must have been within your family that was an example or instilled into you to get involved with the community." And Dad said, he said it was their mother, as much as their father, that she volunteered for all kinds of things. And I know during the war, I think, with the Red Cross, but she was very engaged. And I know Grandfather, you know, was as well. Reading, you know, back on him that he felt being part of the community was, you know, the essence of being here in America and contributing. And I think somehow this definitely came across all three of them. And it came across, you know, to us, because, you know, we saw them being involved in doing things, and then they, you know, nudged us a little bit along as we started our business careers. And, you know, most of us started outside of the business, and most of us, you know, well, I came back, most of them drifted, you know, their own directions and did things. But I think in the end, it's something that's been a value that we've all carried forward as much as possible, and it felt is important, and you find that the personal rewards and satisfactions that come out of it are tremendous, but it's something that we try to, again, keep encouraging for Kevin's generation and others, And I know one of his, you know, second cousins, is involved with the, you know, Salvation Army board now and, and it's neat to see that. So I think, if you think again, that politics is an extension of the whole community involvement, you know, and that, but you know. So I think everybody did, but what you know, they enjoy doing, and where they found satisfaction from. And, yeah.

James Moore 6:40
Well, a point on that, Victor was actually almost, you know, as bitter as Vic gets, which is not very much. He was always somewhat mystified, because with what he had done, what his two brothers had done, so active in the community, why didn't they get the recognition that like the Naito brothers got? That kind of thing. And just saying, you know, we're doing just as much. And, you know, it's the fashion of the times. It's, I

don't know what, what your dad was like, but, you know, Victor would never tell anybody.

David Atiyeh 7:16
Yeah, I was gonna say they really never... it was just something that they felt that they did. I mean, they didn't do it to draw attention to themselves or the business. It was just something that they felt, you know, being a good citizen, going back up the idea of being a good US citizen, and, you know, imparting those values, I think, from their parents that encouraged them. And I think, you know, in other cases, I mean, there's all these wonderful families in Portland, but sometimes the commercial scale of what they do is drawn, you know, attention along with their civic things and so forth. But no, I don't think that they ever did it for any personal recognition. And I don't think Vic ever felt that that way either, that I could see. I mean, he never seemed to change. You know, as we saw him within the family, it was always Vic being Vic, or Dad being Dad, or Uncle Richard being the way he was. And they just went about their, you know, personal work and, you know, work within the company and family, just as he did day in and day out. It was just just the way things were. So none of us really thought much about it. So, yeah, you didn't see that as something that they were trying to do for other reasons, it was just a, you know, a feeling of this is the right thing to do, or a way I can contribute or make a difference. And other than... I think they've always, again, imparted that if you're going to get involved in something then and try to be in a role where you can make a difference with that organization or involvement, you know, or be a leader you know, of that organization. And I think that that part, you know, don't just be on it, to be on it, you know, do something and be actively involved. And if that means eventually being the president of this group or that group, then, you know that that's the way you should go, if that's possible. So I know, with, you know, Dad, he was with district, you know, district govern -- I mean, Rotary Club president, but then district governor, and Richard, you know, as head of the Rose Festival Association and the Lions and we've had our roles here as well. So we've all tried to do those things. And I think the more we look back that we find it was good, because you can get, you know, so absorbed in, whether this business or your other career, and, you know, it's been a good balance, and it's healthy, you know, although I think you when you start off younger, on it, you're just sort of doing it, to do it, and hopefully find some things that you enjoy, you know, being involved with.

James Moore 9:41
Yeah, that's interesting. One of the chief proders to get Vic to do something outside the business, was his closest friend, Jim Campbell. And there's issues about whether, you know, Vic, would he have chosen the company or not? You know, that kind of stuff. But Jim Campbell was saying, you know, whatever it is, you like muzzle loading guns, good. Be a national level collector. You like politics, politics, but do something to get you more out of the store.

David Atiyeh 10:10
Yeah, I think, you know, Vic had a close circle of, you know, friends, you know, as well as within the family of...and I'd say Jim Campbell was probably right, there is, you know, number one, there's a lot of other co people like that. I can think of, you know, Tom Galton, and you know other people that he met along the way, but he and Jim had kind of a special, you know, relationship and when you talk about telling stories, you know, Vic always had a story or an example or a joke, but mostly it was in the form of a story. And he and Jim would go back and forth all the time with, you know, you could just, you know, I could see some of that over the years, but they just, you know, just loved each other's company, and love poking at each other, but I think there was, I think maybe Jim, you know, maybe was a factor in encouraging, you know, Vic, or you wonder, yeah, why did he go, go this direction or that direction? And I'm sure that, you know, Jim Campbell was part of it. I know he, you know, was with Vic the whole way through, you know, particularly, I can still remember, you know, when Vic was first elected governor, and the fellow that came out to introduce him was with Jim Campbell, you know, and the words that he used that night. And so those guys were linked at the hip, going back a lot, a lot of years together.

James Moore 11:31
When Vic was governor, there was a priority of personal phone calls that could get to him, and Jim Campbell was at the top. Dolores was number three.

David Atiyeh 11:38
Was he? [Both laugh.] Maybe the kids...

James Moore 11:39
Yeah. But the kids never really called like that. But it was basically...

David Atiyeh 11:52
Jim, yeah, he and yeah, Jim, were close to a fellow, Allan Lane with, you know, Lane-Miles Standish publishing was just, you know, but I think he enjoyed all the wide range of friendships that he had. But there was also a, you know, close group from growing up together that was there, going back.

James Moore 12:13
Well, and just the bond between the brothers. It's just amazing. And finding out there was your dad. Everybody loves your dad. He's easygoing. I don't know if it helped that then he went and ran the cleaning business. [unintelligible] Everybody loves him. I'm hearing stories that Richard and Vic had different personalities, and sometimes, butt heads, but whatever it was, they could then come together and make decisions and go on. You know, family and business, it worked.

David Atiyeh 12:53
I know Dad's always advice is, you know, he said, "You know, we never had a disagreement." And I kind of look at Dad and I go, "You know, I don't quite remember it that way." I remember, you know, hearing some, you know, arguments and this and that but yet, they always found a way, in other words, that was part of maybe talking things through, thinking things through. And I think there was maybe a confidence that they are always going to arrive at the right point together, you know, but it's like, you know, in other words, we're in, from that standpoint, there was that unity that was always there. But, yeah, there, you know, there was some... the different personalities and different ideas, but I think, yeah, the fact that, I think originally, actually Richard, you know, went over to start the cleaning plant, you know. And then Dad and with Norm Parsons, that had grown up around Grandfather, and was his caddy, you know, for golfing. And then ends up, you know, being a partner and working with him all the years. But no, I was, you know, kind of just thinking back from your first email was kind of, you know, memories, impressions, you know, about Vic. And as I said, I mean, the one thing was, was always just, sort of, he was just always the same. I mean, there's nothing different. And I can remember growing up as a kid, you know, versus coming out of college, or when he was a state representative or senator or governor, or after he got out of office, or, you know, family, it was just, he was just always the same person. And I think there was a, you know, just a tremendous sense of self and awareness. And I've sometimes, you know, thought, thought about it. My mom has said, well, kind of what a maybe calm, measured way that Vic had. Now part of that, maybe he smoked a lot of cigarettes, you know, to keep him that way, but then I was thinking back, Dad and I were just up at the cemetery on Tuesday, because dad hadn't had a chance to get up there, you know, earlier in July, and was kind of looking at the dates, you know, Vic was born in 1923. And then I think back, and you know, by '44, '43 when their dad, you know, started having serious, you know, health matters. So Vic's got to leave college at what, 20 or 21 you know, come up, okay, he's essentially, you know, part of the company at that point. You know, he gets married, and then his dad dies, and then Vic and Rich, you know, not only get sent overseas, but are captured and missing. And yet, I'm trying to think, you know, if I was well so 21 at that time, or 20 going 21 you know, if I've got a new wife, I've got a business. You know, my mom's, you know, she just lost her husband. You know, two brothers. You know, sons are missing, and you don't know what's going on, and how do you deal with that? And somehow, he just, I think, after that, you know, maybe nothing was really as much of a, you know, challenge or insurmountable when you think of all the things that he had to, you know, deal with at that point. But I guess part of it was just his, you know, upbringing, you know, too. It's just, you know, just sort of dealt with what you had to dealt with. But he certainly had some difficult maturing circumstances very, you know, early in his life, and I know he spoke about, you know, in the business, we said, well, I mean, you know, how was it, you know, here's a group of

experienced, you know, middle eastern sales people, again, you know, it's not quite like sales is today. I mean, it's they're going after the customer. The times are tough during the war.

James Moore 16:44
And one of your salesmen beat up the owner of another store [during the Depression]. [Moore laughs.]

David Atiyeh 16:48
I've never quite... I've heard a lot of, kind of shady, you know, following other vehicles, you know, around on calls, and you know, people slamming doors in the office. And they wanted that, but you know, I think I remember Vic saying, well, the one thing that he did, I mean, he'd been around the business growing up Grandfather, I know, brought all the brothers, you know, down to spend, you know, time working, you know, working there. But he said he listened. And I think that was something again, was that just Vic's personality or or that he had to listen when he was 20, 21, not really... okay, he was the family, you know, representative, okay, in charge, so to speak. But he knew that he didn't have the knowledge and things, so he listened, you know, carefully, and that's one characteristic that I think was always there as I think back to our company board meetings, or just other things as a family, that he was a, you know, amazing listener. And he also had an amazing way to kind of get right to the point at hand. But when the decision came or the process came, and he was just going to say that, and it was going to be, you know, pretty clear at that point, and those things through all the company board meetings and things that I, you know, attended as we got back into the early '80s. I'm CPA by background, and so did that for nine, nine years. And then, you know, Vic was in office by '82 as Governor, and Uncle Rich was getting ready to retire, but, you know, Vic was still very much, you know, part of the business, and he would attend again all the board meetings were set around, you know, his schedule, and he was, you know, very actively involved in the company that way from, you know, still his ownership and wanting to know the major things that were taking place in the company.

James Moore 18:42
And also, but leaving management to those active.

David Atiyeh 18:48
Yeah. Yeah, he didn't meddle in, you know, what was going on. I went back this morning and watched the video that's on her website, that was done as part of the Oregon State, you know, family business program. And it's that one part that's early on, where he said, you know, that he didn't want to leave as governor and come back to the business. Because I think he says he didn't want, you know, uncles, looking over your shoulder. You know that you have to learn. You know, learn on your own, make your decisions, make your mistakes. And that was the way that there was a you know, fact, if this is your responsibility, then you make the best of it. I'm not going to, you know, question what you're, you know, doing about you know, this or that at that detail level, I've got the confidence that you'll, you'll learn and grow. And, you know, here's the philosophy and the things that are generally important. And so you can see how those things would translate into, you know, running the state and the departments.

James Moore 19:52
You just described weekly meetings with all the managers. And you basically described those meetings.

David Atiyeh 19:59
Things I have absolutely, you know, no first hand experience, had never seen. I've heard about it, but his way I could see of doing things was no different than we saw, you know, within the business there, and I know he told us in, you know, the board meetings that you know, at one point his final decisions came, as far as transferring ownership and, you know, family responsibilities. He said, "Just be the best that you can in what you're doing." He said, "If you're running a gas station," he said, "Then make it the best gas station that's out there." That was his exact... you know, "Or if you're running, whatever, a restaurant or something,

just be the best that you can be at it." He said, "That's what we're trying to do." And that was pretty much his whole summary of, you know, what it was about, you know, whereas uncle Richard was very, you know, detailed, conscious, you know, I kind of laugh because I see more of Richard and dad in myself as I go along over the years. But you know, Richard, I mean, every rug had to be stacked up exactly a certain way.

James Moore 20:56
Tom described him as a neat freak. [Moore laughs.]

David Atiyeh 21:01
And, boy, yeah, if something was out of order, I mean, he would just, you know, but yet it also instilled that both from a retail standpoint or a service standpoint, or professionalism and appearance. It's all those details are part of, yeah, you know, it's you can't just do some things okay, and do other things one way. There needs to be a consistency if you're going to be a first class business and operate in a first class way. But, you know, I never heard anything from Vic in that regard. I mean, you knew that he was, you know, observing and paying attention to the same things. But I can never recall him talking about anything specifically, that way as to how to run the store, how to do things.

James Moore 21:48
Yeah, and that makes sense. He was someone who had very high standards for himself and would do things. And I think he hoped people would notice.

David Atiyeh 21:57
Yeah, I think he just, by setting that example...

James Moore 21:59
Because also in, I don't know what it was like in the store at all, but in state government, same thing. You take personnel and basically say, "Do the best you can. Here's the parameters. You're totally free within those parameters, do it. You may hire people to do it, you know, whatever it is, do it." But couldn't fire those people. He wasn't very good at saying...

David Atiyeh 22:21
Yeah. I could see that, yeah.

James Moore 22:22
This isn't working out. And so he'd get frustrated. And sometimes they would get frustrated, and figure it out, and leave. But sometimes...

David Atiyeh 22:33
Yeah, I could maybe see that. Yeah, he'd be very loyal. And I think he obviously made a lot of good decisions on, you know, bringing people on, again, the process that he followed, I don't know. I'm sure that when he met with people he, you know, there was a, I'm guessing, again, that maybe there's a relationship or something that he sees about that individual, and you know, I'm sure they'd been recommended or vetted to a certain point, but when it came to appointing people, and again, he been in state government long enough that I think he did have either firsthand knowledge of many of the individuals or knew other people who would maybe know those, I'm sure to draw upon.

James Moore 23:15
There's several crucial ones, though, that he doesn't have that. And he meets with him for an hour and a

half, and then offers them like, "I want you to be my campaign manager." Or Gerry Thompson. She doesn't, to this day, doesn't have any idea why she was really hired. He saw something in her way earlier.

David Atiyeh 23:31
And she was, I think the perfect balance to Vic, because, you know, again, we all had enough encounters with Gerry. I mean, it was okay. "What do you need?" And wham. [Both laugh.] Whereas as Vic started going along, and, yeah, I think he saw, you know, somebody that would maybe balance his, you know, personality and approach and realize that he needed that. But yeah, I can see, even around the store, that there were probably, you know, maybe instances where maybe a salesperson needed a little sharpening up, or a little of that. And I don't necessarily see him dealing with that other than he maybe would have, again, told a story or or just sat down and hoped that they would pick up on what he was trying to tell him, maybe, rather than being, you know, as direct. But when he would, you know, in the years after he was his governor, people would approach him and say, "I want to buy a rug, or get some carpet." And "Can you help me?" And so, you know, again, Vic, wouldn't... he would know enough, I'm sure he could have brought him into the store and dealt with them personally, but he would call up, and if there was anything on the retail sales side, it would usually be to me. And he would just go, you know, "David, you know, I just talked to Roger Maggie Martin, and they want to do something down at the church." And he just said, you know, "Will you take care of them?" "Okay." And that was the end of the conversation. Or, you know, here's the nature of what it is, here's the people, if you don't know who they are, I generally always knew who they were to begin with. And you know, here's what's, you know, needed. It was never, you know, give them a good deal or this or that. He just said, you know, "Will you take care of them?" And so it was, "Yeah, I'll take care of them." And then I would try to just let him know when things reached a certain point, you know, if we made the sale, or we were getting ready to do the installation. Just so in case, you know, I knew he would be seeing these individuals, so that he knew what was going on enough, you know, that he could say something to them back that they wouldn't have to surprise him, by saying, "Oh yeah, we just finished getting this installed or delivered to our house," that he would know where things, you know, ended up. And but again, there was always that confidence that he had, that he could just turn something over to you. And, you know, expect that you would, you know, carry through. And it's a good feeling, you know, if you've worked for other people, and, again, where Dad and Richard would be, "Well, okay, so what's going on with this?" Which, you know which is fine that they, you know, Vic was much more of a hands off type of manager and leader, but, but when you feel that that confidence has been instilled in you, it's a great feeling working with people like that, because you sense it, and it's something that I've tried to learn from that, you know, let them go, you know, give them the broad scope and let them make, you know, those decisions, and don't tell them It's not how to do everything, because otherwise you'll never see the creativity that they're going to... you'll bring themselves to a task. I'm kind of a more of a mix, maybe, of Dad and Richard on the detail, but there's that part of it that always says, you know, this is the, you know, the way to grow people. This is the way to, you know, do some of these bigger, bigger things is you have to, you know, step back and let people show what they can do. You know, most of them are going to step up. Sometimes it doesn't work out. And then you have to make those decisions, or maybe shift roles, or maybe make some other changes. So it's been great, you know, having an uncle like Vic and, you know, and a father and another uncle like Richard, each of them, you know, in part of something, but still a tremendous, you know, consistency as to what they felt were the, you know, philosophy, you know, behind the company and the philosophy from a family value. But again, it was just as much of an example of, you know, just not lecturing and just an example of how to do things, how to be professional.

James Moore 27:25
That's a good question for you. As you went to business school and then make the decision, eventually, to come back here, as you're going through and doing case studies and all those kinds of things. Were you thinking of these three guys and the management that they had done back here in Atiyeh brothers?

David Atiyeh 28:02
Not so much at the time that, you know...

James Moore 28:03
It's just because they have different business styles. More of a family...

David Atiyeh 28:06
Yeah, it was, because, I mean, I guess I felt I knew each of them, as much as I did, you know, growing up. So there was no surprise that way. And I worked, I guess it was about six summers in the business through college and graduate school. And while that was mostly over at the plant, Dad never really had me working for him. It was always working for Norm, or there'd be certain things that I'd be dealing with the, you know, store during the summer. You know, not as much. And so, you know, see Vic and Sarkis Manougian, who was their partner on the retail side, and with things. So, no, I didn't. You know, maybe again stepping back and in more recent years, I've kind of just thought of these types of things and how they did it, or that comment that, again, is in that video, just hits me as soon as Vic said it that day. I'd heard things like that from him before, but I think it stirred my thoughts more at that point than, let's say it did 30 years ago, you know, because now I've kind of been, you know, been through this process, and I'm trying to do those transitions with, you know, with Kevin and others in the, you know, company. And you know, then you remind as to what is important, that you can't look over their shoulders, that you have to give them those opportunities to learn and to grow. And that's what we've been trying to do the last five or six years, as we, you know, transition out of the company ourselves, and to realize that we started this, you know, when I was 60, and then Richard's son-in-law, who was, you know, my partner in business all these years, Tom here and Ted. And we just thought, you know, if people don't know what's going to happen to us, you know, in our personal plans, then it just leaves a lot of uncertainty within the company. You know, we wanted to, to make things certain for the individuals here that we're not going to be sitting here. When we're 70, 75, 80 years old, like happens in a lot of family companies, you know, things do have to transition for the...

James Moore 30:06
I'm not sure Warren Buffet's family complains. [Both laugh.]

David Atiyeh 30:09
Well, no, we didn't have to worry about that on the Atiyeh side, but I think, you know, probably behind the scenes, Buffett's also got some strong people, they're ready to, you know, and they're running a lot of the show. But I've seen so many companies over the years that, you know, that owner or the family is there, and you do, you literally reach a point they're in their '80s, and they're still making the crucial decisions. And so, I mean, how can you grow? You know, unless the company is just growing phenomenally, if it's just even growing within a normal range, you're not giving those younger people that are in their late-20s, 30s, early-40s, a chance to grow and mature. So when something happens to you, you know, the business can have a chance. It's hard enough as it is, to have continuity in the business, let alone if... so, Tom and I kind of started reducing our roles when we were 61 and, you know, I'm 66 now. We've got a year and a half until this process is complete. We thought we'll step back, but just because of the age of some of our other senior managers and other individuals like Kevin, who are in their mid-30s, up to early-40s, that, you know, things were not completely ready five or six years ago. But I think we'll be at that point, and we just, you know, hope, then at that point that they're ready to go. But again, you got to do it, because the other side of it is not good, you know, either. And the only chance is to let those individuals grow. You know, it doesn't matter if it's family or nonfamily, that everybody in the company, you know, needs to grow and be able to step up and show things. So, you know, it remains a challenge, and that's what we've been working on for the past several years.

James Moore 32:00
Do you know any of the details? When Vic took over, there was a manager that had been managing the company since George stepped back in 1940.

David Atiyeh 32:09
Well, I don't know if that was... whether that's, yeah, Glen Haas or [unintelligible], or who I don't know....

yeah. I don't.

James Moore 32:16
This is in the minutes from your dad's history. And somebody's appointed manager. But so I don't know if that person was consistent until '44, did they stay on afterwards?

David Atiyeh 32:28
Yeah, I don't. And there's, I think there was an outside attorney who was involved. And I think even additive, different people float through as far as stock ownership, you know, time period, and who... now, whether some of that was due to, at the time, that, just part of the kind of legal requirements of, you know, with a corporation, I've never quite understood some of the other names I recognize, and because of connections, I think one of the calls, which was a relative, I think, had some ownership. And other individuals I think had legal roles in the company, I think after grandfather passed away, but that, you know, whether some of that was connected, but I'd have to look back, but it seems like in that 1940s period up to when Grandma passed away in 1950. Yeah, there's, there's these different people and ownership, floating through...

James Moore 30:59
And it also gets complicated because there's a decision to... for Aziz, and you guys a switch. You know, ownership goes like this on that company and your company sees a lot of that.

David Atiyeh 33:59
Right, yeah. Yeah, that took place, he had moved back, it was in the '20s, you know, back to New York. But, I think...

James Moore 33:59
But after, there's his brother's death...there's a three, four year period of transitions.

David Atiyeh 28:38
Yeah, transitions. And I think if I, you know, I've got those same documents that he still holds ownership in the Portland, you know, business and things, yeah, start to transfer, then, at that point to... and then eventually, yeah, to Dad and Rich and Vic, and then Norm Parsons, and then little bit later, Sarkis Manougian comes into the picture. But, yeah, I know, we've, you know, ownership-wise in the company now, we've got other senior managers that we've given an interest in ownership the last several years. But I had some people outside the company go, "Well, gee, what are you doing?" I go, you know, we've had, you know, this as much as I can go back in stock records to the, I think, the 1920s and certainly the whole time I grew up, I never thought anything different that Norm Parsons was a equal partner in the cleaning plant, or Sarkis Manougian, and had some interest in the retail operations, and later, as we merged things, you know, together, and then they retired. And so, you know, to me, that's, that's good, you know, for people who are long term individuals, Mark McGirr, who's our company President now, since I reduced my role, and you know, I've known Mark, 35 years now, close to 40. But Mark joined us, I think, 19 years ago. But, you know, Mike, our general manager, I think, is 42, 43 years. And if you had a minute, you know, he was hired, you know, by Vic and Richard, and I think he's always got a couple good, you know, examples of, him and his, I think, interview process, or, you know, whatever, but it was just, you know, but he's been more involved, as far as actually working in the business day to day, than I have, or Tom Marantette, you know, has been and so, you know, with Mike and Mark, and then Tom's brother, Brian at the plant, and Jim Antonini, who just retired as a manager of our Eugene location. And but we gave each of these guys, you know, some stock a few years ago because we felt it was, you know, important and warranted, and, you know, the responsibilities that we were passing along to them that gave them the incentive. But the only comment I can remember from Vic, or at least maybe it was hearing from, from other others in the family, is that Vic did have a hard time with the idea of of selling some of the -- and I maybe can see the Atiyeh Brothers

stock, the Sarkis Manougian... and that was always something that, even though I think it constitute only about 10% of the interest. Now, the cleaning plant, I never heard anything about, you know, Norm, Parsons, you know, having an equal 25% you know, because Vic, Rich and Ed, but then Norm was the other 25% owner, but there's something maybe about that, you know, original company. I don't know what it was.

James Moore 36:40
Looking at the history, they had that special class of stock that was for employees, and then they pulled it back after several years because nobody was buying it. They've done that, they tried profit sharing, and people didn't buy into that. [Atiyeh: Okay, yeah. Yeah.] So, you know, I can see why, because clearly there's something with the main stock, and what do you do with these other things?

David Atiyeh 37:07
Yeah, I think there was enough... again, I never heard him directly say, but I know it was just something that was... I don't know. He would again, trusted and had the confidence in everyone at the same time when it maybe came to the true idea of, you know, the ownership, or maybe seeing what had transpired with ownership as he had to assume certain responsibilities as a very young young man. But in the end, it all, all worked out well. And it was going to be a process that was comfortable to him, so. But I think the other example, just, you know, personally, I can think of Vic's style as fishing. He loved to fish and do things. And I can recall sitting up at our family cabin and trying to tie a fly onto the line there. And I was probably just making a knot, a couple more knots, and hope it would hold together. And he said, "Well, let me see what you're doing there." And he said, "Well, here's a way that I've done it." And showed me this little way to tie the fly on. And imagine it's pretty much the standard way that most people do things. At the time, I was probably 10 years old and didn't know any other way than just tying knots. And he said, "So here it is, and here's the example. Now watch this." And I was sitting up at the cabin a couple weeks ago and out by the river. It's getting harder and harder to do it, because I can't see that good anymore, and trying to get that line back through the loop there. But I can't recall ever going out to fish with him, but I can recall him showing me how to tie that knot. And I can remember him talking about how he would fish his stream, you know, the process that he would use it if he was fishing up a stream, how he would go about it. I actually go the opposite way. But I still, I was always thinking, "No, Vic always said he fished upstream." I always like going downstream. And with stuff that he said, he set an example, but then he left it to you. He wasn't like, "Okay, you want to go out and fish? Go out and fish." And I'm not your fishing buddy that way. Maybe he'd fish with Jim Campbell or Allan Lane. I know he'd go out fishing with Allan and others. Or... he was the big guy, Bob Smith, were on the Deschutes. But Vic was saying here, "I'll teach you a little something, and if you want to use it, fine. If you don't, that's okay too." But I think that was, again, this sort of part of his style on things, to impart a few things, and then just let you go and make your own way. And so again, I think about those things a little bit more when I'm out on the river. Suzanne gave me a great picture here as they were cleaning out the house here a couple months ago. And it was a picture of Vic fishing on the Zigzag River by our cabin. And I'm guessing maybe he's 10 years old, and it was right above, you know, his office door there in the house on [unintelligible]. And so she said, "I'd like you to have it." And I said, "I'm taking it up to the cabin." And we put it up there two weeks ago, and I hung it above the door, and one of the bedrooms there -- only bedroom on the main floor-- that actually uncle Arif used to sleep in, who loved to fish, but I thought, there it is, back above the door again. That's where Vic had it so many years in his office here at home and that was always the fishing room that so called, so to speak, that Arif slept in as the unmarried bachelor there would come up with the family. And so I think that would just be our memory up there. But that was a perfect little momentum there that I look forward to having.

James Moore 40:59
It's fabulous, you know, talking to your dad, because I was asking them about, you know, Vic collected guns, and the fishing And your dad was pretty clear. He and Rich didn't do fishing. [Atiyeh: Yeah.] And so it's fascinating to look at a family and see, wow, people do this. And then it goes to this generation over here, and somebody really likes it. And, you know, it's just fascinating to see the kind of the hopscotch.

David Atiyeh 41:26

Uncle Arif who fished, and Vic, but that's why I grew up, is tying knots on a [unintelligible] to fly. Because Dad, I say, he never fished. He never showed me, so only way I knew it was just to kind of tie a bunch of knots and assume that the flywood would stay on there, and, yeah, it's just, just all part... but no. Vic, you know, you mentioned guns. I can again, recall maybe, I don't think we could have been much more than eight or 10, but he took us out to a rifle range there. It was one of those big old muzzle loading rifles, and he wanted us to fire it. And I can still remember this day. And so he went through, and here's how you would put the -- I'm not a gun guy -- but the cloth patch or something, or the powder, or the whatever order they go in. And here's the ball, and you know, you do. And he had it, you took us through it, had us do this. And then, you know, we fired at the target, and all I can remember is just getting my butt kicked, and how much the darn thing hurt. It just, you know, wham. And boy, I'll tell you that, because again, Dad, I can never remember... maybe firing a BB gun at the cabin, but Dad didn't do guns. Richard didn't, but Vic was the one that took each of us cousins out to the firing range so we could do that. And it was just little things like that growing up. And I know he loved talking guns in his gun collection, but yeah I can never remember him hunting, or hearing anything about hunting, ever.

James Moore 42:14
Target shooting and...? Your dad explained, and then I found a lot of evidence that agrees with it, that it's basically holding history.

David Atiyeh 43:09
Yeah, I think that memory [unintelligible]. Well, he loved history. I know that because he collected -- you know far more than I -- but whether it was the campaign buttons or... [Moore: Campaign buttons, clocks...] yeah, the guns... Lewis and Clark! I'm going to say that, we'll look at the award and other awards here. But I know when you know this, Lewis and Clark Centennial came up in 2005. So the Oregon Historical side, it came to Vic, because they knew that he had quite a collection of items. And they came and they borrowed, I think, for six months, the Gold Medal Award that we had here. But, yeah, Vic was showing me, you know, some of this stuff that he had, and I didn't, still don't probably realize, even five or 10% of all the different types of things that he collected. Yeah, he did. He loved history. And I think Tom was showing me again when… went over to the house a couple months back that they found some coins... I'm trying to remember what the coins were from, from after the Civil War? But anyways, a certain type of coins that they had. And Vic had these in his drawer. And they're thinking what to do with them. But all these things, but, yeah, there was something about it that drew him to history. And I don't know, maybe you found out. I don't know if he enjoyed reading history books.

James Moore 44:43
Yeah, he had an extensive Civil War collection.

David Atiyeh 44:46
Did he? Yeah. Okay, yeah, that I've heard about.

James Moore 44:48
So yeah, he loved reading about it, but the hands on... [Atiyeh: Yeah, physically yes.] was really something important to him. When he went to the Middle East and Asia, he'd buy just all sorts of stuff. It's like, "what the heck is this?" One of his natural resources advisors...

David Atiyeh 45:10
On one of his trips? Yeah, as governor, he brought this back and gave it to me. [Moore: That's fantastic.] Yeah, now they're a pretty common one. The fellas here has given me a much bigger one, and even fancier inside, but Vic brought this back, and, yeah, gave it to me at some point for... I have all these little knickknacks. I can remember coming back when he was governor.

James Moore 45:30
In Syria, he bought in [unintelligible.] He bought scrimshaw that had American mid-18th, mid-19th century paintings on it. And it turned out it was fake. But that didn't stop him at all. He displayed the stuff in his governor's office, and I just got them in March, and I did not put them in my carry-on baggage. That would be too hard to explain. [Moore laughs.] But yeah, the hands on was really important.

David Atiyeh 45:58
Yeah. No, I can see. That's always what, you know, when he kept the office, you know, well, just up to recently, downtown, above the store. The thing was, I know he'd love to go out, and he just used to like to walk around the streets there. And he'd pop in at different stores, and people would be surprised. You know, you got a governor, "I saw Governor Atiyeh just walking down the street," or "He popped into my shop." But he just kind of liked browsing things. He was, I think, a shopper, but he just loved, you know, what are people selling, and what are they showing? And again, that attachment maybe to things. And I think, again, he got to know all the people, probably in the two, three block radius, if not more, around there. And he'd love to... yeah. That was just his manner and method of relationships.

James Moore 46:51
At the state memorial service, I happened to sit with a group that had known Vic, because Vic was on the board of Lone Fir Cemetery. So these are Chinese American, you know, that kind of thing. And so I interviewed one of them, because same thing, Vic in the 1940s and '50s, walking around the store at that point. Similar's Sporting Goods. There was a Chinese guy there, yeah, was into antique firearms. And they bonded... [Atiyeh: Yeah, and see, I think that's what... yeah.] And they were both immigrant families, so they had that as well.

David Atiyeh 47:27
These relationships, and I think, well, what was it was? I think of them as, you know, not necessarily the fellow that just walks into a room and you just gravitate to him that way. Mom has always said it was kind of funny, because it was a political gathering, sometimes it was Dolores almost had to kind of push him into the action, because he wasn't a glad-hander that was going to run. But I think you find, and I that's what I continue to hear, and certainly in all sorts of letters and other personal stories since Vic passed away, is it the personal relationships that he had? But then, what was it based upon? You know, maybe it was like looking at something then they get to talking, but once he latched on to those personal relationships, he never let go. It was a bond that was between him and other people that just went on, and that's what I know he tremendously valued in the years after he got out of office, was those personal relationships. And he kept going back to Warm Springs. He kept, let's say that shopkeeper or anybody else, and just the stories that have come in from people that said, you know, they met him once, but then he started talking about something that they found in common. And he had that somehow means of establishing that personal relationship that they still, even if it was just one or two encounters, it wasn't that they just met the governor while he was in office, or met him at a boy scouts thing. There was something personal that latched on to them that people have never let go of. And I've found people at church, you know, that they've come up and said, "You know, this happened to me," or "He came to our department while I worked in state government, and we were getting anniversary awards, but he took the time,a little bit of time with each of us, and we found this in common." And they realized that there was something more than him just showing up. There was something... and I think that was the way. It wasn't just something that, you know, it's 10:15, on your schedule, and they show up and do this. There was something more that he, I think, truly enjoyed doing. He truly enjoyed.

James Moore 49:43
He was also good at keeping a schedule. He would personally [unintelligible], but he also... partly people behind him kind of pushing him. But, he was actually pretty good at keeping a schedule. Of course, like Tom McCall, Tom McCall could be two hours late, just because [unintelligible.]

David Atiyeh 49:46
Yeah, I know, Vic was a business guy. I know, yeah, Vic, I've seen it. He'd write things down and have his notes there.

James Moore 50:05
As governor, he'd have a 3 x 5 card in his pocket. We have every single one of them, so we see hour by hour what he was doing.

David Atiyeh 50:14
Yeah, great record to have. Well, I didn't wear my short sleeve shirt today, or you didn't... [Atiyeh laughs.] in honor of it, with the forecast. I don't own many.

James Moore 50:22
When Vic died last summer, Denny Miles...

David Atiyeh 50:27
Denny was talking about all the short sleeve shirts that he...

James Moore 50:29
And Tom at one point, said, "Don't worry, we've got that covered." [Both laugh.]

David Atiyeh 50:34
Well, Jim, would you like to go out and take a look at some of the awards?

James Moore 50:40
Yeah! That would be great.

David Atiyeh 50:41
And you can see what we have, and there's a little more water too, if you'd like it.