

Charles E. Beggs Interview on Governor Vic Atiyeh

Recorded on March 12, 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.

Charles E. Beggs 0:01

How long have you been doing things clinically out in Salem?

James Moore 0:09

This version, besides just growing up, it's basically since 1991. I moved back here after graduate school in 1990.

Charles E. Beggs 0:20

Where did you go?

James Moore 0:20

I went undergrad at Stanford, and then my doctoral work is at Northwestern. The only reason I moved back to Oregon -- I grew up in Medford -- the only reason I moved back here was because I re-met a high school friend and married her.

Charles E. Beggs 0:35

Well, that's a good reason.

James Moore 0:36

And she had an actual job.

Charles E. Beggs 0:39

I would be glad to sit over there, if you don't...

James Moore 0:41

Oh no, no. It's fine. It's fine. It'll pick things up.

Charles E. Beggs 0:47

Yeah, Joyce and I met... I asked, I didn't think you were here in the '70s. Joyce and I met, he was administrator of the House Democratic Majority office, in the late '70s. Uh huh. That's where we met... sort of political [unintelligible.] But your junkiness tends to diminish when you get retired, but on the other hand, you have more time to do it in a way too. But, anyway...

James Moore 1:22

Yeah. It's interesting. The details kind of aren't as important as kind of where they're going. Yeah. So I was

growing up in Southern Oregon then, and so my high school social studies teacher was Al Densmore, [Beggs: Oh yeah, I know him.] and knew Lenn Hannon forever. Senators... you know, I interviewed Gary Wilhelms last week, who was from Klamath Falls I realized, and so he... we were doing the name game all over in there too.

Charles E. Beggs 1:55

Yeah, I started in the capital in 1970 with the state... I worked over there for six years before I went to the AP. So I think I was there long enough. [Moore: Yeah, absolutely.] About 35 years.

James Moore 2:13

Yeah. But that gives you perspective that I want, because you were running into Vic Atiyeh when he was Senator Atiyeh. [Beggs: Right.] And then watching his '74 campaign, and then as he successfully transitions to being governor and things like that.

Charles E. Beggs 2:36

Well, I'll try to offer what I can. I don't know how valuable it will be.

James Moore 2:35

Well, the thing is, with you, there's also I can go back and dig in the files as well, because, oddly enough, you wrote kind of a diary. [Moore laughs.]

Charles E. Beggs 2:45

Yeah, I've got a bunch of stuff there. Yeah, it's funny with the internet now you call up things, maybe you want to know one, but yeah, it's just almost infinite.

James Moore 2:57

I was talking with Dana Tims last week. And he was remembering, because he started with the register garden in '79. [Beggs: Yeah.] And he was remembering Ed Fadeley calling Atiyeh Ayatollah Atiyeh. [Beggs: Oh, really?] And which would fit with Ed, and so I was trying to track that down. He couldn't find it. And so...

Charles E. Beggs 3:16

Well, since Atiyeh wasn't of Iranian descent, that probably didn't go over very well.

James Moore 3:20

Well, but I finally found it in a Wayne Thompson article, Atiyeh called himself that [Beggs: Oh, really?] in a Dorchester skit. [Beggs: Okay.] So it's then... I'm gonna talk to Wayne as well, who's not very well.

Charles E. Beggs 3:21

He's not too well? [Moore: No...] He's still in Oregon?

James Moore 3:44

Yeah, he's still around. He's still around, but he's got bad problems and things like that. And so I sent that article to him, and lo and behold, he said, "Oh, when I left the Oregonian, they just gave me these boxes. I'm not sure they have them, but I have all these articles." So I'll eventually talk to him, or he'll send me a bunch of articles.

Charles E. Beggs 4:09

All I did was I went on the Oregonian archive this morning to refresh myself, scan through a few articles. I wasn't sure where you were headed, but anyway. You know, Vic was the first Arab American governor.

James Moore 4:25

Yeah, absolutely. Not that it wasn't that big a deal. I asked Denny Miles if he ever polled for that. He said, you know, it never occurred to them to do anything like that.

Charles E. Beggs 4:36

I never heard it brought up. Frankly, pro or con.

James Moore 4:41

Yeah, absolutely.

Charles E. Beggs 4:43

Does he still have brothers alive?

James Moore 4:46

He had two older brothers, and one of them died two years ago, and one of them is still alive.

Charles E. Beggs 4:50

The rug business probably isn't. He's got sons...

James Moore 4:54

So, yeah, it's to the next generation. And then actually there's a fourth generation that's very interested as well. So the rug business is going fine, but it's not Vic's son, it's one of the other sons. [Beggs: Oh, okay.] Vic's son...

Unknown 5:11

Nice to meet you.

James Moore 5:13

Nice to meet you! Yeah, Vic's son and the rug business didn't work out, but then he started his own rug business and married a woman who speaks Chinese, and so they do stuff from China. They do Chinese rugs, actually. [Beggs: Oh, okay.] So he's in the business, but not in Atiyeh Brothers.

Charles E. Beggs 5:32

It sounds like it's flourishing.

James Moore 5:34

Yeah, yeah, it's doing great. And fascinating to learn about that business as well. So I'm recording all this archival quality. It's eventually going to go into the archives at Pacific. And then I take it and I snip it up by whatever we talk about. And, you know, use it for my own stuff to figure out how to write this darn book.

Charles E. Beggs 5:57

Yeah, when did you start on it?

James Moore 5:59

Vic asked me in October of 2013, and I was able to interview him several times before he died. But I just started a sabbatical just at the beginning of February, end of January. So it's been dive in and do interviews, a little bit of research. But, you know, classes kind of take priority. So it's just though the deep dive has just started.

Charles E. Beggs 6:26

But now you're free of that for a little while.

James Moore 6:28

Yeah, yeah. Basically, I have until August to really dig into this and get things really, really started and grounded in there. And in the middle of all that, our governor blew up. So there was two weeks.

Charles E. Beggs 6:41

That's another thing. And... if you later, a minute when you're done with this, get your opinion on what the hell happened in his mind, in your opinion? But anyway, you know, I've known Kitzhaber a long time since, well, I guess '79 when he started in the House. Anyway, we don't need to go into that side thing, but I don't know what happened to his judgment. Just don't understand it. I was on the Ethics Commission for five years, and he... she and probably he are going to be found guilty on a whole bunch of violations, I think, if they ever carry through with it. Anyway, some people think he was mistreated by the press and hounded out of office. Being me, I have mixed feelings about that. Anyway, it was very strange. I've never seen a playful event like that in this state fall that fast.

James Moore 7:48

Yeah, it's just crazy, crazy. So, you started in 1970. Did you have interactions with Atiyeh in those early days? I mean, he's in a minority that gets smaller and smaller even as he becomes the majority leader, but...

Charles E. Beggs 8:09

Not very much, until he was minority leader. And I think during at least one session, they were down to six.

James Moore 8:15

Yeah, they had six, and they had seven the session before.

Charles E. Beggs 8:18

The phone booth caucus. [Moore: Right.] So, you know, I had some dealings with him then, but the kind of dealings the press would have with a minority leader of six, you know, didn't... not too much, yeah, but I gave first impressions of him and which carried on through. He was a very consistent person about everything. Seemed to me, anyway.

James Moore 8:45

Uh huh. What were some of those consistency?

Charles E. Beggs 8:49

Well he was a politician, he was rock steady, he was -- other people I'm sure have told you this, but he was really low key. You know, you couldn't... I never saw him get mad in the sense of body language mad, and I

saw him at times when he was pleased, but there wasn't a lot of difference in his body language and his expression. The way you could tell when he was irritated, but as far as I would go, would be described as irritated because he wasn't a guy that stomped around and he wasn't a Peter Courtney, you know, the polar opposite, but so he was consistent. His demeanor. He was the way work was behind the scenes a lot. He didn't, ever, never drew attention to himself. A very even tempered, personable -- other people probably have told you this in the press, but when he left office, I was president of the press corps, and we made a plaque and presented it to him and for his accessibility and treatment of the press, and I told him that he was the most accessible governor I'd covered, and that would've included McCall. Atiyeh came down to the press room probably about once a week, and just wandered through. And whoever was there, he talked to anybody and then answer any questions. You know, asked him the way he wanted to, but he'd hold press conferences every week -- or not every week, probably, I've seen that, and I don't think it was that common, but he'd hold regular ones, whether he had anything to announce or not. And one anecdote you might be interested in, I think it was Ron Blankenbaker, but Vic would call reporters back at night and report something. Tried to call governors that often at night, just just thinking they wouldn't get through. But there was some incident here in Oregon. I can't remember it, but Vic was in Phoenix, Arizona, and I think some kind of a flap came up, and I think it was Blankenbaker, that called him, but got through to him at night down there, and he called him back. And I wish I could remember the context better. I don't remember what the controversy was, but that reminds me, you know, you've probably seen the trader thing, I coined that, I think. [Moore: Oh, you did? Great!] Yeah, I'll take credit for that. Ron Blankenbaker, you remember, of course, good friend of mine. But he wrote biting columns about everybody. But he called Vic initially Governor Gulliver, because of these trade missions he went off on, and Ron would poke fun at him once in a while. I said, "Yeah, you know, a good name for him would be Trader Vic". Oh, that's where that started I think. Mike and Victor, popularized it, I think, but feel free to jump in with the question of not being too free-form with this. But Vic accomplished a lot in very hard times, and aside from budget things, he accomplished environmental things. And I was reading the old clippings that started Oregon Food Chair and things that wouldn't pop in people's mind, like McCall and Straub in the Greenway or something like that, because he didn't make big deals of it, and the businesses he got to locate here from... he was down in Silicon Valley in the early days, and he got the unitary tax repealed, helped bring some of the high tech folks up here. But it was a lot of besides behind the scenes stuff, and he was a good fit for governor at that point because he had so much legislative experience. He knew the people, he knew how to work the legislature, and he had a lot of friends and contacts there. And, you know, he knew that a lesson in the legislature is line your votes up before you try to do something. And governors don't always do that. That's an aside, but I think faded Barbara Roberts, you know, trying to push a sales tax down the legislature's throat, and it backfired on her because she got in front of them, and it didn't work. Anyway, so Vic did things that... and I think I saw a quote in one of those clippings that you can get a lot done if you don't care who gets the credit. And so he wasn't a show boater. He was the opposite of that.

James Moore 14:51

So did him being behind the scenes make it harder to cover him? I mean, he's talking to the press, but as you said, he would say what he wanted to say. He has this neat kind of triage list about how he would respond to questions and things. But so did it make it harder to figure out what was going on?

Charles E. Beggs 15:14

Oh, I don't know that it was. I think as much as politicians disclose to the press about what they're doing to -- manipulate, maybe is a bad word -- but to work the levers of power behind the scenes, he was pretty forthright about it. He didn't duck a lot of questions. I mean, probably not as many as some politicians do. But he had a very rough time in the early '80s, of course. You know, he did things politicians don't do, like raise taxes, in addition to cutting budgets that he took a stand... for example, you know, Vic always opposed the kicker law. He thought was a bad, bad thing, that it was going to come back to haunt -- and that was the point where the recession had started. It looked... we were... had a bunch of extra money, but he said we're going to regret it. And that was very foresightful, but he was bucking up in the legislature there. As you would conclude, of course, Vic would be, if he was in office now, he'd probably be a Democrat. I don't see how he could be a Republican [Moore: Yeah, it's hard to see how that would work...] in this climate today.

James Moore 16:49

Yeah, he was a die hard Republican until the day he died. [Beggs: He was.] But just talking to his family, I discovered that his older brother, for instance, voted for Obama twice, and he never told Vic that.

Charles E. Beggs 17:02

Noo Vic was a very, very committed loyal Republican. But he was not, even in those days, I didn't consider him a far out conservative. [Moore: Mhm.] He was moderate on a lot of social issues, progressive on environmental issues. He did things with taxes and things that he had to do to get pragmatic. Today, he'd have to be a liberal today if you classified him in a camp. I was reading a little thing about... he was a minority himself, so he was sensitive about treatment of the minorities. But interestingly, when the Rajneesh were here, he didn't meet with... he wouldn't meet with the Rajneeshees, because he didn't want to give them liability, some of his staff members, and he weathered that pretty well. He and Frohnmayer and those folks, that was pretty turbulent, the incident itself in addition to everything else. Vic had some turbulent times in his terms. But interestingly, he was a very good retail, ground level politician. Of course, you know, he beat Tom McCall on McCall's comeback bid, you know, so McCall found out he wasn't as beloved as he thought. But anyway, that was a three way race. Roger Martin was in there too, as I remember. But Vic was good at retail politics, and he liked it. Pretty much he would... and he was very loyal to the party. I remember covering Dorchester well after he was governor, and he'd usually show up and drive up there and take part, even though he didn't -- some of the leadership that showed up he didn't agree with.

James Moore 19:20

So, what do you remember about the '74 campaign? He gets into the race, as you know, basically a nobody. He knocks off Clay Myers, who everybody thought would win in the primary, and then goes on to lose the Straub. So what do you remember about that campaign?

Charles E. Beggs 19:43

Not too much, really. Of course, as I get older, I'm afraid I remember less, but like you say, he was kind of a nobody. Straub was much better known in it, and so I don't think people gave Vic much of a chance, and it came down in somewhat of a partisan vote, but of course, he just didn't have the statewide exposure. You know, caucus leaders, as you know, and even speakers and presidents of the Senate think they're really well known statewide. They're not. Yeah, you know, you can go down the street, and that's even with Courtney's disability, "Who's the president of the Senate?" Quite a lot of people that don't know. So he was one of those politicians that had to make a statewide run so he could make another one and win. Because he really came from nowhere. I don't remember too much more about that. I remember a little more about the Kulongoski campaign, because Kulongoski imploded, shot himself in the foot with the plant closure bill for one thing.

James Moore 21:10

So what were the dynamics of that plant closure bill?

Charles E. Beggs 21:17

Well, as I recall the details of companies had to give quite a bit of advanced notice to the community and employees if they were going to close. And there might have been some economic -- I don't know if they determined sanctions, but compensation involved. I can't remember too much more about that. But this was right in '82, right in the midst of the depression, when plants were closing, mills were closing. And that was a wood product recession, because the construction industry fell apart. And Kulongoski's timing was very bad. You know, he was a strong labor guy, and his timing was very poor.

Unknown 22:00

Hi guys.

Charles E. Beggs 22:06

Hi. You got a call here. Oh, he didn't take the phone and see it.

Unknown 22:12

Yeah, yeah. I got a Skype from...

Charles E. Beggs 22:14

[Unintelligible] or something?

Unknown 22:16

Oh, yeah, yeah. They called today?

Charles E. Beggs 22:18

Yeah. They messaged to call for your application or something to that effect.

Unknown 22:23

Yes, paper work I have to give them, so. Okay, okay, cool. Where's mom?

Charles E. Beggs 22:27

Gosh, she's at the store.

Unknown 22:28

Okay. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt.

Charles E. Beggs 22:33

No, that's all right.

James Moore 22:34

That's okay. So the plan could be labor?

Charles E. Beggs 22:37

Well, you know, maybe other things. I mean, Kulongoski was a young, not well known legislator who, you know, I think he bit off a little too high in that race. But Vic had the big advantage of incumbency and whatnot, but Kulongoski knowingly or not, shot himself in the foot of that bill so that I remember that campaign more than I do Vic's first one.

James Moore 23:16

Do you remember the '78 campaign when he was the... not only the last Republican who served as governor, but he's also the last person to knock off a sitting governor when he beat Straub.

Charles E. Beggs 23:37

I remember more about Straub foibles than I do about Vic's positives. Straub was a likable, but kind of an odd guy, not particularly good speaker. I think he was. He was bright and accomplished some environmental things, but he didn't know how to take credit for things. I don't think he had a particularly good publicity

staff. And so I think for that reason, he was kind of vulnerable. People didn't have a real great impression of him. He had some tumult, because Prop 13 in California passed in '78. [Moore: Yeah, that's something.] He had to call a special session to put something on the ballot here. And so he got through that okay, but anyway, I don't remember. I can't tell you too much about other vulnerabilities. So campaigns have swum together. [Moore: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.] And it's hard to delineate one from the other.

James Moore 25:08

So what more stands out in that '82 campaign? You got Kulongoski imploding. Was there anything on Atiyeh's campaign side that stood out?

Charles E. Beggs 25:19

Not very much comes to mind. Just, I think he did get... people thought he was doing a serviceable job in getting the state, I think, together when this recession started and he didn't have a strong opponent in the other party. So I don't remember too much more about it. If something pops in my head...

James Moore 26:03

Yeah, that's exactly... you talked about Atiyeh and environmental things. What comes to mind when you think about those issues?

Charles E. Beggs 26:14

He was a conservation -- He liked to fish. He was a conservationist. I think he got some land preserved in Central Oregon on the Deschutes. It was something involved with the Warm Springs Indians that... he worked with them. I read, you know this, I'm sure, I think I read, as I read about him, that he was very strongly for the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area preservation bill, and said he got the White House to persuade Reagan not to veto it.

James Moore 27:13

Now apparently, Bob Packwood has a different story. I hope to interview him next week.

Charles E. Beggs 27:22

He's an interesting guys. He's 80 years old and he's still working, I guess. [Moore: Yeah, yeah.] He has a lot of energy. Yeah, I don't know, that's the story I've always heard, but it may be Packwood, was probably even Hatfield, I suppose were involved in it too, so.

James Moore 27:40

Do you remember the Opal Creek issue? Reason I ask is because I always... my understanding of Opal Creek was always it was a Mark Hatfield thing, but it turns out that...

Charles E. Beggs 28:01

George Atiyeh?

James Moore 28:02

Yeah, Georgia Atiyeh was...

Charles E. Beggs 28:04

It was a nephew?

James Moore 28:05

Yeah, yeah. He's one of the twin brothers' sons, yeah. He really wanted Opal Creek preserved, and it turned out that much of the land in Opal Creek was owned by Vic's wife's family. [Beggs: Oh!] So it was all sorts of interesting things.

Charles E. Beggs 28:27

I don't remember that. I don't remember Hatfield being prominent in it, in the outcome of it.

James Moore 28:37

So in economic stuff, do you get a sense... I mean, the economy starts falling apart in '79, but the big crash comes in '80, and the huge crash comes in '82. [Beggs: Yeah.] Those kind of boom, interest rates go up, and then by '82, the timber industry looks like it's in free fall. Do you really get a sense of the Atiyeh administration in triage mode, the administration in we've got to invest in the future mode, or just looking at, you know, our budgets that we've got to cut... I mean, what do you remember about their reaction to just all that economic bad news, just one right after the other coming through there?

Charles E. Beggs 29:32

Well, as I say, I always thought Vic to be a steady and business-oriented, business-like operator. I don't remember a lot of triage, arm waving on the surface. Vic was very... schooled himself, very deliberately on the budget and paid a lot of attention first, where it could be a trend to solve part of the problem. And then his moderate side came in, and he said they couldn't go any further. And of course, he had a democratic legislator, so they couldn't go... he was pragmatic, but I guess his administration was all him that came up with a temporary surtax to help solve the problem. But there were three special sessions, and I didn't cover one or two of those. I was in Portland. One was a one day thing. Well, maybe that was later than... to repealing the unitary text. [Moore: Yeah, it's '84]. Yeah, that was '84.

James Moore 31:06

Yeah. But like in 1980, apparently there was a long session in, like January to February or March, and then there were two short sessions. [Beggs: Yeah...] That was very specific.

Charles E. Beggs 31:20

A 37 day one was the long one, yeah, as I recall. That was the angst over the budget cuts and the surtax, as I recall. But as far as investing in the future, Vic... that probably had a hiatus in his work on that during the height of the recession, but he was very committed to that, much more so than Straub or McCall. As far as trade missions and contacts with Asian... other markets, Silicon Valley stuff.

James Moore 32:07

So when he started doing those trade missions, I mean, in his first term he does maybe four of them, and in his second term he does 16 of them. You know, you talked about columnists taking him to task on that. But what was the general sense that you remember? Were people saying, "Wow, this is a good idea." Or were people saying, "Why is he gone so often?" Or how did people respond to that?

Charles E. Beggs 32:40

Oh, I think as an overall, the public thought it was fine for him to try to develop trade, because the economy was... we had to diversify. That was pretty plain to anybody that was studying what was going on, the causes of the recession. You know, Mike and Baker poked fun at him and stuff, and the other... there's always some of that. But then that didn't override, I don't think, the public sentiment about it. But Vic, you know, Vic went, he did what he thought needed to be done, and he didn't, I really think he said it, and I really think he didn't, more than a lot of politicians, didn't really pay attention to the reaction. I don't think he

really did. If he did, it didn't show it. I can say, I've never heard of him calling up a journalist or anybody else and chewing them out for something. Maybe... it may well have happened, but I'm not aware of it.

James Moore 33:53

Yeah. Apparently, that attitude drove Denny Miles nuts. [Moore laughs.]

Charles E. Beggs 34:00

Did it? Trying to get Victor...

James Moore 34:01

To take advantage of this stuff.

Charles E. Beggs 34:03

Well, Denny's a little more high strung than Vic was. Now, high strung is the word but... you know, reactive, I guess. [Moore: Yeah.] And maybe they were a good pair because of that, it happened too often, being overly reactive and probably been too good.

James Moore 34:29

So do you remember any scandal kinds of things? I mean Vic talks in -- he did an oral history in the early '90s with the Oregon Historical Society. And the main thing he talks about there is, he felt some people in the press were making a lot out of how much he was spending, like on the trips, or, you know, a couple of other things like that. Did any of that resonate with you, or was that...?

Charles E. Beggs 35:07

I don't remember there being very much of that. [Moore: Okay, okay.] At least in my memory, and I'm sure there were some stories written about it, you know, there always are. But, I mean, I guess Vic maybe was more sensitive, I suppose, to that because he felt he was on a good mission, or nitpicking. And that's what happens in politics a lot. But no, I don't... I mean, I guess in those days that would pass for a scandal. [Beggs laughs.] [Moore: Yeah, exactly.] I don't think it was a scandal. I wouldn't call it that.

James Moore 35:49

Yeah, that's striking how different the rules were. I interviewed Gary Wilhelms, and he resigned at some point, October or whatever, and the first of January, he was back as a lobbyist, because there weren't those kinds of, you know, year off. [Beggs: No restrictions, yeah.] Yeah. He said it was very interesting walking into the Democratic caucus saying, "Hi, I'm the guy with the checkbook from the phone company."

Charles E. Beggs 36:18

Yeah, right. Yeah. Gary was on the ethics commission with me for a while. Then he went back to work for the Republican caucus, doing something, I don't know what he did.

James Moore 36:36

So comparisons of Atiyeh with other governors. Is it a personality thing? Was there something about him being a moderate Republican as compared to other governors? Was it the times?

Charles E. Beggs 37:03

I guess, you mean, did the time shape my impression of him, or?

James Moore 37:06

Yeah, yeah. So, for instance, if you were to compare him and Kitzhaber, would the difference be between because they were different personalities, because of the time Vic was governor, versus the times that Kitzhaber was governor, would it be gregariousness? I mean...

Charles E. Beggs 37:29

I think it would be some of that, yeah, Kitzhaber went through a bunch of turmoil himself with the budget, of course, five special sessions that we had... maybe that helped me drive to retirement. [Both laugh.] I kept saying "I'm not going to be here in August anymore," but no, just contrasting those two, Vic was much more open and approachable than Kitzhaber to the press. I think maybe they were both behind the scenes players, for sure, and Kitzhaber is not necessarily a publicity hog either, but he was more of a loner. He worked behind the scenes well, but with the press and public. I think he was... searching for the words, but more aloof more of an enigma, I think, in a way, than Vic. If you covered Vic for a while, you know, a year or two, what you saw as what you had. And I think he probably acted behind the scenes the same way he did talking to... in the press room or anywhere else, the lunch room. We used to go down to the lunchroom, and he'd come down and eat in the lunchroom frequently. Kitzhaber never did that. Kitzhaber didn't like the press that much. And that, I don't hold that against in particular. A lot of politicians don't. But I think Vic was suited for the times, in the sense that he had a deep knowledge of state government and a deep resource in the legislature, because he'd served there quite a while, and the combination helped him steer things through, where another governor that been thrown into that probably would have had a more difficult, quite a bit more difficult time.

James Moore 39:53

How about comparing Atiyeh and Goldschmidt? I mean, for Vic, there was a real sharp difference. When he came in, when Vic came in, he kept basically most of the Straub staff. Straub had left him a, you know, here's how the governorship works. And so Atiyeh set that up for Goldschmidt, who came in and fired everybody and threw out the instructions. And, you know, so Vic saw it as a real sharp difference there.

Charles E. Beggs 40:33

Yeah, I think I read a Steve Duin column once that talked about... Vic never mentioned his successor's name, but he didn't say... [Moore: After 2002...] he didn't say good things about him either. Interestingly, I - - this is just a quick aside -- that when I was editor of the Emerald [unintelligible], Goldschmidt's brother was the student body president, so... [Moore: The guy who worked for the school store?] Steve Goldschmidt. [Moore: Yeah.] I got to be pretty good friends with Steve. So I went to Neil's wedding as a matter of fact. That's a long, long time ago, so... I reflect on that way. And Neil was a showboater. He's very bright and he's very politically deaf, but he was a showboater, he wanted credit. He wanted, you know, he was a bold mover. And I guess the bold moves like you talked about were getting rid of all the staff, bringing his own in, which is sort of, I mean, Kate Brown didn't do that so far. So I don't know how well Neil worked with the legislature. I think they were... I think he worked probably fine with Portland Democrats, but I don't think he had the same background skills that Vic did with the legislature overall. And Neil, at least on the surface, was more of a visionary, but he also wanted the credit for it and wanted to make a splash. Vic was a visionary in a lot of ways, but he didn't care about splashes. He didn't need publicity. I mean, he needed publicity, of course, and a politician does, but he didn't need adulation, and I guess maybe Neil did. Anyway, Neil was closer to it, needing it.

James Moore 42:57

Yeah, it fits in well with the anecdote about taking Tom McCall down to get rid of the "Welcome to Oregon" sign, "Thanks for visiting," at the California border. Yeah. And Vic's first idea was to blow up the sign. [Beggs: I remember that.] And they actually went to Denny and said, "Denny, you have to talk him out of this." And he got, you know, it didn't get blown up, but they took Tom in, and McCall just reveled in it. [Beggs: Oh, sure.] And Vic was just kind of standing on the side saying, you know, "Great." You know, this is one of his last times he's gonna be able to do this.

Charles E. Beggs 43:42

Yep. You know, McCall accomplished a lot, of course, and has a great legacy, but he also was a showman. I mean, he came out of TV, and he was great for the press, because he was sort of one of us. He'd come down to the press room and put down as much as Vic did. That's why I told Vic, when I give him that plaque, that I think he was even maybe more accessible. But Tom was a showboater, and he got things done because of it, but he still was... he loved the limelight. And I'm surprised that I remember that now, that anecdote, and that's blowing things up, is not how I think of Vic, that kind of attention, but I guess, because he wanted more business and trade for the state, you know, to remove barriers like that.

James Moore 44:38

But one of the, also the residences at that point was the Paul Linman footage of the whale on the Oregon coast was fairly recent. [Beggs: Oh, okay.] And we didn't want to go there. [Moore laughs.]

Charles E. Beggs 44:51

Okay. God, I was working in the 18th bureau in Portland that Sunday when they washed up. Tried to get pictures out of there... anyway, that brings back memories. Yeah, blowing up the whale, that didn't work so well for some people. [Moore: No.] It blubbered on that car. [Both laugh.]

James Moore 45:09

Exactly. Big dents in your car caused by...

Charles E. Beggs 45:12

I think I'd be careful, blowing things up.

James Moore 45:15

Yeah. So, when you think back on Atiyeh as governor and then ex-governor. How would you describe him? Just a few words.

Charles E. Beggs 45:28

In both contexts? [Moore: Yeah, yeah.] Humble. Humble, I'm assuming. Personable. Loyal, like I mentioned, loyal to his party, even though his party was running to different directions, but he still wanted to serve and try to contribute. He was honest, of course, you know, I think of Boy Scouts, but some other groups he was involved with and kept participating in, I think, after he retired. I don't know what he did at Pacific University. He was on the board.

James Moore 46:28

He was on the board. It's the main thing, yeah, I found out the reason he donated his archives to us is because when he started, from 1959 until the '72 election, he was... it was multiple member districts. [Beggs: Right, okay.] And so Pacific was part of his district. Because it was [unintelligible] Pacific. I mean, great, so you're on the board, but I don't get it. But it turns out, that's the reason.

Charles E. Beggs 46:56

That's right, multi-member districts, the '72, that changed. [Moore: Yeah.] Yeah, that changed a lot. Just sticks to the legislature. Those are the words that come to mind. That's how it was, I guess, cliché, but he was a genuine gentleman in his demeanor, his approach, and you know he was the kind of politician, if you ran into a reporter, like me, if you ran into him in the halls of the Capitol, wanted to talk with him. He'd walk down the hall with you and talk, and some of them will have a notebook in their hand, and then you'd be

running somewhere else. You know, they're too busy. But he was never like that. He'd always listen. But I'd give him a lot of answers, but he'd always listen to them. Discuss things. But so he came across as, I think, a gentle, laid back man, but he was tough underneath, he was firm in his beliefs. Played football. You know, he got a bid from the pros. Yeah, he was solid I guess I'd call him also. He was real solid in his beliefs and his behavior.

James Moore 48:39
Great. So, anything else to add?

Charles E. Beggs 48:43
I don't think so. [Moore: Okay.] You might have drained my reservoir... [Moore: That's okay!] at least for the moment. You know, that's...

James Moore 48:53
Yeah, if you look through clippings, or, you know, something comes to you, just let me know.

Charles E. Beggs 48:56
Yeah, I'd let you know. Do you have an email address?

James Moore 48:59
Yeah, I'll give you a card.

Charles E. Beggs 49:01
Yeah, I... that's a long time ago, you know, some of that stuff. 30 years ago. [Moore: In so many ways...] And longer than that when Vic started. '59, did you say that's the year...?

James Moore 49:14
'58 he was elected, '59 he started.

Charles E. Beggs 49:15
I was still in high school.

James Moore 49:17
Yeah. I was born. [Beggs: Yeah.] Yeah, it'd be so great if this was 15 years ago, and apparently there was an aborted attempt to do a biography that didn't work out. [Beggs: Was there?] And so about a year ago, Vic sent me an email from the person who'd been doing the biography, and it didn't work out. But she listed the people that she had interviewed, most of whom, when I talked to them, have never heard of her, so... [Beggs: Oh, really?] we don't know what actually happened, but Vic had gone through and written "D" for dead and "F" for frail. And so when I started doing this, I started with the F's. Do the F's.

Charles E. Beggs 50:00
Well, that makes sense.

James Moore 50:01
And you know, between the time just of his memorial service last September and when I was able to get into this, two of them had already died. [Beggs: Oh, really?] Dave Frohnmayer was literally yesterday. I was

going to call Dave Frohnmayer, [Beggs: Were you?] and he wasn't on the "F" list.

Charles E. Beggs 50:17

Dave would have been a great resource. [Moore: Yeah.] Yeah, well, I don't think anybody knew of his illness, apparently, hardly anybody.

James Moore 50:23

No, but apparently there were two assistant attorney generals, who were in most of the meetings on the Rajneeshees and things. So I'm hoping I'll be able to get them in...

Charles E. Beggs 50:35

Who were they?

James Moore 50:36

I can't remember.

Charles E. Beggs 50:37

It's too bad about Dave. Great resource. Have you talked to Norma Paulus at all?

James Moore 50:46

Um... Norma's memory is going. [Beggs: Yeah, okay.] And so I've talked to the people in her family.

Charles E. Beggs 50:54

I heard she had a mild stroke, but I don't know if that's true or not.

James Moore 50:57

Well, it's not clear if it's dementia or if it's a mild stroke, but whatever it is...

Charles E. Beggs 51:03

Yeah, okay. She came to mind because she was close to Frohnmayer, politically. They did a lot of stuff together. They got the open meeting law passed, I think, together, and things like that. But yeah, Norma was appointed to the ethics commission when I was on it. I was chairman actually then, and she served one meeting and resigned. [Moore: Huh.] And I heard that she'd had some kind of a mental stroke or some kind of... [Moore: Oh, so this is...] medical problem. [Moore: Yeah.] It's been a couple years ago. Two or three years ago. Anyway, I haven't heard of her or seen her since.

James Moore 51:39

Yeah. When I talked to Phil Keasling, who actually recommended that Norma's long term memory is actually pretty good. So, but I've got to figure that out.

Charles E. Beggs 51:54

Yeah, she comes to mind probably as Dave's closest political ally in the house, as I recall. They're, you know, similar personalities, and so she would have had things to say about Vic, but I don't know what kind of conditions he's in either. I'm very fortunate that I'm not in the F category. Getting old, but not [unintelligible.] [Both laugh.]

James Moore 52:18

Yeah. And I have, as I go further, I have more questions about the Atiyeh family and Vic's older brother, who's now 93, but he's off in the desert for the winter. So it's like, please make it back. Please make it back. [Moore laughs.]

Charles E. Beggs 52:37

How's his wife doing?

James Moore 52:39

Not well. She also has dementia. And she... the same day that Vic fell, she had...

Charles E. Beggs 52:48

The hip thing, [Moore: Yeah.] That... yeah. Got relatives and people that age when the hips break, it's downhill.

James Moore 52:57

Yeah. And so there was a long time, I think they have her in a place right now that they're all happy with, [Beggs: Yeah.] but rehab places and, you know, just stuff that... I've dealt with this with my family too. [Beggs: Sure, I know.] Boy, there's a kind of a grim world out there.

Charles E. Beggs 53:13

I know. I had a sister that broke her hip, and she was 92, half sister. She didn't live very long, [Moore: Yeah.] but I just wondered if his wife's a resource for you...

James Moore 53:26

No. She's totally out of it. [A long pause.] Well, great! Well, thank you very much!

Charles E. Beggs 53:34

Well, sure, I hope maybe I added something.

James Moore 53:37

Yeah. No, this is good.

Charles E. Beggs 53:38

Maybe I'll... one sentence in the book...