

Mike and Jill Thorne interview on Atiyeh

An interview of Michael Glenn Thorne and his wife, Jill Thorne, regarding Oregon's Governor Victor Atiyeh. This interview was recorded on June 23, 2015. The Thornes had known Atiyeh through several government roles. Mike Thorne served as a Democrat in the Oregon State Senate from 1973-1991, and later as the Director of the Port of Portland from 1991-2001. Jill Thorne worked as her husband's campaign manager and later, was on the staff of Gov. Neil Goldschmidt, who succeeded Atiyeh. The interviewer, James Moore, was as professor of political science at Pacific University and was Atiyeh's biographer.

The interview includes discussion of: the leadership styles of former Oregon governors Vic Atiyeh and Neil Goldschmidt; how Atiyeh, known for his accessibility and bipartisan approach, appointed Mike Thorne to various state commissions and was praised for his management during economic challenges; how Goldschmidt, in contrast, was seen as more impatient and focused on economic development through regional strategies and tourism; the impact of the lottery on economic development; the challenges of defining economic development; the influence of The Oregonian newspaper; the political and personal dynamics of Oregon's past and present, comparing figures such as Vic Atiyeh, Barbara Roberts, and Gordon Smith; Atiyeh's concerns about the Rajneesh crisis and his illness before his last session; Gov. Barbara Roberts' realization of her role as a successor to Atiyeh; the media's role in politics; the impact of legislative decisions; Atiyeh's extensive travel relating to international trade; Gordon Smith's political rise; Ron Wyden's bipartisan efforts; and personal reflections on rural Oregon's challenges.

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.]

Mike Thorne 00:00

Okay, and you drove up this morning. Yeah, just drove in right now. [Jill Thorne, speaking away from the microphone: You're sitting right there?] Well, wherever it's convenient,

James Moore 00:09

sitting right there is fine, and I'll sit over here, okay? And I have this because I think Vic is talking about you for something, and I need to verify at some point here.

Jill Thorne 00:22

Vic and I had a great relationship.

James Moore 00:25

That's great. Did you work directly for him? [Jill: No.] Or did you-- because--

Jill Thorne 00:31

I worked directly for Neil Goldschmidt for four years. With Victor, he, well, of course, we knew each other a long time while they [Victor Atiyeh and Mike Thorne] were in the Senate together. Dolores [Atiyeh] and I antiques together. We'd take off on all day jaunts. I'd drive and she'd bring the fancy lunch. And we antiques together, the four of us at the fairgrounds all the time, you know when it was there. And so he is the first one that brought me into state government in commission positions. Okay, so he appointed me to the Fair Dismissal Appeals Board, and then moved me from there to the Liquor Commission. Okay, so I was a liquor Commissioner for five years.

James Moore 01:14

When did he put you on the Fair Dismissal Board? Was it early in his term?

Jill Thorne 01:18

It would have been 79 or 80 because I think I went on the liquor commission in 81

James Moore 01:23

Okay, Denny Miles tells about finally -- you know, he's hot stuff -- He's working for the governor. His father, for the first time, finally respects him. And lo and behold, he gets a phone call very early on 79 from a reporter saying, So tell me about the head of the fair that got fired, and Denny has no clue in the world what this guy is talking about. He gives a very flippant answer, and he hangs up the phone, and five minutes later, calls back and says, What do I need to do? So you won't publish that and I can keep my job? [Laughing.]

Jill Thorne 02:10

Learning the ropes. Yeah, no. We had lots of great fun with him. I was reminding Mike of this trunk, and we actually found it. They were out antiquing. We'd pick them up at their house, and it was then it was before Mahoney Hall. So we picked him up, we went out, and I found this trunk. Well, I think we were living in, I don't know if it was a special session, and we were living in a hotel room or something. And so they stored the trunk for a long time. I refinished it. And so when I was able to come down in a pickup truck to bring it back, they said, gee, we sure like to keep that trunk. He said, Sorry. It's coming with us. It's coming with us. [Mike: That trunk's old.] So what was the quote that was,

James Moore 03:01

well, let me play it for you. Let me play it for you. Okay, turn this on. Make sure everything's talking to each other here. So this is Victor in March a year ago.

Victor Atiyeh 03:16

[Recording being played back by James Moore of an earlier interview with Victor Atiyeh.] I -- you wouldn't know her, but her husband is a senator. I know him very well. He was a very well known, nice guy. I like him. She went to work for my successor [i.e. Gov. Goldschmidt]. A few months after I saw her, she said, "this job is tougher than you made it look." That's a particularly... [recording playback ends].

James Moore 03:52

That's a very telling and wonderful ... But did you say that?

Jill Thorne 03:54

[Jill apparently nods]

James Moore 03:55

Okay, that's all the verification I need. That may become the title of the book. It's just, it just sums up what so many people say about Vic, that he was so engaged, he was so accessible. And I know talking, I've interviewed both Barbara [Roberts] and Ted [Kulongowski], and they say basically the same thing, you know, getting in there, they tried to do what Vic did with weekly staff meetings and stuff. And it's like... And partly, it's the times have changed. But you know, I know with, with Neil [Goldschmidt] -- and I want to talk to you about Neil. I know with Neil ... You know, he came in with, he was sure about things, and doing things, and... But he didn't have experience with that kind of state government. He was the mayor of a city, you know, he was a secretary, he just wasn't a Salem person, right?

Jill Thorne 04:55

Right, yeah, right. No, I can remember he set that "100 day agenda." And Vera Katz -- This was Neil. Vera Katz said afterwards, he just didn't understand the process, and you don't do it in 100 days in Salem. but he was a fast learner also,

James Moore 05:15

oh yeah, yeah. I'm discovering some people found him so frustrating because they couldn't get access like they'd gotten access to Vic. But I talked to John Yunker yesterday: budgets; Dan Simmons, who said he's been out here, actually; and those guys, you know, the top of the bureaucracy, they said they had access to him whenever they needed and so it's just an interesting...

Mike Thorne 05:42

Different style, a little different style, probably.

James Moore 05:45

Yeah, absolutely. So tell me about Vic Atiyeh from from your point of view. When were you elected?

Mike Thorne 05:58

I was elected as a state senator in 1972 so the first session would have been the 73 session, right? And you know, [I was] fairly young, this young, youngster from Eastern Oregon...

James Moore 06:17

I've already talked to Earl Blumenauer, who was 23, so. [Laughs.]

Mike Thorne 06:22

So, yeah, elected in 73 and actually went to Salem not knowing anybody or anything, and yet thought I knew a lot. Yeah, I think that's what happens to a lot of people that are first elected. And actually was appointed after the Senate organized to chair a committee, and that was seen as, my goodness, this freshman senator given a committee, and... It's interesting thinking about Vic Atiyeh and thinking about the interface with, and on a fast learning curve, to get to know the process and the people. It became apparent to me, and maybe this is the advantage of going in without a lot of preconceived notions, a lot of experience, that if you're going to be able to provide any kind of leadership, you certainly needed to be bipartisan. And that was a, you know, I look at the situation today compared to then, and my analysis, or my reaction is, it's become much more partisan. When I was first elected, at a committee and I assigned Republicans and Democrats various roles in the committee... And a lot of that was, I think, a byproduct of people like Vic Atiyeh, you know, he was a leader in in the Republican Party in the Senate and that was encouraged, you know, the bipartisanship was encouraged.

But, you know, from there, you know, I became, you know, very, very, very cognizant of of Vic's style, and it maybe fit in somewhat to my approach. And that is, he was always, you know, willing to listen and understand. He was not a dominant type of a leader, but he certainly was-- knew how to lead. And for an example you had mentioned here just a few minutes ago, his style as governor and his regular meetings, well, to me, that symbolizes a leader that depends upon top people running various agencies or a department. And you constantly need to be in touch with them, and you constantly need to be making sure that everybody knows what's going on. Contrast that with styles of most recent governors. While we have a new governor now, but dropping back to say like a Kitzhaber: there was a migration away from that style to a type of management that you would have, within the governor's office, a staff person who was in charge of, say, natural resources, or a staff person in charge of corrections or education or whatever. So you build up a situation where you almost had a staff person that was giving direction to a person that was running an agency. Vic's style, as the Chief Executive Officer, if you will, role, if you can use that example, whereby the people that were in charge of making the daily decisions in an agency were reporting to the leader, and he could give direction. And I, I particularly like that approach, as opposed to another layer of of people who who give direction. I mean, it seems to me the governor should give direction to the people in charge of the agencies. Why would you hire them if you didn't respect their leadership? I like that style of leadership. I learned that early on in watching Vic Atiyeh and you know, as Jill has pointed out, we respected them so much. They're just great people.

James Moore 10:58

Yeah, absolutely. In the Senate, did you have direct dealings with him? I mean, in 73 things are going well. But then all of a sudden, his, he's the leader of a caucus that...

Jill Thorne 11:14

they met in the ... phone booth!

James Moore 11:15

Yeah -- Wally Carson, with glee, showed me his poster size picture of the phone booth [Moore is referring to a photograph of Vic Atiyeh with a group of other freshman legislators, stuffed into a phone booth], and then when they were seven, Vic actually had made little gold Roman numeral seven pins. So there's only seven of them in the world. I've seen three of them so far. But did you interact with him as that happened?

Mike Thorne 11:37

Let's put it this way, I never discontinued and then we say this, right? We always continued to react, get along it, you know. And I saw, and I would say it today, I think the best government comes out of a situation when the parties are, you know, when the when the when the members of each party are, are very, balanced. You know, there's a in the Senate, a 1416, 1614, split is much better than us. You know, a 30, you know, at 2010, or something like that. So, but I think, you know, it's hard to recall everything, but I think back when there was just seven there was pressure on them. You could feel that there was this sort of, well, why does it matter? You know, we're not going to do anything anyway. But I never really, I never really felt like I paid a lot of attention to that. And I think the major reason was the area that I represented, Eastern Oregon, rural Oregon. You know, it's a, it was a, is still tries to be. It was then clearly a Resource Based Economy and a natural resource based economy, Vic understood that very well. Bob Smith was in the State Senate from Burns, and, you know, there was about four of us that basically had, you know, the all of Eastern Oregon. And so we, while the numbers, I was a Democrat, well, our numbers were higher. I don't think I ever really took great stock in that from the perspective of what I needed to do for the constituents I represented.

James Moore 13:27

So the geography and the resources becomes the more important.

Mike Thorne 13:31

That was always the case. That was always the case, and you hear it today, you know, rural Oregon versus, you know, Metropolitan Oregon. I think it's become more strident today.

Jill Thorne 13:47

With Vic, in '73 was he on the committee that dealt with Senate Bill 100?

Mike Thorne 13:54

I actually was on his committee, an education committee. He was not on the committee to deal with Senate Bill 100 but he was, he chaired the, he chaired the Education Committee, and there was Senate Bill one and two, which was a byproduct of an interim report. I never forget that and and, you know, he worked diligently trying to get that passed. I don't believe much came of it, as I recall. But

James Moore 14:21

that was, I think, with Senate Bill 100 I think in maybe '75 he was on the committee that dealt with, what do you do for implementation? That's right, he was somebody I talked to vividly remembered what was actually McCall came in something done. So the chair of the committee said, Well, let me explain to you why we can't get it done now. He said, I moved with us to the floor, and they went through a TM, no, yeah, and it was, it was split. He clearly couldn't move on the committee. At that point, someone called yeah

Mike Thorne 14:53

Yeah, no, that, as we have later found, with 100: the Devil's always in the details. It was an idea, and I actually supported 100. I was supporting it from the perspective of, I thought it was a way of, sort of protecting the integrity of farmland and range land. You know, I was coming from that perspective, as we've since learned, and over time, as court cases and it's evolved, it's become a very burdensome issue for certain development and in fact, many rural communities lack the resources back in the very beginning stages to properly set out zones and boundaries. And now there's can't do much, because they put a boundary in place back in '73, or four or five, whatever that really constrains what they can do today. And there's been follow up efforts to try to modify that, but, but anyway, Vic was not on the original Committee.

James Moore 16:08

He also supported it, but, you know, he fundamentally, he wanted to know all the facts, but that didn't mean it was going to move him, yeah, but he even he supported it, and he supported the idea, yeah, when you were going to their house in the West Hills, the Beaverton Hillsdale highway right down there, their family farm is where there's now a Fred Meyer. And so the boys had grown up there forever. And then the boys, you know, live all within half a mile each other, but they watched that little two lane country road turned into a five lane highway. Just said that can't be so he supported the support of the idea as well, right? Just watching, yeah, the people who were in the Senate at that time, in the Republican

side, talk about being effective in committees. And then Wally Carson was funny when they had six, he said Jason Bowe assigned them to so many committees, Wally had one free hour a week, and his wife was sitting much like you, and because she was his staff, and she said, Oh, horrible. But did you see that effectiveness in committees with them?

Mike Thorne 17:33

Yeah, I thought, notwithstanding the numbers, you know. Tony Meeker, yeah, very, very effective. I worked with Tony, very close with good friends. You know, Hector McPherson was a, you know, a name that was George wengard. I, you know Molly Carson, you know Bob Stan out of Kirk, you know, they must have been effective. I can still remember the names, yeah, no, they were all. They were all very active in trying to represent their the interests of their constituency. Yeah. And, you know, some credit, no doubt, has to go to their leader at the time. Too big, Tia. But now the first committee I chaired out of Kirk, and maker were on it, and Tony took over drafting a pesticide registration deal, and Stan took over some guidance on commercial fishery in the fishery, and, you know, we developed, you know, because they had expertise, I didn't know anything about that really, and so we turned to them right off the start. Yeah, maybe some of the Democrats might have asked, why'd you do that? Well, we needed smart people trying to help figure this stuff out. Yeah, absolutely.

James Moore 19:01

Did you do any work on or, you know, cheering on the sidelines for the 1974 gubernatorial campaign, Straub? Or Atiyeh?

Mike Thorne 19:13

you know, I'm trying to remember, I don't think we were very we were very active. I mean, I wasn't out supporting openly Atiyeh, for sure, and I don't remember, [Jill: except I think we did take him to the Joseph Rodeo...], yeah, I think when they were here, we, we,

Jill Thorne 19:38

They stayed in this home, but I don't know if it was in 74. But we were not actively campaigning for Straub either. And you can get away with that being a Democrat in Eastern Oregon. Oh, yeah, absolutely,

James Moore 19:52

Oh, yeah, absolutely, yeah. And the Straub people knew that too, so yeah. Yeah, in 78 were you playing a role there as, I mean, that's just a fascinating on the Republican side, you know, Roger Martin and Vic and then McCall gets in. And someone described it really wonderfully. You know, as McCall was leaving office, there was already the full grown myth of McCall, and he found out that even McCall couldn't major up to it in 1978 there's that. And then, and then we go into the general where the this the last time a sitting governor has been beaten. Yeah, yeah.

Mike Thorne 20:33

Well, I think by that time, you know, but McCall was governor when I was first elected, and, you know, I, you know, contrasting a McCall with Roger Martin and with Vic Atiyeh: Vic clearly, in my mind, had a Better style-- a more I thought I related better to his style of leadership. Tom McCall was flamboyant. He was, you know, an idea person. He had, you know, he was surrounded by some good people, you know, that's part of what I think. In fact, we were laughing about the time the whale got washed upon the beach, and McCall's people went down with dynamite to blast it off, and blew whale all over the country... [Laughs; they are referring to a famous incident a whale in Florence, OR in 1970.]

James Moore 21:44

which, just so you know, had resonance when Victor wanted to go blow up the sign at the California border. The whale was still fresh in people's memories, as well as, I don't know if you know, there's a story down there. The [De Autremont?] brothers held up a train down in the tunnel there, blew it up. So there would have been, you know, they were afraid of sign like the whale with all the television when the -- Lee, the Chief of Staff, who eventually left, that's the first time he said he had to use Denny [Miles, Atiyeh's press secretary], "Denny, your friend: talk him out of this!"

Mike Thorne 22:16

But when, when you know when they would come this way. I think probably we tended to see more Vic Atiyeh during

that campaign, yeah, running and, yeah, you know, if they came to, came to town or in the area, we certainly would try to, you know, identify things. We're going to show them, introduce them whatever. You know, this notion because they happen to be another party or something you should ignore them, is nonsense. How else? And I can relate to some things that Vic Atiyeh did when he was a governor that had me, you know, had we been sort of standoffish, posture wouldn't have happened. You know, I recall later on when there's now the Eastern Oregon Correctional Facility. At one time, it was a mental hospital, Mr. DD facility, and there had been pressure to close that for years, and the activists wanted to close it and obviously it had a big impact on the community and and I could see, we could see, sort of the handwriting on the wall. It looked to me like eventually it was going to get downsized, and the trend to put people out on the street and normalize, which now is probably the source of a lot of homelessness, and you can look at the after effects, but at the time, it uh, Governor Atiyeh then, actually, at our request for some help, by executive order, created a task force that we participated with that come up with a interim strategy that that that actually put a smaller facility in place that served the needs of Eastern Oregon 13 counties for many years thereafter. And you know, that was because we tried to, you know, whenever an official come, we tried to talk about what's going on here. Yeah, and, and he was very responsive to that. It fit his style of management, right to the T and so, you know, I credit him with providing some answers at a time when, you know, the activists were stridently in. One was camp and yeah, and the defenders of the status quo and the other. And you know, what happened to the folks you're trying to take care of, you know, turn them out, put them on the street, whatever downside, no, because facilities to accommodate that, as was the case in our example of Senate Bill 100 the resources to do the right zoning right weren't provided in this case, if you're going to normalize or create home, where's the homes? If. Put him in. No, we don't have the money for that, but we're going to close down. Well, vicodia was very good at seeing through that kind of stuff, and give him great, you know, credit for so much of his management style was, understand the issue, understand the problem, try to do the right thing and and that, as much as you know, he was as good as at that, as anyone that's been governor

James Moore 25:29

I just, a couple of weeks ago-- I grew up in Medford, and my dad was at a 100th birthday of a former mayor of Medford, cutting Lou Han, not Len Hannon, but. And Vic was down there in, I think, 1981 and he gave a speech. This is right when they're putting in the DEQ testing stations. So they got him there, medfords got the worst air anywhere. And Vic gave a speech that I hope I can find the original love that really not very well considered it's in it he said things like, If I lived here, I wouldn't put up with this stuff. And Lou Han, who was on the city council that wrote him a letter taking him to task and laid out what was going on and this stuff, which led Vic to a conversation. And Vic got this guy together with the head of the DEQ and Vic backed this guy up. The DEQ wanted to do kind of a wacky experiment, but it's Vic, wow. If I'm wrong, tell me, let's get the facts. Let's get this out here. And so it's really great. And this guy, he's blind now each 100 Geez Louise, but his daughter went and found all the original letters. It's exactly that kind of thing. Yeah,

Mike Thorne 26:50

yeah, no, it was very, very his style of leadership is, you know, is unique in a political position.

Jill Thorne 27:01

No ego.

James Moore 27:02

Yeah, which drove Denny nuts. Yeah, you have to take credit for these things, but you do what you do, right?

Mike Thorne 27:14

The conversation we had last night. What'd you ask? Who's gonna write my memoirs? That's the last on my list. [Laughing.]

James Moore 27:29

There you go. Well, this is great because Vic asked me,

Speaker 1 27:35

So did he? Yeah, that's definitely going to ask you how you became involved in that?

James Moore 27:41

Over the past four years, has been giving all his stuff to Pacific, so we've got the archive, and I was along for the first probably half dozen meetings, because they would Vic, unlike most archives, you pack everything up in boxes and send it over. Vic, you would go to his office and he'd give you a box, which is fun, because then you tell stories about what the box. And so I went over for the first probably six times six box, and they recorded stuff as I asked questions and probe and but after we had a big opening of the archive in October of 2013

Jill Thorne 28:17

we were not able to attend.

James Moore 28:20

Yeah, it was, it was, it was great. And about a week and a half later, we went over to just kind of debrief and tell them things. And that's when he asked

Speaker 1 28:30

me [to write his biography], so wonderful, yeah, are you enjoying it? It's,

James Moore 28:34

it's a blast. It's a blast. My professional life is kind of half international stuff and half American stuff. And so with all his Taiwans and Syria's and things, it's great. Well,

Speaker 1 28:48

I laughed when I went to work for Neil and had such a great relationship with Victor. It is the first time, probably, that a Lebanese leader was followed by a Jewish leader in the Civil War.

James Moore 29:01

exactly. And I actually have a picture from 1983 at the National Republicans conference. John Sununu from New Hampshire is the second Arab American. And then Sununu goes and he's the Chief of Staff for Bush and stuff like that big, big deal. But I've got a picture of them together, and I won. I would love to know if they even talked about it, because in for the political side, Vic's era of American identity was never a part of it at all.

Jill Thorne 29:33

No, and he was upfront about it too. He would tell people it wasn't hiding it at all.

James Moore 29:38

Yeah, it wasn't hiding but it was just never an issue. Denny never pulled for it in the campaigns. Nothing interesting.

Jill Thorne 29:51

I have a question. Yes, I wanted to follow up on that too. Has anyone talked to you very much about the Oregon Trail study that he had. Done commission. No go. Okay, so that was my other connection with him, but I didn't know it was going to work out that way. But I after I left state government when Neil didn't run again, Steve Corey, who lives here in Pendleton, asked me to chair the statewide Sesquicentennial of the Oregon Trail. Well, it was all started by Vic. He commissioned a study, and then a plan was developed so he saw the sesquicentennial coming in 93 probably eight years before, yeah, and his love of history and his love of Oregon, and what it what the Oregon Trail meant to Oregon. Well, he had, Steve chaired the committee that did this study. And so I have not, I have the I was looking for the plan, and I think I loaned it out when they did the Oregon, the Oregon Sesquicentennial of statehood, because they were trying to figure out what kind of a statewide celebration they were going to have, and they wanted my book. But if that hadn't been commissioned way ahead by Vic, it, we wouldn't have had very much going on in 1993 so that was another thing where he just he loved the whole state and wanted it all tied together and and it had the research done, so then they could present it and have someone then carry it out. So there was a commission appointed, you know, there was a non, we set it up as a nonprofit, but the roots were with Vic.

James Moore 31:32

That's wonderful. Yeah. It's, you know, the whole, his whole love of history has such a big impact on his life in the

antiquing kind of stuff. His brothers didn't do that, and his older, one of his twin brothers is still alive, so I've talked to Ed several times. The collecting of guns did not, yeah, but it was the history. That's the history. Was what it was all about. And it's really cool to shoot muzzle loaders and stuff. But it's, you know, just so many things like that, that love of history turned into something

Jill Thorne 32:06
that benefited,

Mike Thorne 32:07
yeah, his connection with the Native American community, again, it's huge,

Jill Thorne 32:13
particularly the Warm Springs, yeah? But, I mean, with all the tribes,

James Moore 32:18
yeah, do you know how that started

Jill Thorne 32:22
fishing. I think fishing is

James Moore 32:24
part of it. I mean, he prided himself on, in fact, we have it in the archive now. He had a lifetime fishing pass book in Warm Springs. He also, in fact, at the same time when, when he asked me to write the book he was showing us his fishing licenses from when he was governor. When you're governor, your fishing license, fishing licenses, 00001, 1987 whatever it is, 3292 that's how you tell suddenly, no one cares. Suddenly no one cares. The I got an interesting lead on this, because in about 73 there's a creation of the legislative Indian commission, yeah, okay, and Vic was the one who was, it's his bill, okay,

Mike Thorne 33:15
I remember it passing. I didn't connect it, but that,

James Moore 33:19
yeah, and so that's great. That advances me from, you know, that gets me another 10 years from where I was before. And there's a hypothesis that it was through Sam Johnson. Okay, because Sam Johnson is, I was at, if you've been to Roger Martin's old timers gatherings, yeah, they just hit one. Yeah, I was there. And so, you know people saying, Yeah, Sam Johnson saved his bacon. I get the federal government to buy his bill. But if that's the case, then that takes because Vic and Sam were doing a lot of things together. Yes, that may get me back to 67 okay, this will have to talk to Etsy and see if she returns anything about it. Maybe Bob Smith would know. I've talked to Bob, and he's not. He's really good on things that really still tick him off, but he's not these, these interviews usually last kind of an hour to an hour to an hour and a half, and I was done with him in 25 minutes. Yeah, yeah. The things that take him off, still, the kicker, my god, that was the best thing in the world, because it kept government spending money, and then the Balanced Budget Amendment in the Congress, because that was his, his name was on that. He still ticked off, but yeah, he's beyond those kinds of memories. Tony Meeker, I haven't talked to him yet. Haven't talked to him yet. So many people knew Vic in you knew this part or this part or this part. Yeah. So finding the one that might know the Native American

Jill Thorne 35:04
is maybe the Native Americans would know,

James Moore 35:06
yeah, yeah. And I've got a couple of connections to try to get in there. So you know, as you know, that's a harder nut to crack. Yes, they've got to buy in you as well.

Mike Thorne 35:18
But there is an enormous regard for him, within that community, within neighboring and as Jill said, the Warm Springs

connection would be the place where I would think you could go first. Yeah, he had a good relationship

Jill Thorne 35:31

with Anton out here. But I don't remember the names of the ones that he was really close to at Warm Springs? Yeah,

James Moore 35:41

no, I have several names, and I've done some stuff with the tribe. So it turns out somebody I worked with, like, seven years ago is a key person. So we'll see what we can get out of that. But I think you're right. I mean, the basic thing is, they just love to go to the shoots and go fishing.

Jill Thorne 35:59

So, and he was really helpful with them and establishing that museum over there. Yeah,

James Moore 36:04

the museum, the thing that Ted Kulongwoski was saying, which he then saw, you know, in working when Ted was the attorney general, was the sovereign to sovereign means. Vic started that in about 82 and that's just elevated him in a big, big way. So Victor becomes governor. 78 comes in office in 79 that 79 session has been described as kind of the high point of Oregon budgets and kind of the end of that activist 70s period. In fact, Ted Kulongwoski and I were discussing that 70s period is when the legislature was truly a co equal part of the government. The last time we see the legislature really generating policy and moving things is probably kits Auburn's health plan in the 90s, early 90s, it's just a responsive place. Now it's not, it's not generating things, right? But 79 so you know, the money's coming in. Things are there, but California's Proposition 13 hanging over people's heads. There's been measures six and 10, the property tax measures on that 78 ballot. And then so everybody eventually goes home. We have a kick here. We give back millions and millions, hundreds of millions of dollars to taxpayers. And then Paul Volcker says we need higher interest rates after everybody's gone home. So what do you remember about the shift from Oregon being, you know, a place where the budgets are okay and we're doing fine, we gotta worry about this property tax thing, to all of a sudden we begin to hit a series of recessions, that peak with that 1982 well,

Mike Thorne 37:58

memories a little. That's

James Moore 37:59

fine. That's fine. So even as I was talking to Dick, I was saying victories, I wish you'd asked me 15 years ago.

Mike Thorne 38:07

You know, at a macro level, if you connect Oregon and the economic slide that you're referring to, it clearly ties into, in my mind, a Resource Based Economy. Then wood products was still critical to Oreos economy. Of course, the agriculture, but interest rates started to soar. And, you know, I recall as a farmer, some of the borrowing rates we had to pay for for money was just unbelievable, the pressures that created. So we hit a situation where the nature of our economy was exceedingly sensitive to high interest rates, and it basically put the brakes on the growth and expansion and the operation. I mean, if interest rates are through the roof, who's going to buy lumber to build a house, right? It's those kinds of connections that that I recall. And as a farmer, when interest rates were pushing up better than 15% pushing 20% in some cases, how can you how can you afford to borrow money to operate the farm, yeah? That kind of dynamic. And so, you know, high interest rates to a person that had a passbook savings account, that was gravy, yeah, yeah. But to us to an economy that is so resource based, oriented as we were, then high interest rates. Just, just put the brakes on. And, you know, I recall special session and 10% cuts, and another special session and another 10% cut. The one thing I do recall in all of that was Vic. Tia was probably the one person that should been in charge at that time, because he knew how to manage the adversity that we're going through, as well as anybody I think we've had. He was, he was very, very good at, again, this chief executive management style that I think he possessed at working through each of the agencies and working through the solutions. And, you know, it was, it was a tough time.

But Vic didn't go out on the street and cry and doom and people will be dying and, you know, that kind of stuff. Vic figured we had to find a way to manage through this. And I thought he did a, you know, as good a job as anyone can do post major five, if you recall some of the comments, by then, the governor, you know, this will put people on the streets,

and there will be people, I think, dying on the streets, or something, as I recall. Well, that wasn't Vic's style. Vic's style was, you know, take the situation. You've got work your way through it, do the best you can and so I give him, you know, kudos. I remember, of course, I was then working my way in through on the Ways and Means Committee and the budget stuff. And so we lived with that. You know, day in and day out. Never revenue forecast was worse than the previous one. It was tough times. But yeah, you know. And you know, you learn from those things. And I think Oregon learned the importance of beginning to diversify some of its economic base. You know, obviously the tech industry started to diversify some of that, particularly on the west side. Eastern Oregon still struggles today, relatively speaking. But you know, you learn from those situations. And I give Vic a lot of credit for trying to help manage the transition. I'll just continue here. I recall when I actually chaired Ways and Means Committee. One of his budgets called for some additional effort in the for the Economic Development Department was then called, and of course, I from this side, you know, wheat. You know, 85 90% of our production goes in some market internationally. You know, it's not concerned. I

James Moore 42:38

give talks around the city. Say you want to know who knows international relations. Let me introduce you to the east side farmers.

Mike Thorne 42:46

This is, this is our life blood. And so I had an opportunity working with then Governor Tia and his budget people to start an expansion of the state's interest in offices in Asia. And we got to office in Japan, and later, you know, expanded into Taiwan and, I think Korea and so on. You know Vic understands. You know Vic, although it wasn't specifically contained in his budget, in working with him, again, an example used about the person Medford working, yeah, yeah, yeah. With him, it became abundantly clear that this, this made an enormous amount of sense. And he became a champion of, of trying to expand trade and, you know, later on, you know, had the nickname, I think, Trader Nick, but

James Moore 43:38

I met a person who coined the phrase, yeah.

Mike Thorne 43:42

But, you know, the point I'm trying to make is, he was a, he was, he was a hands on kind of manager. He tried to understand the problems, and he, you know, in my mind, that was great leadership. There. There are governors who think we'll come up with this grandiose idea, and then that's leadership. Well, good ideas are important, but you better have taken enough time to figure out how the grand idea is going to become reality and what the implications are. And you know, you contrast leadership styles, and we've, you know, you know, you look at the theory of Senate Bill 100 it started with this grandiose, oh my goodness, we can't have this expansion and development and that sort of thing. And the devil obviously, is in the details. How do you work that through? Yeah, I've rambled a lot here, but we strayed from, you know, things were great and we had excess funds to a sudden change and, and you mentioned Paul Volcker, yes, when the Fed started changing the interest rate, Oregon was exceedingly sensitive to that kind of a dynamic. You know, we still saw four. Of what happened in the last economic recession when you know a state that depends upon the income tax for the bulk of its revenue is going to have cycles much more extreme than a state that has a more fixed base, like a sales tax or whatever, that's a given. And Oregonians continue to live in the world, I guess. You know, we're gonna stick with it. You're gonna stick with it. And that played into that, played into the economic challenges we had in the late 70s, early 80s, when interest rates drove businesses to shut down income taxes to the state went down. We compounded our problem

James Moore 45:46

as a result, yeah, on Ways and Means. Pat Amedeo tells of at some point, Vic said, Okay, nobody can go and testify about budget stuff, and vary from the numbers that I've given you. And she says you kept her in the chair once for seven or eight hours, and it was all, it was all on the closed circuit TV, so she knew the boss could look and see she was doing her job. Yeah. Well,

Mike Thorne 46:23

you know, I, I completely bought into and respected the fact that the governor's recommended budget was the document that you worked from. And there was nothing that would prevent the governor from coming back and revising the recommendation. I think some of the challenges that we were trying to work through, and this is what's difficult from

the Governor's side, very difficult you start putting your budget again and finalize it in September, before the legislature comes in in January, and then the legislature has a luxury of a couple of revenue forecasts, a March forecast, a May forecast, and the numbers change. And so now you've got a governor's recommended budget casts in a fairly strict order back, you know, six, eight months it starts, even it starts a year in advance, really. And then the legislature has the luxury of looking at changing numbers. And so then there's a temptation on the part of the legislature to start, you know, moving program and moving things and if, if you're going to stick by this, you know the script of the governor's recommended budget, and then you've got more revenue, or maybe you've got less, but usually it's more revenue when, then, when you start looking At making the changes. It puts a lot of pressure on the governor's office, particularly when they're standing there saying, this is our budget, this is the numbers we have, and we know that the numbers are different. So what do you do with what's in between? Right? That's a quandary that that you know that exists today. You know they've got more money, and so the legislature is in the process of spending more money. But I at the end, I felt the governor's approach. You have to hold the agencies accountable. That's his management style, and they come in to defend the governor's budget. And that's the way it should be. I think it's always been. And I know in the case I was using in market development, in international trade, it was, you know, while it was not originally totally scripted in the governor's budget, changing it on our part, was with his approvals, basically, yeah, you know, so and You know, feeling like I was torturing her. It's interesting. As time passes, I'll be the first to admit, I think, as a legislature, you over the years, you realize what you probably didn't know that you thought you knew when you first started. You know, at a young, 30 year old, I thought I had ever figured out. And you know, 15 years later, maybe it's not quite as easy it looks.

James Moore 49:47

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Did you ever go on any of those trade missions? I

Mike Thorne 49:54

actually did I later ran the port of. Portland. So I spent a bunch of time in that role, right, using those offices and using the ports connect with those offices and and I don't know how many, yeah, 1000s of miles I traveled doing that when Vic was governor. I don't recall going on any mission with him. Now, maybe my memory is hazy, and maybe there was one I don't recall. Did a lot of them. He did a ton of stuff. And remember, after he left office, he

James Moore 50:33

he did well. He went on the first one. Neil went on, yeah, and

Mike Thorne 50:36

he was on that one, and I was on that one. Okay, yes, okay. What I remember about that one as much as any we were in Taiwan, and there was a bunch of Oregon business representatives on the trip, and three or four people went out to jog, and they got lost, and they got back to the hotel, finally, in the middle of the afternoon. And the lesson you learn from that when you leave the hotel in a foreign country, in the street signs you don't understand, take a business card with you so you can give it to a taxi cab driver to get you back when it comes but

James Moore 51:16

yeah, Vic has a funny story from after he left the governorship and he's doing his consulting business. He was over talking to his friends in Japan. And during the day, unlike when he's governor, his schedule when he was governor was stunning. Yeah, he would be doing that. He'd have like, major things. He could easily have 20 major things. When he kind of he had like 67 things total in a day, just amazing. So when he's consulting, he's dinner, and golf are the key things, and then you do talks. And so across from his hotel, there was this really neat neighborhood in Tokyo. And so he spent three days during these kind of free afternoons, kind of wandering through there. And it was really, got some souvenirs, and just a great time, and at the dinner on the last night, he was telling people, yes, what I've been doing, they were appalled. It's a red light district. They said, Well, I wish you hadn't told me that no one came up and propositioned me. It's great story. Classic Vic. Let's talk going from Vic to Neil. Wonder, how long are you in the legislature? Are you in the legislature when Neil's in and then he appoints you

Mike Thorne 52:40

to the port. Well, actually, yeah, yes, and no, I was, I left the legislature in 91 okay, and went to the port. So deal. So Neil was still governor the port. Actually, the Commission actually selects the the executive director, not the governor, doesn't appoint now, I don't know if there was a conversation between the governor and right commission that I couldn't

even come close to answering. I don't know but, but

James Moore 53:13

when you watch Mr. Wyatt walk in, though, you sense that the governor is involved somehow,

Mike Thorne 53:19

I think that's become more, I think the port, very honestly, has become more politicized now than it was much more. And I think, and I'm not sure that's for the best, yeah, but that's my honest, candid take, that it's become much more politicized that that it was when I felt was there, this, the political pressures from the state of Oregon, governor's office, whatever, were far removed, right? And we were trying to understand the port's mission, the development of trade opportunities. And there were times when, clearly, you know, we had some issues with the governor's office on regulation, or whatever the case may be. Yeah, I don't know that that's quite that way today. Yeah,

James Moore 54:17

removed, yeah, but yeah, sorry, go. Actually, when you left, I actually applied, what the heck? Because I do international economics, trade, I mean, and that's actually the first time I talked to Vic, not for that, but I was at the University of Portland for years and resigned and tried to figure out what to do, and wouldn't talk to Vic, because Vern Duncan is a good friend, and Vic and I talked for an hour and a half or something. He said, Well, if I were governor, you'd be the head of my economic development. Yeah, there you go. Good governor, Colin goski That I. Yeah, but yeah, just watching, watching the port, is just fascinating, just fascinating. It's still, how do you balance? It is basically 19th century trade with 21st century. I mean, we need the 19th century trade for the wheat and things like that. But it's, you know, then you get caught up in what they're, you know, they're in right now. We're just a teeny, tiny, little player. That's why the shippers pulled out said, you know, just a little too much trouble

Mike Thorne 55:30

well. So, you know, we've always been a little player, yeah, but we were a player, yeah? And the port made a decision to become less of a player and farm out that terminal, yeah. And when they did that, when they did that, they wrote the script that ultimately was followed and the shippers pulled. You can be a small player, but you can be a player. And they decided it was too much work to be a player, yeah, and lease the terminal, yeah, that's no, I agree totally with that, that, and that's, you know, that comes at a great cost to the state, a great cost to this, to the producers in this state, in fact, to a great cost to many people that depended upon the port was Idaho,

James Moore 56:25

wherever or issue, yeah.

Mike Thorne 56:29

And now I read most recently, well, the traffic is in

James Moore 56:34

exactly. Well, we're guessing there might be 2000 more trucks. Well, good luck. What did you expect? Exactly? You know exactly. So, yeah,

Mike Thorne 56:44

no, it's too bad, but that's what's happened.

James Moore 56:49

So let's go Vic to Neil. Here's what Vic's take on Neil is, is he hated that Neil talked about all the dead wood in government that he was going to come in and change people, which he did very different from when Vic came in from Straub, and people were saying, oh, Republican, Democrat, big change. And Vic kept basically everybody. It was very exceptional that he changed the people. Vic also on that first trade trip, Neil had his own way of doing things, and it wasn't a way that Vic saw his working very well with the Japanese and the Taiwanese and things, but Neil's the governor now, so Vic was not bitter, because he knows when there's a governor change, there's a change, but he saw there was a real discontinuity. So from your side, were you seeing this a different

Mike Thorne 57:53

style of management? You know, I spent some time talking about VIX, yeah. I think, I think that the genuine concern and interest was the same on both people's part, okay, I think it's how you do it. And and Goldsmith was, you know, yeah, he was not a bit bashful about saying publicly, you know, things that would irritate folks, like the dead Woods got to go and whatever. Well, Vic's style of management also was, he was he had certain agent did I say Vic Neil's style of management was he had certain agency heads that he depended upon a lot, and he began to create some of the staff type positions in the governor's office, more so than Vic had. And so it was a different style of management. But I would say that while the style was different. I think the desire for outcome was, you know, you know, equal both people, both governors, really had a good sense of the importance of a strong economy to this state. We've talked about the importance of a good economy to this you know, when you're an income tax state, yeah, I think both governors had a real concern and interests in achieving that goal. It's a question of, of how you get there and and those two in my, you know, my term started with McCall and ended with Goldschmidt. So I went through a series of several governors. Those two had a better understanding between what I think is such a fundamental in this state, and that's a good economy, means you got resources as a state. Be to do things, and both of them understood the business model. I don't know that other governors have understood that as well. Yeah, I just don't believe our you know, that was not the greatest strength of kids harbor. Yeah, absolutely, for sure, absolutely. And the jury's out on our current governor, yeah, and, and so, yeah, I saw the difference in style. I think the basic interests, what's good for Oregon, and the passion that the governor's had was probably equal. It's just how you Yeah, how you got

James Moore 1:00:40

Jill from inside Neil's office. What did you see? Let me tell you what someone told me about watching that campaign in 86 Norma appeared to be running as if you like, what's happened? He vote for me, and then she also on her long expertise in state government. So at some point she said, I know where the bodies are buried, and I know they were going to an editorial board trying to get him to tell them something about those bodies to know. I just, I just know where they are, whereas Neil was running as a change agent, yeah, you know, enthusiasm, expertise, you know, all that stuff, with all the baggage that comes from being the mayor of Portland and the rest of the state and things like that, and and after, when people at the time, when you look at the coverage of Vic, you know, boy, he got us through some hard things, but it's kind of a gray Planet suit kind of guy, it's like having a CPA as your governor. So the change with Neil was really exciting. So what, what was it like inside the office dealing with that change? Change? Well, I think

Jill Thorne 1:01:58

when we started out, we were saying that first setting the 100 day agenda. It was hard on the legislature, but it was hard on the staff, because you had to gel figuring out where the new governor wanted to go. You had to figure out your new job, and you had to figure out how to work with people and get it accomplished. And sometimes it wasn't real clear because it was so frantic. As an example I laugh about it is the little things that you don't think about. And we went through the big inauguration thing. I was chairman of that. And the next day, I show up early for work. No one had the key to get into the office,

James Moore 1:02:48

just the little things.

Jill Thorne 1:02:50

It was dark and I had and none of them had experience in the Capitol building, and we'd been there for a while, so I knew to get security, but you then you open the door, and it's still dark, and no one knew where the light switches are. Yeah, yeah. It was just the basic Yeah. And then you're trying to figure out what's going on in the legislative session, right? You're trying to get them to know the legislators, yeah. And then you're trying to figure out the governor's program and how to implement it. So it was frantic.

James Moore 1:03:21

Yeah, yeah, talking to, I think it was Dan Simmons who was telling me this. He talked about being in meetings with Neil, when Neil would just start riffing on things and it wasn't clear what was supposed to be actionable. And so Dan says, well, the meetings that he was in, often, he was the only one who said, So does this mean you want X, Y and Z, trying to nail something down? Did you experience that kind of

Jill Thorne 1:03:57

quite often? Yeah. I think that Neil is. It was an impatient leader, yeah. And again, impatient now, yeah, impatient. He wanted it yesterday. And so again, us trying to get to know each other and to know him and figure out how to implement it. It was, you know, chaotic, yeah, it got better. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I traveled a great deal. I started out with one a job that was called special events or something. That wasn't my thing, but, but I molded it in to at that time, we were trying to implement the regional strategies program, which was the key to his economic development stuff at that point, and traveling the state, because it was the lottery money that went in, and he was driving tourism, because he could see the ups and downs of the 80s where, you know, we needed tourism to come in, but to get the counties to work together. How do you get the counties to work together? And I can always and it had to be more than two. One county couldn't have a regional strategy. You had to work with at least one more and maybe three. Umatilla county worked with wow and Union. But I can remember, I learned a great deal from Neil. I mean, he was impatient, but he was so bright, and I think that's why he's impatient, yeah. But he says, I couldn't believe it that one county didn't know what the other county was was doing, yeah. And he says, How do you make them work together to make something happen for the state? And so we were learning to try to make them work together. And this was all going on during the legislative session. He was trying to get the regional strategies program up and going and convince them that tourism was a theory strategy for the state.

James Moore 1:05:55

Because now a lot of that would be the association of Morgan counties would be breaking down those walls. It would be great to look back at the AOC and see what it was roles.

Jill Thorne 1:06:09

Well, I was, I was the liaison to he appointed me liaison to the counties. Pam Forrester, at that time, it was Pam Collins. She was the liaison to the cities. Then, then he appointed me the liaison to the tribes, and so we were working with those counties. And the most dysfunctional counties were the ones on the this side of the Cascade Range. So I had it from here down to Klamath Falls, yeah. And to try to get them to work together. So we organized the Eastern Oregon Alliance. I mean, just Okay, you guys, you don't talk to each other. You don't talk to your other eastern Oregon counties. Leave the Western ones alone. If you can come together and make a solid point of what you want on this side, and then drive it and get your economic development dollars, you know. And those are the kinds of leveraging that I learned from Neil. It's much better to work like this than this. Yeah,

James Moore 1:07:06

absolutely, yeah. Lottery dollars, you're doing Ways and Means when the lottery comes in, Gerry tells about Victor really wanting it clear that, by gosh, it was for economic development. Ted kologoski says he totally agreed. But as you know, Attorney General, then as governor, he's one who said, well, let's roll it's a little, you know, expand. So what did you guys see as the lottery was coming in. Was it supposed to be? People talk about it now is the state's reliant on lottery dollars, and it's like, well, for this much, but is it? Did you see it as a crucial thing when it came in? Or were you just kind of trying to set groundwork for what?

Mike Thorne 1:08:00

Yeah. Interesting question. First of all, if you can define economic development for me,

James Moore 1:08:10

therein lies the crux of the problem. The key thing I've discovered is economic development. There you go. It's

Mike Thorne 1:08:15

whatever someone thinks it is, yeah, however, at the time when it was passed, there was a fairly small amount of money, right? So it wasn't as though, if you only got a little bit of money, okay, we'll, we'll use it. And I think early on, there was investments in some education buildings, college, higher ed, maybe, if I'm not mistaken, I don't recall all the details now, but it was fairly focused. And then as the pot grew bigger, the challenge of defining the use when you had a bigger pot become almost unmanageable, you know. And unfortunately, in so many ways, what's happened today is, is where it's now an integral part of the state's budget, whereas before, it was always seen as an add on some extra money to use for specific economic development projects or activities, now has become a sort of A main portion of the state's budget. And, you know, Attorney Generals ruled, and people concluded, and people said, well, if a b and c get you here, what's

wrong with D getting you a little bit, you know, the expansion that grows and at the time, the transition from Vic's administration to Neil's you know, of course, the lottery dollars are growing, yeah.

You know, if Vic had had all the money that subsequent governors had, it might have been different, yeah. And so consequently, you know, that's when Goldschmidt. I thought, well, let's try to block this up and do the regional strategies and get counties to agree upon a sustainable strategy going forward. You know, he was a master at trying to broker deals using lottery money. I can I, I know of you know, the food processing plant used to be crusties in Pendleton. You know, that deal got to put together because there was some lottery money available to help build access and do some things and and so in that particular era, the governor's office was able to leverage and use that money. And I think over time, that influence has been dissipated by the legislature plowing morbid into ongoing program and budget. But you know the crux of the problem? If there's a problem or the crux of the issue is a better way of looking at it is, help me understand and define what economic development is. Yeah, you can do that. Yeah. You can, you know, you can tell the attorney general, this is, this is a rule, rather than you concluding, or whatever, yeah. And you know, what's happened shouldn't be a surprise to anyone. At the very beginning, the notion was, here's a pot of money that this state will use to truly grow at a macro level, its economic vitality. And in turn, what's happened has become an essential part of the budget for economic development. Now, is Business Oregon or something? Yeah, you know, look at this budget. This basically lottery dollars, yeah, and so in there, in lies, you know, we're living on it as a necessity, as opposed to a luxury.

James Moore 1:11:50

The institutionalization of it, in effect, is needed. So that it's fascinating that that summer of 84 is when the unitary tax is repealed. Yes, and I just, that's the section I'm just finishing up. Had a little question. There was a timing of a memo that didn't make sense, so I sent it off to Gerry and Denny, seeing what they remember. And I got back huge responses about John Anderson, the head of economic development, who they did not like at all. And apparently he was not being a team player, and so Gerry put the screws on him as the Chief of Staff. But the fascinating thing is, at some point between about January and then May, the unitary tax Vic is eventually saying, Yeah, we do need to get rid of it, but that'll be the next session. It was a crucial night in late May when Vic, we didn't know that at the time, said you got to have a special session. But the conversation changed so that it wasn't, Geez, what's good? What are we going to do? Because this is giving a giveaway to corporations to economic development, and those that same understanding of economic development is the way the lottery ran its campaign. So there's a connection there that just sets up the lottery win in the election that fall economic development without, once again, defining exactly what that means.

Jill Thorne 1:13:18

Well, it was kind of defined for economic development, if I remember, right by the company that wanted to get their machines into Oregon. I mean, how do we get the people to pass it

James Moore 1:13:29

exactly, exactly, but they're picking up. They're picking up on what's out there. Yeah, just when I teach students, actually, when I talk to groups who should know better, because there's all these, you know, should there be more casinos, that kind of thing? It's like, you know, the \$2 million against that casino, you know, that just comes from the other tribe that has a casino. Yeah, no one else has given any money to that campaign, but they wouldn't do that. Yes, they do.

Jill Thorne 1:13:58

They do. They haven't, no,

Mike Thorne 1:14:01

follow the money. Yeah, people today don't even people that are, you know, making the decisions. Don't make the connections. No, it just blows me away. We were talking with a friend over the last few days. We were together with some friends. Remember the discussion came up with, we were talking about old cemeteries, and there's in there was this standard that in order to be buried at an old rural cemetery, there were certain standards that were established by the funeral directors or the, you know, well, okay, I get the picture. They want the people to be buried, according to a standard that has them doing the funeral. If I want to be put in a pine box and put out here behind the shed? No,

James Moore 1:14:55

yeah, do kind of cut them out, but it's all. All about the politics

Mike Thorne 1:15:01

and people get. People don't make those connections in my mind. Yeah, as well as it should. It's

James Moore 1:15:10

been hilarious. Literally, writing this book, I started my sabbatical at the end of January, and so I lost two weeks in there because it was our governor was blowing up. I wasn't doing much book work, you know, covering all that and analyzing it and things, but just watching the Oregonian editorial board on Clean Fuels has been just fascinating. It's partisan. This is bad, bad, bad. It's like, you know, the money was there to elect the people. The Democrats gained seats. They tried to pass it last time, and they didn't quite have the vote because it was close, and Betsy Johnson made a difference. Why is this a surprise to you? Why is this a surprise and now they're still trying to make a big deal out of it, and it may actually be in play, who knows? But it's you know, you guys, you have to just pay attention to the reality on the ground here and kick your feet all you want. But, yeah, this is not a mystery. No, it's not the it's been

Jill Thorne 1:16:19

pretty obvious. Most people are not interested in history or civics, and it's becoming more so, and so they aren't following it. So we've got reporters that do their journalism class reporting, but they don't dig in and don't have the background to connect the dots. Yeah, exactly.

James Moore 1:16:36

Yeah. One thing, it didn't really play a role in the election, but the Oregonian, we now no longer have a statewide paper, that's right, and so that's been such an important part of the state for the last 100 years, and at some point we're going to have an election, and that is going to be a Big Thing. Some we don't know what it is, but

Jill Thorne 1:17:03

well, just, just because the people here in this county don't read, probably didn't read the Oregonian, but some of them did, yeah, we still read it online. Yeah? What makes it even worse? And though I'm going to pump up my thing, we don't get cable TV. Yeah, we're out here. We have a satellite dish. You know what our local channels are? Washington State? Yeah, we say everybody no wonder this part of the state just gets further and further from that side because they don't know what's going on over there. I mean, fewer and fewer people watch news. That's their fault, but I'm a news freak, and I not getting Oregon news? Yeah,

James Moore 1:17:42

yeah. I grew up in Medford, and so my dad's first job was running the cable company there in the mid 60s. But it was amazing because we got Portland stations and San Francisco stations as well as our stations, and so we had a real regional sense. And then as cable turned into the, you know, a billion channels, it's all cooking and, you know, all that kind of stuff. And so that's right, you're just chopped up, isolated,

Jill Thorne 1:18:14

and I just, you know, I have CNN on all the time. But that doesn't help me understand rural and urban Oregon. No, not at all. Doesn't help me understand the issues or what's going on in Medford. I, I used to know what was going on in Medford, because when I worked for Neil, that was one of my Jackson County was one of my counties, part

James Moore 1:18:32

of the part of the beach there. Yeah, yeah. Mentioned Pam forester. My dad worked for the Capitol press for years. Oh, so, okay,

Jill Thorne 1:18:40

yeah. I introduced her to Mike. Uh huh. Oh, great. And they were, Neil was the best man and I was the matron of honor. They've moved back here full time now. Well, they have. They sold their house in Salem Great.

James Moore 1:18:53

Yeah, I know that they've been moving towards that. So yeah,

Jill Thorne 1:18:56

well, he's got Parkinson's and she they were talking a year ago, maybe waiting and buying one of the big condos in Salem that's then goes into assisted living, but yeah, they changed their mind, came out here full time. Yeah, they've had the house here for 10 years. But yeah, they go in back and forth. Yeah.

James Moore 1:19:19

So any other big things

Mike Thorne 1:19:24

well, I've talked about, you know, specifically the one area that whose economic development showed, you know, his great interest that I talked about, some of his management style, and I related to the, you know, to the help here he provided with the Eastern Oregon hospital in the transition, which is, you know, what I was trying to do is characterize how he approached his job as governor, and how, how much detail he went to to try to do, you know, the. Right thing. What I thought was the right thing. You know, I I just think that during the time he was governor, and some of the challenges the state faced, he was probably, without a question, in my mind, the right person. And you know, when his term expired, and you know Goldschmidt came in, you know, it was not a case at all, in my mind that Vic get to did a bad job as governor. It was another era. And, you know, and A and another opportunity. And, you know, the Oregon had, had labored under some pretty challenging times and, and you know, everybody was hopeful of, of a new frontier and a new, you know, new opportunity. And I just, you know, I just, I so much. Enjoyed working with Vic because of his, you know, you knew who you were dealing with at all times he was so willing to to, you know, to expand his scope and his discussion, a great person, and, you know, a great governor,

Jill Thorne 1:21:29

it would not have been a good time to be a governor. No, I think he had to call more special sessions than any. It would be interesting to go back. All I can remember is all the special sessions.

James Moore 1:21:40

Yeah, he had up until the mid 90s, but I think it's up or being 2000 to five session.

Mike Thorne 1:21:50

See, we were in Seattle. But you know, again, to that, if my, if my memory, is anywhere close the, you know, the special sessions that Vick Tia had, you usually came in. He had, he had a solution in front of you. And, you know, so he exercised good leadership and I, as opposed to a session where there were loose ends that kept the legislature sort of hanging around spinning, and again, that was a credit to his way of approaching the problem. There's

James Moore 1:22:31

an exception to that. January, 1982 it's the long session. Yeah, I haven't talked to Paul Hannum yet, who was the leader of the Republicans in the House, yeah, but the speaker the house, Hardy, Myers, Barbara Roberts, sitting on the crucial committees, no one. There was no working with the governor's office before that. All it means that's why it was 37 days and it was, I don't know if you remember, you met, and then everybody kind of went home while the activities, did stuff and came back and forget it. But it was brutal. And so I haven't I found out about all this since the last time we talked to Gerry. That's something really going to drill down. What the heck was going on with that session? Because everything else is you six weeks ahead of time you start do this that the other we meet hours later, it's done. That's

Mike Thorne 1:23:28

a good point. And I had kind of glossed over that, and I recall that. I mean, I recall the long session, yeah, I

James Moore 1:23:36

can't tell you, yeah, I don't know it's, it's got to be on the Governor's side. So just figuring that one out, it's not the session where he said to the legislature, if you don't do this, I'm going to call you back into a session which he did. I think that was 83 and so that was, you know, but even that session he called back for was actually relatively short, but that that January, to one, just something was going on. Yeah, Vic talks about his time. I mean, he just loved being

governor. I don't know if he talked to you about this, but at some point in there, he decided he wasn't going back to the rug business, and the main reason was because he liked making decisions by himself. I love you too, but no more group decisions done. But he talks about the Rajneeshees in the recession, those two things, that was a real tough, tough set of things. Yeah, things. Yeah, yeah. I hope the book is going to have lots of stuff that's never been published before on the Rajneeshee issues. Yeah, Gerry's the key, and I'm now finding things that give information no one's it's ever been published at all. So that gives me leverage to get everything from Gerry. So the

Jill Thorne 1:25:04

county clerk, I can't remember name, she did some stuff when Neil was governor that first year, the county clerk from Wasco County, the Dallas she dealt with the Rajneeshees a lot too, maybe. And you could probably find her name in the old blue books, yeah, she might be worth in the interview, yeah, yeah. That'd be great, because she dealt yeah with them, because it was their county, yeah. You

Mike Thorne 1:25:31

know it, it may have been that I know how I reacted. It was such a shock to realize some of the things that they ultimately were doing, like trying to poison people and so on, you know, we sort of naively, you know, thought, well, there's this group of people that have a different lifestyle and think differently about things that are out here in this, you know, remote area of Oregon, and sort of let them be. But that was not, as it turned out, there was more of a concern for public safety and their motives, and that's probably what made that I, you know, I'm just thinking of what you said that I'm sure the governor was getting information from security interests and others, saying we got a problem here, and this was sort of foreign to Oregon. And so what do you do without just, you know,

Jill Thorne 1:26:24

putting it on discriminatory, yeah, remember that rest there was a restaurant in the Dow. They sprinkled the stuff in the salad bar. Restaurant never opened again, yeah, yeah,

James Moore 1:26:36

yeah. You know, Vic never met with him, ever, yeah. But he saw it totally as a freedom of expression Yeah, thing, and also knowing that cults have a life cycle, yeah, yeah. And his big concern, because people would write them all the time and saying they've got an artery out there, you got to do something. And His concern was that, and he wrote it in letters and things, and said, You know, I don't know if you noticed there's a lot of rifles in the back of pickup trucks driving around. I'm also worried about the safety of the Rajneeshees. He divided them between the leaders and what he called the innocence and the brainwashed. Just the balance there. Really tough. I don't know if he told you this, but the night before the 1985 session, so it's his last session. He got suddenly ill. More said he's ever been sick in his life, even when he was having heart attacks, and they treated it as an assassination attempt. And Barbara Roberts has just been elected Secretary of State. She remembers sometime in the 30 days, and it has to be this, Gerry calling her at night, saying, I just need you. Just need to know we took the governor to the hospital tonight because, you know, you're just really elected, but the idea that you're the successor hadn't sunk in, but it's because they there's no proof, because you have to get the microbes to match up. And even in the cases, in the dowels, they only were able to identify about 20% of them as being truly from from the seminar. But they treat it as an assassination attempt. So just fascinating things. This also made Barbara. When Kate was called back by John from DC, and people were saying, Barbara, why would she do that? You are the successor. You know, if he decides to do something, there's no Governor until Kate is sworn to come back. It's your job. And that's that's when it really hit her. So I

Jill Thorne 1:28:42

her so terrible time. Yeah, January and February.

James Moore 1:28:47

Oh yeah, yeah, it's just stunning. Gerry was at some kind of a gathering in Salem and John was there. This is in January, early February, and they realized they never had a picture of them together. They've known each other since 75 or something like that. And so there's a picture taken. And John looks great. John looks great. But you know, she was saying, she was standing there right at the pictures taken. He said, You know, I'm angry and I'm sad, and he just got a real hangdog look on his face. Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 1:29:32
stupid is as stupid does. Stupid

James Moore 1:29:34
is as stupid does. But when you're talking about the journalism, you know, the really good journalism that was done, of that didn't ask crucial questions. The key thing is, so Sylvia was doing all this stuff. Did those people get \$116,000 of value out of that? If they did, then what is the story? But that's those questions were never asked. So the. It's all behind closed doors. Now we'll see if the feds do anything. But

Mike Thorne 1:30:05
now you were talking about the New York going in and in our time and watching the transition. I can recall my first session. I believe it was the Open Meetings. Law was, oh yeah for the legislature, yeah, and

Jill Thorne 1:30:26
the Nixon fallout.

Mike Thorne 1:30:29
No, I think it was, probably it could have been, I but what I recall was actually sitting down with, you know, with people from the Oregonians. I remember Harry Bodine. I remember, yeah, and we had a conversation like I said, you know, help me understand what's why we why we need this. What you know, help me. And here was a case where I think it's fair to say, the legislature decision makers valued the experiences and the resource and the input from the media today, I don't think you can make that case. You know, the only

James Moore 1:31:08
thing is, like, Jeff Mapes has the institutional memory. Nobody said Peter Courtney does,

Mike Thorne 1:31:12
yeah, yeah, and yeah,

Unknown Speaker 1:31:17
Peter is he?

James Moore 1:31:18
He's actually working out of the Capitol press building with

Jill Thorne 1:31:22
Eastern media, the media conglomerate,

Speaker 2 1:31:26
yeah, champlains newspaper, yeah, yeah. And

Mike Thorne 1:31:32
then the other guy that writes the column in the Oregonian, Steve Dean. Steve Dean, yeah, I recall having breakfast with him or at the rainbow cafe in Pendleton. And that's when Hatfield was running for re election, and Steve Dean was up here doing a story, and he asked me, Well, what about Mark Hatfield? I remember saying, If Oregonians aren't smart enough to re elect the ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, they ought to have their butts kicked across the Columbia River. And he quoted that, that's great,

James Moore 1:32:15
and yet, pre staging by just four years the voters in eastern Washington kicking out the speaker? Yeah. Well, to this day, we were doing opinion exit polling, and, you know, 25% of the people that answered the exit polls thought that Jordan evacuate was going to be the speaker of the

Mike Thorne 1:32:36

house. Yeah, I realize you're electing a freshman. Oh my gosh.

Jill Thorne 1:32:42

Well, Oregon booted out Al Ulman. Yeah, yeah,

James Moore 1:32:46

yeah. It was fascinating because, you know, Al Ulman, until the Packwood Hatfield duo, that's as powerful as Oregon and just stunning and Vic was so parochial in the legislature, really, that '74 campaign, and getting into it really opened him up out of Washington County, and the things that he really cared about, like natural resources and stuff. But, you know, didn't really have anything to do with Altman. You know, not, he was really kind of, yeah, he was attained thing.

Mike Thorne 1:33:25

Vic Atiyeh was a product of his years of running a family business and being a product of serving the legislature, yeah, and that that for many years, crafted how he approached things, how he managed, you know, the role that various agency heads played, and even friends that were associates or lobby members or whatever, that he knew. You know that. And that's a contrasted style from, from, say, a goldsmith who wasn't a foreigner, if you will. And, yeah, world and so, you know, but Vic, did I do to his credit, you know, yeah, ability to transcend that, and yeah, and realize that there's a broader world there. Now we're talking about Al Ulman. People around here want to know, well, how come somebody said, if Almond gets defeated, United Airlines won't be flying and pounding much longer,

James Moore 1:34:31

right? See that case with, I think it's the lieutenant governor or speaker of the house or something in New Jersey. Yeah, there was a flight from New Jersey to basically 40 miles from his vacation home in South Carolina, and when he lost power, the flight was canceled within six weeks. There you go. There you go.

Jill Thorne 1:34:52

Well, we're kind of winding down. You guys continue, since we're so far from anything, I would like to make you a ham sandwich or. Tuna fish sandwich with some potato salad and chocolate chip cookies.

James Moore 1:35:05

I will have to examine your bread. I have food allergies, so I have to, we'll have to examine that. What if we don't put it on bread? That might be a very good idea. Very good idea. I can't have any dairy products of any kind. Okay, most bread has got,

Jill Thorne 1:35:20

okay, no dairy products. Can we put mayonnaise in the tuna fish? Tuna fish or ham? Tuna fish would be great. Okay, because I was gonna put Swiss cheese on the ham, but you can't have that. Okay, we'll put tuna fish on some lettuce. Perfect, hard boiled egg. Oh, that'd be dead pickles. And what kind of pickles Do

James Moore 1:35:44

you like? Sweet pickles? Okay,

Speaker 2 1:35:48

okay, great. Thank you. Thank you. So

Mike Thorne 1:35:53

what kind of a time frame are you working on? I hope

James Moore 1:35:55

this comes out next year. But books are books, and when teaching starts, you know, that's where my energy goes.

Mike Thorne 1:36:03

So what's, what's journalism, what, what do you, what you, what did you, what your

James Moore 1:36:08

I do political science at Pacific University, okay, and I started, I'm an international person. So actually, Vic, when he left office and was doing all his stuff. He has business cards that had his information on one side and it's Arabic on the other side. I'm actually the first person who's able to read it in Arabic and say, yeah, it says what you think it does. But when I came, I grew up in Southern Oregon, went off. Never thought I'd look here again, but re met one of my high school classmates just before our tenure reunion, and we got married. And so when I moved back here in 1990 it became pretty quickly apparent that there was really nobody except kind of Bill Lunch who knew West Coast politics and could also then articulate it make sense out of it systematic ways. And so my first interview with a media group was actually there was a fundraiser. Barbara Roberts was at it for the newly powerful gay community, was having to fund, and the television station Juan Mabon told them, don't you go get one of those darn liberals from Portland State. So they called University of Portland and to me. So that happened, and a year later, I was calling the elections on one of the televisions. Oh, okay, so, so the election out here that would make the biggest difference is I'm the one who called Gordon Smith's win 24 hours before anybody else. Oh, is that right? Because I had, that's when half of our voters were doing vote by mail. Did absentee ballots. I figured out a way to poll so that I could get both and cracked it. And so I have lots of friends who were out here working for it was channel six coin. At that point, they're saying, well, our political analyst says, You fun. Gordon just smiles. And the journalists all had to drive like crazy back to Portland, whereas Gordon has gone on this

Mike Thorne 1:38:26

plane. Interesting. I when I left the Senate, State Senate. Why? Of course, I was as near as I know. I don't know who the Democrat was ever before me to have a seat at some point there was but long time, and I told the Democrats appointed a filler. And I tell them, Well, given that and the fact that he tried to line up with, you know, the party, and he that became sort of the script. He fell. I said, you know, he won't last turn. And then Gordon was elected. Yeah,

James Moore 1:39:17

Gordon was discovered by, do you know Dan Levy? Oh, yeah, yeah, but he discovered Gordon and Wes Cooley at the same time. Dan doesn't really claim Wes cool yeah.

Mike Thorne 1:39:29

Well, you know Gordon? You know we talk about Vic's legislative orientation and his experience there, and he was able to, then pretty quickly broaden become a governor that that really understood so much more than what his parochial background might dictate. Yeah, so. Uh, you know, Gordon never really got his hands dirty, if you will, in my from my, you know, perspective, when he was in the State Senate, he he tried to go fast, he tried to rise above and stay above, to fray and sort of, yeah, and you know that that got him, you know, it got him when he ran, he got elected. But his re election he, you know, instead of trying to dig into some of the challenges that might have existed in the metro area, whether it's transportation issues or whatever. Gordon wasn't geared to, seemingly get down into the to the level he needed to, to understand what solution and give, you know, not only the appearance but the actual reality of him, yeah, digging in and understanding. And yeah, you know, poor Pat Amedeo, who spent hours in front of us. Part of that was trying to understand,

James Moore 1:41:08

yeah, exactly, exactly, tell

Mike Thorne 1:41:11

me what's going on, I guess. Yeah, you know, it's but, but Gordon, unfortunately. And I, you know, I liked Gordon. I knew him. And knew him when he was running a processing plant over Weston. I remember some, it was interesting. Some the pea there's a pea Growers Association, and he was, of course, the processing plant. And he was trying to rough run, a little rough shot over the growers. And I remember a couple of them came down to Salem to see me and wanted some legislation introduced that would make it a little more difficult for him to be so arbitrary in some of the contracts. And he got wind of it, and I said, Well, look, I don't like to do this legislation either. Why don't you just go talk to those guys, you know, why don't you go figure it out? What's the issue here? See if you can't, you know, yeah, yeah. Don't drive to the office from town and and send your minions out to exactly, you know, talk to these people. They're real. Yeah.

James Moore 1:42:25

One person I hope I'm able interview. I was able to interview Earl Blumenauer, but I need to talk to Greg Walden, yeah, because he cut his teeth on Vic's 1978 campaign and also spoke at the memorial service. Yeah, but I you know, the end of the conversation, I just want to ask him, so what do you think about Gordon being the head of the national broadcaster, as you the broadcaster art? Well, did we about?

Mike Thorne 1:42:54

No, he doesn't. And, you know, it was sort of, you know, that some would say, I don't know if this is you know, but some might say that, you know, this is a fellow with a silver spoon in his mouth. And when you

James Moore 1:43:12

said, you know, he didn't get his hands dirty, he has the softest hands of anybody I've ever

Mike Thorne 1:43:19

well that actually came from this. You'll find really, my legislative assistant secretary worked for him, and she actually implied that, you know, contrary to your style, like he was staying up here out of the Yeah,

James Moore 1:43:43

yeah. Remember, there was a special session the day after he was defeated by Wyden 96 and he's the President of the Senate, he basically just sat there and moved Yeah. Like, you know, you got things you have to do. Well, I think the Ron and Gordo show was a good thing for this, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Mike Thorne 1:44:11

No, that's true. You know, white is an example of talk about a person that came from a fairly focused, narrow, oh yeah. And look what he has done. He is so in my mind, he is very highly regarded here, even though, you know, a Democrat this day and age, getting elected from rural Oregon is a challenge, but, but you'll find many of the people that are somewhat knowledgeable about, you know, producer groups, Growers Association, people who would never come close to a Democrat, yeah. You know, appreciate Yeah, Ron Wyden, yeah, and support it.

James Moore 1:44:52

Yeah. He's done an amazing job of broadening from being the great Panther guy. Yeah? Yeah, and now he's got power, and it's amazing, in the minority, he is exercising power, much like you know, that subversive little group of Republicans in the State Senate. Yeah, last year I was talking to him, and I had him out to the university, and every time he asked him a question about policy stuff he talking about, well, I have a bipartisan bill. Yeah, yes. And it was partly because he does have bipartisan bills, but partly because he knew he was going to lose his seat as the chair. But it actually looks good for the Democrats to take it back again in 2016 so he's, he wants to play with in there, whatever the field is. He wants to be a player

Mike Thorne 1:45:41

now. He's, he's, I've have high regard for him. I've had some experiences where, you know, in 2008 I started the project to rebuild the rodeo grounds for the town and Roundup. You know, just before the economy goes this way, and you're trying to raise money from outside sources and locally, what a challenge. And there was a some opportunity and some federal appropriations to maybe get some funds. And I never specifically asked Wyden for anything other than to explain what we were trying to do and the dilemma we had. And, you know, he made the opportunity happen.

James Moore 1:46:42

Yeah, when Vic would go back as governor, would go back to DC, apparently Wyden was the, by far the most welcoming and accommodating. And you can imagine Packwood and Hatfield at that point are. They're big, big deals. But even you know, the other members of the delegation were here, talk to my this that or the other Wyden would be there at the front door, take it to the outer office, to the inner office. What do you need? What can I do for Oregon that's really conscientious? Yeah, yeah.

Mike Thorne 1:47:21

Well, it's, you know, the passing of time and memories is what it's great that there's an effort to at least try to capture

some of the things that you're doing and some few things we've talked about, like Atiyeh great governor, you know, to this day, McCall is, you know, some of the Californians will remember his comments about coming and spending your money and leave exactly. I don't know that Vic could be given. I don't think people see Vic in that context. No,

James Moore 1:48:12

he just to the end of his days he said, God, it was so hard to counter that. Yeah, yeah. And they would be in Saudi Arabia, and people would tell had heard that, yeah, oh, yeah. So all the world, yeah, there's great marketing. But then how do you counter that? The speech that he gave for the special session on the unitary tax just reading a couple of days ago, and he's got, like, three of his paragraphs are about, there is an attitude out there. We have to change the, you know, our perception of the world.

Mike Thorne 1:48:46

No, he, he would never go out on a string and do that. No,

James Moore 1:48:54

also being talked out of blowing up the sign. Yeah, yeah.

Mike Thorne 1:49:01

Yeah, you know that that obviously wasn't around, but actually knew one of the people that worked in the McCall administration when they they tried to blow up the Oh, yeah, I guess they had blubber and big chunks and places they didn't want it exactly. Yeah. So while you're up here, are you? Are you headed back today? Yeah, I see Yeah, just turn around and drive back.

[After some unrelated personal conversation, the recording ends.]