

Barbara Roberts interview on Atiyeh

An interview of Oregon's former Democratic Governor Barbara Roberts (served 1991-1995) regarding her predecessor, Republican Governor Victor Atiyeh (served 1979-1987). The interview was recorded on Feb. 23, 2015. The interviewer, James Moore, was as professor of political science at Pacific University and was Atiyeh's biographer.

The interview includes discussion of: Roberts' first encounter with Atiyeh, who was state senator at the time; their subsequent interactions during his tenure as governor; Atiyeh's approachable demeanor, his methodical governance style, and his accessibility to the public; Roberts' role as Secretary of State, including her efforts to introduce performance auditing, which Atiyeh opposed; her personal relationship with Atiyeh; Atiyeh's respectful and supportive nature, particularly during challenging times, and his lasting impact on Oregon's governance; the unique bond and respect among governors due to the shared experiences and challenges of the role; and a side discussion regarding the role of archives and historic photographs in documenting Oregon's history.

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.

[Interview begins mid-conversation.]

James Moore 00:00

....And convert it into stuff that's not archival quality, because that takes a lot of memory. And then actually, you'll go into my bibliography as we talk about things, it'll be that, and then I can refer to it and get it transcribed if I need to, and all those kinds of things.

Barbara Roberts 00:15

That's fine.

James Moore 00:17

So, start off with how you first got to know Vic Atiyeh, who was not a governor at that point.

Barbara Roberts 00:26

No, he was a state senator, and it was on the opening day of the 1975 legislative session. I had just recently married Frank Roberts, who was also a member of the State Senate, so he and Vic were colleagues in the Senate at that point, and I was working as Frank's legislative assistant, my first time to ever play that role in the Oregon legislature. And I was seated at Frank's desk on the floor feeling a little awkward. I was a new bride, sort of, and it was my first day on the job officially. And Senator Atiyeh then walked up to me, put his hand out, shook my hand, and said, "You must be the bride!" [Both laugh.] And I will never forget it! It was so heartwarming, and it was so open, and it was so clear and you know, you hear politicians, and because I was surrounded by a number of politicians at that point in my life, you know, you'd hear these nasty remarks about the Republican or the Democrat that they didn't like. And, here was Vic Atiyeh, the head of the Republican Party in the Senate at that time.

James Moore 01:45

All seven of them.

Barbara Roberts 01:46

Yeah, all seven Republicans. And Frank, a long standing Democrat, and he just walked up to me as warm as if he were my grandfather, and said, "Hi, I'm Victor Atiyeh," and you must be the bride. So that was my first memory of ever speaking with Vic. I had seen him in the paper. I've heard his name, of course. But this was a new experience, sort of a one-on-one experience with him.

James Moore 02:15

That's great. So in that first, basically four years that you know him when he's a senator, did you or your husband have much to do with him? Or, you know, how did that work? I mean, I've heard, I've heard that teeny tiny caucus described in different ways.

Barbara Roberts 02:36

Well, I didn't have much to do with Vic then, other than seeing him around and knowing where his office was, and listening to him on the floor of the Senate when he was carrying bills. Frank was serving on the revenue committee at that time, and so Frank had a lot of sort of technical bills that came to the floor as a result of serving on the Senate revenue committee, and Vic always paid a lot of attention to revenue bills. It was something he understood as a businessman and a political leader. And so I can remember at least a few times when they would have exchanges on the floor of the Senate that could raise a question about something, Frank was carrying a bill and they would...it was always a very honorable exchange. It was never a cranky or rude... they were both gentlemen. They were both articulate in the exchanges, as I recall them, were always like that between them on the floor. Sometimes I would notice Vic on the floor, and I'd be sitting at Frank's floor desk, and I would notice him, and I got so I could recognize his laugh, because he had kind of a distinctive laugh. And it wasn't that he was loud, it's just that it was a distinctive laugh. It meant he probably told a joke that he screwed up, because he frequently screwed up the punch lines. I can always remember his doing that, but he had so much fun telling it that it didn't matter, you know. So you would laugh, not so much at the joke, but at him telling the joke. And so I can remember that about him on the floor, and he stood a lot on the floor, more than he sat at his desk. I always remember his standing someplace, often at the rear of the chamber, paying attention to the discussion. Not that he was back in the back of the room chatting, he was really paying attention to the speeches and the issues, but he often stood. He frequently was kind of a little statuesque back there, standing and listening attentively to the presentations that were going on. So during that time, I was used to seeing him every day on the floor of the Senate. So I watched him speak, I watched him ask questions. I watched him interact with Democrats and Republicans. And you know, he clearly knew the legislative process very well. And for me, there was this interesting thing that I knew, because I was married to Frank Roberts. Frank Roberts had been the reading clerk of the House when Vic was very early in his career, might have even been his first house session, I'm not sure.

James Moore 05:41

Yeah, Vic was elected... '59 was his first session.

Barbara Roberts 05:43

Yeah, so it might have been about then, and Frank was a reading clerk in the house. It's a good job for a speech professor. Yes, it was, yeah, he could do that very well. And he used to tell me privately, I never heard him tell this joke away in front of anybody else, but he told me privately a couple of times that when Vic was a new member of the House, he was a little more conservative then, and he voted no a lot, and so he was the A in the alphabet, and Frank always called him first, because they did it in alphabetical order and this is long before they voted with voting machines. It was all an oral presentation. So Frank would call on him and Vic's name would be there. He'd say "Atiyeh!" And Vic would say "Nay" or "No!" Whatever, you know. And he did that frequently. And so one day, Frank went to House Representative Victor Atiyeh, and he said, "Representative Atiyeh, could I make a request of you?" And Vic said, "Well, what do you need, Frank?" And he said, "Well, it would help me, if you're going to vote aye on a bill, if you'd let me know in advance, because I'm so used to marking no beside your name, and it's the first name on my list, and it messes up my roll call." And he said, "So if you're going to vote aye on something, would you mind letting me know in advance?" [Both laugh.] But Frank was known for being able to get through the entire 60 names in the house. Just blank, blank, blank, blank, without any mechanism, just, check, check, check, check, check. He was very fast and he was very accurate, but Vic messed him up when he in those early years, when he voted aye. So it was a joke that Frank always told me, and I think he and Vic talked about that a couple of times in the later years when they were working together. So Frank had this very long association with Governor Atiyeh, then House member Atiyeh, and then Senator Atiyeh, and Frank always talked very respectfully of him, even when he disagreed with him strongly on some occasions. So I think part of my early comfort with Vic Atiyeh was that Frank liked him, you know, I think that made a difference in how he made me feel, because I was learning to know who all these members were that I didn't know, and some of the Democrats I knew, maybe one or two of the Republicans, but in that small little caucus, I didn't know very many of them, because a lot of them were from southern and eastern Oregon, and I didn't know them. And so I had to kind of watch and learn. So by the time I was in in the house, of course, Senator Atiyeh had become Governor Atiyeh, so I

watched that transition as well in his history.

James Moore 08:52

So what was that transition like? Did he hit the ground running? Was he, you know, slow and try to figure out what Straub had done and what he needed to continue, or what was it like from the outside?

Barbara Roberts 09:06

From the outside, Governor Atiyeh appeared to be very, I think I'd almost use the use the word methodical. He took things a step at a time and examined them, and you didn't get many quick reactions or quick decisions, he would weigh in balance and check and see where everything was and what the details were. So he wasn't one of those guys who had a press conference every third day. He was very open with the press and met with them just casually all the time. I mean, it seems like a...

James Moore 09:44

He had a weekly open door for them, or he'd go down to the press room.

Barbara Roberts 09:49

Yeah, and I remember seeing him in the coffee shop in the capitol when he was governor. And it was always exciting to see the governor walk into the coffee shop, but governor Atiyeh did that, and there would be press people there, and he'd stop and talk to them, but it was very exciting for me even though I'd known him in the in the Senate, it was very exciting for me as a freshman member of the House to have him walk him to the coffee shop. That was surprising to me. I think oftentimes we think of governors getting kind of entrenched behind the closed door and here he was very open about, I mean, he walked through the building with the comfort of a man who had lived in the house for a long time. He knew the building, he knew the people, he knew the process, he knew everything. He'd been there long enough that he really had... so there was a great comfort in the way he strolled through the house, the building and the Capitol was like home for him, I think, and you could see that in the way he... so I think part of the thing that became very apparent for me as I watched him early on was how accessible he was, how open he was to conversations with strangers, with little kids, you know, with Girl Scout troops and Boy Scout troops. I mean, he was always there, and that's the way I thought of him back then, was that he he that's exactly the way he always presented himself was that he was at home. He was at home in the state capitol, and he seemed to be very at home in the governor's office. So for me, that was the image I always have of Vic and, you know, I remember it was a... there were some really hard times. I mean, the economy was so bad and the tax situation was such a mess then. When I was a freshman in the house, well, all through my house service, I served on the revenue committee, so I always had a relationship with Vic's office, because if you were on the revenue committee in an economic crisis, you better know where the governor was, and you better know which bills were the governors, and you better understand them. And so I liked the revenue committee. I hadn't planned to like it, but I liked it. I liked it a lot, and I served some really good people in both parties, but Governor Atiyeh's people would be down there presenting his latest one time only bill, or his new tax plan, or some new nuance of taxation because they were critical, because we couldn't... I mean, we kept going back into special session and back into special session. I think, if my recollection is correct, that at that time, he called more special sessions than any governor in history. I think that's accurate.

James Moore 09:49

Yeah, I think so too. It might have been broken by the five in 2002, because he had a special session in '80 and then there were the multiple special sessions from '81 on, so I think you put them all together and he's got the record...

Barbara Roberts 11:53

Yeah, I would think so.

James Moore 11:53

And they were, I mean, he called one special session in September of the 1982 election.

Barbara Roberts 11:53

I remember that.

James Moore 11:53

Talking to Gerry Thompson and Denny Miles, because Denny was the campaign manager, you know, boy, Gerry hated to make that call, but we had to have a special session.

Barbara Roberts 11:53

Yeah. Well, it did make people work fast.

James Moore 11:53

It did, it did.

Barbara Roberts 11:53

But you know, at the end of '82 when I became majority leader... I had the Democratic caucus, sort of my responsibility to some degree. And so you can imagine all these special sessions, all this tax stuff. I mean, it was not a fun time to be a caucus leader, because particularly when the governor was one party and my caucus was the opposite party, so there was a lot of conflicts, and the trick was to make them, make the members of the Democratic caucus be more than aware that this wasn't a political battle, this wasn't a partisan battle. This was a battle to save Oregon. I mean, that's how it felt, and for me, that's the way I approached it. And I think we had a really good committee, the Democrats and Republicans worked pretty well together through that, that period of time, but I think part of the reason they did was because of Governor Atiyeh's approach. He didn't beat anybody over the head, and he didn't say bad things about the Democrats, and he basically said, this is our job, and we got to get it done. So I think that approach was probably critical, probably critical to getting through that period of time. If he'd have been as aggressive as some of the governors you see across the country right now, just beating people up and pounding them to the ground and, you know, slicing and things that were unrelated to the economy, just political scenes. And I don't remember Governor Atiyeh ever doing that. I don't remember ever his ever playing that kind of mean politics. He just was too much of a gentleman, you know, and it always made me smile. Another thing I always think about him in those... not so much when he was governor, but still when he was a senator. Once in a while, Delores Atiyeh would come into the Capitol when he was Senator, and she'd be coming there to meet him, or have ones with some of the Senate wives, or whatever she was doing, and Republican wives mostly, but she would come in and he would kind of light up, "Oh, there's Delores!" It was just, it was always this thing you saw in him that that made that relationship so clear, because he would just kind of, "There she is, Miss America!" So I think about that more. You know, I mean Delores Atiyeh, like Pat Straub and Antoinette Hatfield were the governor's wives. They were never first ladies. I never remember any of them being called First Lady. We just didn't use that term in Oregon. They did in other states, but in Oregon, I don't remember them using calling them a First Lady. They were the governor's wife, and so in a way, they behaved like the governor's wife. It was not... they didn't have some magic status as a First Lady. And maybe that doesn't make any difference. Maybe it's just verbal, but it seemed to make a difference back then. And when I when people talk to me now about First Lady status and how it works. I say, you know, I don't remember us having first ladies. Back then, we had governor's wives, and they were all wives, because there were no women but, but I think that's an interesting nuance change. I'm not sure when it... I'm not absolutely certain when it occurred. I think I know, but I'm not sure, I think it was with Sharon Kitzhaber

James Moore 17:31

I think so too, just given her personality and the way that marriage kind of was bookended by coming into office and going out. That's what I would bet as well.

Barbara Roberts 17:40

Yeah, that that would be my supposition, that that's when it started. So we had a lot of Republican governors back then, and we did... excuse me, and this sounds awful, but I swallowed a lot of blood, but I hurt my mouth last night so my throat is sore...but I think there was a difference in how those governor's wives were treated. They were treated, certainly with a lot of respect, and it was always exciting to see them, but they were the governor's wife. That was it. I mean, Pat Straub had that column in the Salem paper about growing herbs organically before we ever used that term. But she would write, I think it maybe was a weekly column that she wrote, but as First Lady, it didn't say that. It was said by Pat Straub you know. And nobody ever thought of her in that way, I mean, and I don't remember that being different with Delores. She was Victor Atiyeh's wife. She was the governor's wife, but I do remember how he sparkled when she walked in. It was a really interesting... of course, is a fairly new bride. Originally, I would watch these older romantic couples, you know, I would watch the ones that clearly had very strong relationships, and you could see them

like that. And so I was maybe unduly aware as a new bride,

James Moore 19:29

That's wonderful. So I know in your biography, you talk about a particular bill that Victor vetoed. And did that happen before you became Majority Leader or after you were Majority Leader?

Barbara Roberts 19:47

Are we talking about the audit bill?

James Moore 19:49

Well, no, the audit bill is when you're Secretary of State. This is the one where there's going to be, like, health coverage for...

Barbara Roberts 19:56

Oh, yes, I think it was my first session... I can't, I'm not certain, but I think it was my freshman session. It was an alcohol bill.

James Moore 20:08

And eventually we just covered, like a state experiment. But even that, yeah, yeah,

Barbara Roberts 20:13

yeah. And it was intended to say that if somebody was an alcoholic was an addict, that they could give their insurance policy covered hospital insurance for alcoholism, for treatment, if it already covered that it had to cover outpatient treatment as well. It didn't add any new coverage, in a sense, to the hospital to the policy, and it didn't make any policy have that. It was pretty limited, except I was really concerned. I was doing a lot of women's work over those years of women's rights work, you know, and I was and I found these young mothers who had issues with alcohol, but they couldn't there, even if their insurance policy covered to go into a hospital, they couldn't be gone for three weeks, yeah, to have little children, and so what in people who were average income workers couldn't check into a hospital for several weeks? Maybe, maybe a rich businessman could, and that was my philosophy. It was so class oriented. It said rich people can do this. Poor people don't get coverage and and the big argument was that, besides the cost that people didn't want to pay for, the other big issue was boss, my train of thought, oh, that outpatient care didn't work. Outpatient alcohol did not work. And there we were with several long term members of the legislature, including ones that Vick Atiyeh served with in the Senate who had gone through outpatient alcohol treatment many years before and were still sober, yeah, and I knew it worked. I had experienced it with family members, and it was very upsetting, you know, and I was surprised that Vic vetoed it. I would have thought he would have thought it was a good idea for families, yeah, you know, because you want people to get off an addictive behavior and move on. And so it was very upsetting for Did you have any hint that he would veto it? No, it was before the governor was required to put the list. Yes to say, these are the bills I'm considering. That was a frank Roberts amendment, by the way. And then later, when I was governor, I didn't like it so much, but it was a brilliant idea when he first did it. But no, no, I didn't have any idea that it was going to get vetoed. And then when we when we tried to redesign it in a way that just made it experimental, then we still lost it, so it was upsetting to me. And a number of years later, my sister went through alcohol outpatient alcohol treatment, and it was insured. It was a little later period of time and and I always thought about that, you know. So I think later in his career, Governor Atiyeh might not have vetoed that bill. I always thought that, but I think he was getting some push from maybe the hospitals it could be, yeah, yeah, I don't know, maybe some of the business community, but anyway, yeah, it was very disappointing for me. Yeah, that was reason

James Moore 23:40

I asked is when I was talking with Hardy Myers, after he was speaker, he went back to be chair of the Judiciary Committee because he wanted to keep the judicial reform stuff going. And he had several things that came out of there that were vetoed out of the blue as well. Yeah, and to this day, he doesn't understand why there was no, no hint, you know, no testimony. No, nothing. So,

Barbara Roberts 24:02

no, no, I we didn't get much testimony against the bill. Once people, they, they, they tried the issue of, it doesn't work.

It's not successful. And then we had all these long term sober people coming saying, 72 years ago, what wasn't quite that bad, but you know, 22 years ago, I came and went through this program, and I've never had a drink since. And we had people coming before the committee, it was so clear that the people who were carrying that argument kind of went away. So it did not get the kind of negative you might have thought it did, and I'd carried it, I'd worked on it. I didn't introduce it, but I worked on it and I was obviously an advocate for it, and never a word, yeah, never a word. So it was, it was upsetting. But he wasn't the only. Governor who did never a word, yeah, Bob Straub vetoed one of Frank's bills, and they were long term friends without ever telling him he was going to do it. It was a, I think it was a juvenile rights bill of some kind, or in he without ever telling Frank you veto. That's where that other legislation of Franks came from the governors had to announce they were considering, yeah, because he's

James Moore 25:26

been there, yeah, yeah. So anything else while your Majority Leader jump out, I think the economy is getting better, yes, at that point, yes. Go back, actually, this once again, from Hardy Myers in 82 when you had the special session in January, that was the longest Special Session ever. And then there were several others afterwards that tended to be eight hours or 12 hours. Hardy was saying that unlike previous special sessions and working with the governor's office, they had no hint about what the budget proposal was until it hit the floor. Do you remember? What was your impression of that? Because then it was very different from what had come before, and also then what came after, which were very well set up and negotiated well,

Barbara Roberts 26:15

because I was on the revenue committee, my recollection, in thinking back on that was we did get a few, what we called surprise bills, where we until they were introduced, we didn't know the content of them. So that would have probably been in that that 82 January, yeah, yeah, because it wasn't something we had a press conference and say, here's what I'm going to do, and I'm laying out these. And these are the things I'm going to ask the bill was presented. And, I mean, it was drafted, and it was presented to the to the introduced, and that was so on the revenue committee, we had no idea what was coming until it came so and of course, that was a little hard for the for the revenue staff. You know, because legislative revenue did all those analysis of those kind of bills. So usually when you got a bill in the revenue committee, you already had a legislative revenue analysis, and we didn't have it. We didn't have it right in the beginning. We had it soon. But I remember there was a question about whether we ought to even look at the bill till a legislative Revenue Office had given us some analysis, you know, and because it makes you kind of flounder when you try to deal with the bill without any professional analysis and and that was very unusual. I mean, you just didn't get a bill that the revenue staff hadn't seen. And even the legislative the bill was drafted, I think, in legislative council. But that doesn't mean legislative revenue saw it, because they can't do that so as members of that committee, and it didn't appear to me, as I think back, and boy, this has been a long time, but as I think back, I don't remember the Republican members of that revenue committee having any more information than we did. So I don't think he, you know, talked to Republican members of the you know, because John [Skune?] and Nancy [Ryles?] and the guy from Roseburg. Can't say his name right now. Yeah, lost it. I can't say it. George is his first name, but I can't...

James Moore 28:52

I was talking with Phil Kealey this morning. By the time we were done, he had seven blue books up on his table. That one,

Barbara Roberts 29:00

yeah, yeah. Well, I know who this guy is. He was a he was, he had a county office before he came to the legislature. That was, he was, like the tax guy for that county. I can't think what that position was called. And he did that before he came to the legislature. So he had the view of a man who'd been handling taxes a lot. So he was pretty, pretty skilled, yeah. And John scone, who was a banker, was a Republican member, and he was a very he was a quiet member, but he was a very skilled member. And Nancy Ryles was on the committee, and she had been a school board member for a long time, so she all the school tax stuff she knew very well, yeah. And so we had really skilled members on the committee, on the Republican side as well. And but. I don't think any of them were aware of his of these packages in advance didn't seem to be okay,

James Moore 30:05

that's good. More stuff for me to grill Gerry Thompson on. Okay, so 84 you decide to run for Secretary of State. Did Vic

play any role in endorsing or being involved in that he

Barbara Roberts 30:23

endorsed. He always

James Moore 30:24

endorses the Republican. Yeah, anything. I don't

Barbara Roberts 30:27

think he did. He endorsed [donization?]. But I don't, I don't remember ever seeing I'm just in looking back, I can't remember everything thinking that he was active in her campaign. Norma Paulus was helping her, and I knew that, but I don't remember any sign other than just an endorsement that Vic was doing anything behind the scenes or publicly in that race, and and I had gone through a also a tough primary with Jim Gardner. Didn't turn out to be so tough when it was done, but it looked tough when we started and and I don't remember any indication that Vic was ever, you know, sometimes even in a race that's not your own party, yeah, you'll be kind of on the edges of it, and I don't ever remember that. And Vic. Did Vic serve with Jim Gardner? I'm trying to remember that I don't know. It might have been after Vic left that Jim Gardner came, because he only, I think, serve that one term in the Senate. I think so. And, yeah, oh, another new booze. I found one right here this morning. So they're all over. I think, God, how embarrassing, klutzy. But you know, it's really, it is a member of the revenue committee at that time with, with Governor Atiyeh being there, and the economy being such a mess, and everything was just, it was hard. It was a I, I loved the committee, but it was a really hard time to be there and we were, we were considering a sales tax, one of the times, very seriously designing it, dealing with the agricultural exemptions, and doing all of that. Those are tough designs. And, you know, everybody wants out, everybody wants in, whatever it is, and, and, and then we had Wally Priestley on the committee, who hated the sales tax beyond belief, just hated it and made it very difficult to work on the individual issues of design and so and everybody. I mean, it was really funny, because it used to be, Democrats hated the sales tax, and the Republicans pushed it. Then later the Democrats were pushing it and the Republicans were opposed to it. It was, it was a very it was all pretty political, I guess maybe just partisan. But you think, you know, we thought, well, now finally we got some Democrats coming over here, and I, I started out as an opponent of sales tax and became an advocate. So, mean, the governor must have been watching this with a great deal of interest, because in the revenue committee, I mean, it was the most popular committee in the building for a while. Every morning, eight o'clock, that room was packed, yeah, every It was packed because everybody had, you know, everybody had an iron in the in the fire. I mean, there was just nobody wasn't impacted by it, yeah, and so it was, but it was, it was an interesting time to be working in the governor's office, I'm sure was probably had those on their TV watching the hearings every morning, because it was pretty interesting work, and I'm sure the governor's office was paying close attention to it. They never, I don't remember they're ever intruding in the debates and discussions. You know, I don't remember seeing someone from the governor's office down there saying, We can't accept that. I think they just let us design it. No, it wasn't going anywhere. They would go over to the Senate and the ED Fauci Lee would make sure it didn't go anywhere. Exactly

James Moore 34:36

when you were talking about the Republicans and Democrats on the sales tax, when I was talking to Wally Carson, he at one point went up to visit a counterpart in Washington, at the Washington legislature. He said he never knew the power of the Columbia River, but Republicans on this side felt one way about sales tax, and Republicans on the other side felt exactly the opposite, hardcore reasons. It's he's just. Never knew the river was that powerful. Well,

Barbara Roberts 35:02

I remember a state representative from Vancouver who was pushing for an income tax in Washington state while I was over here, pushing for a sales tax. And he said we were both in the House, yeah. And he said, you know, Barbara, if we keep working on these two issues the way we are, pretty soon, you and I are going to have a lot of time for lunch, because we're neither one going to get reelected. And that's true. That River was just It mean they hated the income tax as bad as Oregonians hated the sales tax. So it was pretty funny

James Moore 35:40

looking at the revenue committee and its work, and then we'll move to your secretary. Yeah. Was it the definitive committee when things came out of there? Did they change much when they went to other committees and then made it

to the floor? Or was that really

Barbara Roberts 35:53

they usually went directly to the floor? We just went from revenue committee to revenue Committee to the floor. Those bills very seldom had any subsequent referrals on them. So that's the definitive word is right there. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And because they really didn't have, they didn't belong anyplace else, yeah. I mean, I suppose you could have sent the sales tax to the Agriculture Committee because it affected agricultural exceptions and that kind of thing, or timber exceptions. So I suppose you could have done that, but I don't recall that very often. And because I sat on the revenue committee and chaired the caucus, the Democratic caucus, my job was, if we wanted those, and these were democratic committees, and the House Committee was the Democratic committee, so once it got out of that committee, then my caucus had we, and we never met in the Democratic caucus. We never took an official stand on a bill and said every member of the caucus will vote this way or that. We never did that. There was pressure, there was encouragement, there was push, but nobody was ever told that they had to vote one way or another on a bill. It was pretty strong democratic caucus philosophy that you couldn't do that, that they were their own vote.

James Moore 37:20

Were there? Because I know there were that's still in the days when there were conservative Democrats, they're beginning to disappear at that point. But were you, were you as the majority leader, reaching out at all to the moderate Republicans, or were they just kind of you, you knew they'd come along. Or, Yeah, how did that work?

Barbara Roberts 37:38

I didn't. I did not reach out to Republican members as a caucus leader. There were, you know, we had, like I said, John scone and George, what's his name starts with a T and, and Nancy and, and, you know, so we have good Republicans that we thought could make this message in their own caucus, and often times they voted on this on the same side with us. A lot of times those bills came out without, except for Wally priestly with, with basically pretty strong votes. We got it. My recollection is we got a lot of those tax bills out with pretty bipartisan votes. And in a lot of cases, not always, but sometimes. And my job was to make sure that my people in my caucus, did their job right. And Tom troop was chairing the revenue Committee during part of that time. And he, he was a very strong advocate for the things that came out of that committee. So when Governor Atiyeh would propose something and it would end up coming out of that committee, I not only was pushing myself as a member of the committee and a caucus leader, but I had Tom troop who was very skilled and articulate and very knowledgeable about the revenue items, but I carried a lot of the revenue bills during that time. Yeah, and, and when Tom would assign him around, he wanted him to pass, so I got a reputation as somebody who could get a revenue bill passed on the floor and but knowing I would never get Wally Priestley, some things are given. Yeah, yeah, some things are given. So, so I yeah, I would say that there was a pretty clear understanding when, whether it was governor tears bill or a bill that came from someplace else, but we had a lot of the governor's bills in that period of time. Occasionally they'd be introduced by a member, but they were, they were big spills. They were part of a package. Sometimes that would come in with several units, but they were the whole time. Concept. I, I think they looked at it as a package, and they needed to get all the components. But sometimes they were smaller bills because they were just, it was just too much stuff to consider all at once, and you had a better chance of passing one of those small bills, and you did a whole tax re, implement, implementing. So, yeah,

James Moore 40:20

clearly, a lesson lost on Congress right now. Oh, yes, yes. So you become Secretary of State. Talk about what it was like to be now. You had, in effect, an equal power base with the governor. So talk about what it was like to be there. You've got the lands board. There's a variety of things where you're coming together, talk about what that relationship was like. And you know, I know that he had weekly meetings with his department heads. Did he do that with you? You know those kinds of things?

Barbara Roberts 40:54

Well, he usually had two meetings a week, and half of his heads of his agencies would be at one meeting, like on Wednesday, and the others would be there on a Thursday. And I did those meetings. Governor Attia invited me right away. As soon as I became Secretary of State, he invited me to join in those meetings. He didn't have to do that. They were his meetings. They weren't mine, but it gave me an incredible insight into all of the agencies of government. I'd be listening to the Department of Agriculture, and I'd be listening to the veterans, I mean, to the National Guard, and I'd be,

you know, I got a chance to listen for all of that time, for those two whole years, I got a chance to listen to the to sort of the guts of government and I saw the different kind of leadership among his own people, among the agency heads. They were very different group of people, very diverse in the sense that they had very different styles and very different kind of management, very different reporting styles, and so I always considered it a privilege that I got that, because when I became governor, I had an asset I would have never had without that you could not have gained that just sitting in the State Treasurer's Office, for instance, I don't think you could have done that and so or the Secretary of State's office for that matter. So that was an incredible asset for me. Governor Atiyeh was always so respectful once, when I became Secretary of State, I got the respect from him of another statewide official, not quite equal. You can't be quite equal with the governor, but close and in my role as lieutenant governor, which we're now very aware of in Oregon at this point in time, you That's it takes you a little while to understand what that means. Except it didn't take me very long. You know why? Because very shortly after I was sworn in the Secretary of State, I got a call from Gerry one night said, Can you hold that? I'm going to take this because I'm waiting for a warrior to call back. It's the code, yeah. So let's see what it was.

James Moore 43:36

He was open. Oh, the succession. So did he call you?

Barbara Roberts 43:40

No? Gerry called. Gerry. Gerry called me and said, Madam Secretary, I just wanted to let you know that we just took Governor Atiyeh to the hospital. And then there was a second sentence, but there was a break, and then she said, everything's fine, but Well, it was by then I was, you know, on the floor, practically, you know, it scared the hell out of me. It was a really good reminder to get that so early in my term that you really are the lieutenant governor, and you really need to remember that. So when this recent issue came up with Kate Brown coming home from a national secretary of state's meeting on the governor's call, and people said to me, Well, why did she just rush home? I said, She's the lieutenant governor. You rush home? Yeah. And they said, really? And I said, I would have done the same thing. I mean, that's what you do. That's your job. Yeah, there, if there's a break in that, there's nobody in office, and until you're sworn in, there is nobody in that office. And you if, I mean, she, she didn't know he wasn't going to resign that morning or that night even, yeah, so, um, so I tried to explain to people, because I've been asked about it so many times. Times, but when Gerry said, I've just taken, they've just taken they, she said they've just taken Governor Atiyeh to the hospital. And I don't know how many days it was after I was sworn in, but it wasn't very long, and it was an eye opener. Yeah, so that's when you get the Lieutenant Governor part. You really understand that part. And in the other piece is, because you're, you're in charge of the Elections Division, you get all the political stuff that surrounds that, yeah. And so, you know, in a lot of ways, you know, Governor Atiyeh could have not included me the way he did. And, and you and, you know, of course, I served on the land board with him then, and we had other activities we did together in that period of time. But he, he really gave me an incredible asset, you know, by that and, and he was in the meetings he, you know, I'm when I'm first going to those meetings, of course, you know, this is not a new thing to him. He's already been doing it, and not a new thing to those agency heads.

I'm the new kid on the block, and I was kind of quiet for a while, which is unusual for me and but I really wanted to learn. I really wanted to listen, and my role was not to participate anyway, unless I had something from my agency that was worthy of bringing to the group. But it was, it was a college education, like a like a master's degree in government in two years. And then that was followed by Governor Goldschmidt coming into office and said, said, I don't do show and tell meetings. He thought those were Show and Tell meetings. They come and report to your governor, and everybody gets to show off. You know what they're doing? Well, there's no quicker way for a governor to learn about an agency than hearing it from that agency head, you know. Yep, every week, every week, you know. So if something gets past the governor because they haven't reported it, then you know, you've got a problem when you know something is going on there and you're not hearing it and or they don't want to report it in front of all those other agency heads. So it's, it's way more than show and tell in my estimate and estimation, and I missed it terribly when I didn't have it after that. It was, it was a loss for me to lose that that contact, the good, the other good thing, besides the learning I got out of it, was I began to know the agency heads of all of those agencies, and these were the governor's agencies heads, But I had relationships with them and in they were not deep, I don't think, but they knew who I was. I knew who they were. We were. We could have a conversation about their agency, or we could just chit chat. But Vic gave me that too.

That was another huge thing to learn, because I really got to see the management people in state government, who they

were, how they worked, how they didn't work, you know, whatever was the good, the bad and the ugly of that, and Vic just handed me that, just a gift, and that was a, could you do that when you were governor? Or a version of that, a version of that, yeah, but not nearly, is not nearly the depth and breadth that that did it, yeah, yeah. My, my staff were not supportive of the big meet, big, big meetings, but they did group meetings of all the like, all the environmental agencies and that kind of thing. But sometimes without me, they were not, you know, they were not reporting to the governor. They were more reporting to staff. And that reflected my staff more than me. But I always thought they were valuable. And if I had it to do over again, I'd do it exactly. I think it was very valuable and it, you know, in the state treasurer was also there, I mean, and you know, the Attorney General, and so you, you had all these statewide elected officials who were in one of those two meetings at least every week. And I think it was very valuable so, and I think it was for everybody, because if you, if you, if you were the head of the of the Department of Revenue, you could hear what the people were saying over in the Department of Agriculture. I thought that was incredibly, incredibly valuable. So agency heads got a lot more feel and when we were doing major five budgets, when I did the first major five budget. It's we budgeted in with all the when we tried to put the budget together, we put all of the environmental agencies together, all the agencies that were related to business together. And we would have said it, you know, you don't want us to cut your agency. Well, tell your colleagues which one of their agencies you'd like to cut, changes the whole conversation. So I think in many respects, what Vic was doing did that as well. It created a and because they were cutting budgets, then, oh yeah, they were all colleagues. They were all in it together, and they wouldn't have been quite in it. So together, I think without that, I think that made some difference. You didn't hear as much whining, yeah, because everybody was in the same boat, yeah. And I think, I think that was wise.

James Moore 50:53

I talked to Vern Duncan, who came on board, and so he attended the last McCall Cabinet meeting. And then Bob Straub this morning right after but his recollection of dealing with the governors was with Bob Straub. You would talk to Bob, and sometimes the staff would come through. When he talked to Vic, what Vic said is what the staff did. And when you talk to Neil, you couldn't talk to Neil. It just, just basically didn't happen. Yeah, was that, I mean, with, with your experience with, with Nick and Neil? Yeah.

Barbara Roberts 51:32

I mean, I mean, because Neil and I were both democrats, we probably had, I had a little bit more access than some people did, but not a lot, not a lot. And there was, I mean, sometimes he would call on me to, you know, at one time, he said to me, I've got these two, two projects I want you to look at, and I want you to chair one of them. One of them was an education reform, which I had a long history with, and the other was the reform of workers comp. He thought I'd take the education one and I took the workers comp one, and we got some stuff done ahead of the Mahoney Hall conference. We actually did some really good work. And we had, it was a quiet little behind the scenes committee, and we had labor and business and, and so we had, you know, pretty good balance of, jeez, just gonna do that? Well, I guess it's probably just him calling back to tell me what date they picked March is both of my sons, my only two children. Both of my son's birthdays are in March. My daughter in law's birthday is in March. My granddaughter's birthday is in March, and my younger son and his wife's wedding anniversary is in March. So when March comes and go, ah, you know, it's kind of like Christmas, you know, it's a little crazy, so we're trying to get everybody organized. And when the grandkids grow up and they become adults, they're not always as cooperative as they were when they were little. Children wanted gifts, you know, I don't know. I think I'm going to be in, you know, some place, you know, Mexico, then, or something, I don't know.

But anyway, so it takes a little more work, but, and there was a huge difference in the way that Atiyeh operated, and how and how Neil operated. And sometimes Neil would just pick up the phone and call and say, why don't you come over to my office? I've got somebody I want you to meet. And you never got any preparation for who you were meeting. He never said, I'm going to have so and so in the office tomorrow. And this is what so and so does, and I'd like you to be aware of who they are. And so it always made you feel sort of ignorant. You walk in and if you didn't know who the person was, he'd introduce you. And I remember him saying once, now, this is the man who is a new CEO of the biggest Oregon Corporation. Do you know who he is? Well, God, it made you just feel like an idiot. You know, Vic would never have done that. He would never have done that. He would never have tried to make you look uninformed, and so that that was a real I'm sorry, it's okay. I need staff. Yeah, I can't tell you how much last week or before the resignation was announced, and all of that stuff was happening, and the resignation was in the discussion, and I was getting, I don't know, I'd come home and there'd be 100 new emails on. My email, both my phones were just ringing. I'd be on one

phone, the other phone, and my phone is unlisted, and my cell phone, I don't hardly give out. It's like somebody wrote them on bathroom walls. I couldn't get anything done, and I was trying to get ready. I had two big speeches, and I was doing my first performing my first ever wedding ceremony. Had my little thing from the online so I could do that, and I was trying to get the ceremony written and the damn phone was I finally went out and stayed all night with my boyfriend one night and just let everything ring. I mean, except my cell phone, because my family gets me there. But so it was really, yeah, it was really, I just wished for staff during that time, I really was overwhelmed. I couldn't even take the messages down fast enough to I have lists in there, and I'm still checking them off to make sure that in between the press calls, some most of which I did, but lots of which I didn't, were other kind of messages, and they were written in these lists, and I turned the page and started another page, and I'm trying to be sure I didn't miss anything I should have picked up during that time, and I'm still doing it. Yeah. So

James Moore 56:16

yeah, that Thursday, because all hell broke loose on Wednesday and then Thursday, we didn't know what was going to happen. I had, in fact, I interviewed Gerry Thompson in Salem, then I checked my voicemail, email, nothing. I went to lunch a block and a half from the Capitol with a former student, checked 1245 got my car, went to like us, we go for a funeral, got home, and my email and my voice mail had exploded, yeah, yeah, it was just

Barbara Roberts 56:44

it just it really was. I've never had anything happen like that, yeah, I've never had that kind of phone reaction. Only once while I was governor did I ever have a phone reaction like that. It had to do with the parole board, but, and they, they gave out the number on the phone. And I came into the office, and the poor woman at the front desk was just going crazy. It was, it was awful experience, because, you know, it was one of those things they do to, you know, try to upset the office. And I'm sure they probably had some of those too, but I only remember one that came close to what I had here. I was poor little person all by myself. I need help, but I

James Moore 57:34

still have my list as well, because I was just writing, flipping writing, I was getting three to a page.

Barbara Roberts 57:41

Yeah, that's what you've got to do, yeah. And then I messed up one of the numbers. Then it was one of the people I actually wanted to call. So then I had to say, Now I wonder how I can get this the other digit that I messed up, you know? I said, Well, I could just call till I got the right one, because there's only if it's only one digit, then you can just keep calling you. Nine calls you should get it. Yeah, but the person called back three more times by the time I got perfect I became close personal friends with Pat Doris. I said I saw him down at the Capitol later in the day after the swearing in and and I walked up to him and said, I really miss hearing from you, because he was calling about four times a day. It was just awful. So what a mess. Yeah. So

James Moore 58:32

one of the fun things when you mentioned Pat Doris, I do have a small bidding war going between coin and KGW for me. So,

Barbara Roberts 58:39

oh, this is just nice. Let him do that.

James Moore 58:43

So Secretary of State, so good working relationship, graduate level introduction to government. But then you want to be an auditor, and Victor doesn't want you to be an auditor, so talk me through that.

Barbara Roberts 59:00

Well, the Secretary of State was already state audit, yeah, that that was, that's a constitutional provision. But what we wanted to do was more than just dollar and cent auditing. It was, it was, it was the accountability piece of auditing. You know, the state says you can spend \$2 million then that's an easy audit. Did you spend it or didn't you? Did you spend it all? Did you spend more than you were supposed to spend? That's a fairly easy audit. What's not an easy audit is to find out if what you're doing is making any difference, and that kind of auditing was beginning to be the norm around the

country, in places like Boston and others where they had, course, a lot of Harvard influence there, and in places where they had a lot of academic events. Eva, kind of climates. That was what was happening at the performance auditing. And I had been reading about it, watching it. Norma had talked about it, but never proceeded with it. Donna [zajong?] talked about it a little bit during the campaign, I talked about it quite a bit during the campaign, and that wasn't my reason for pushing it. I really got worried that when people think you're auditing, they think you're looking for either crime, waste or inefficiency.

Well, the word, for me, was not efficiency, it was effectiveness. Is what we're doing, making any difference? You're spending the amount the legislature said you could spend. But is it making any difference? That's what performance auditing does for you. It's a great tool for the governor, and could have been, I thought, very useful to a governor. Vic saw it as an intrusion into the executive role, and I just couldn't move him on it. He just was so convinced it was a step in his department and his departments weren't auditing performance. They weren't and we were going to offer him a tool as governor, or any other governor, a tool that all over the nation, the experts were saying, this makes this makes sense in government. We always get blamed for not doing a good job, and people use the term efficiency, but what they really are after is effectiveness, and that was the thing that I cared about. You know, if you've got a children's institution like McLaren, and you're spending millions of dollars to operate that for kids who committed crimes, what are we how's it working? Are those kids coming out of McLaren and they're back in the federal I mean, they're back in the adult system in two weeks? Are they coming out and going back to school? Are they, you know, I want, we wanted to know and we thought that a government ought to know that, and an auditor ought to know that.

So in we, you know, in the end, I got the performance auditing. Neil agreed with me. And when he was running, I badgered him about it, and so it was one place he agreed right away. So I had his vote and his support and his endorsement when I started on it the next time. And so that was, that was, I think, probably the biggest disagreement, public and private, that Vic and I ever had. I just, I knew how he was looking at it, and I could understand that. But, I mean, I know later on, when I became governor, that those performance audits being done by the Secretary of State were valuable. They were very valuable, particularly with the first major five budget. I had audits that said this isn't working. You know, this is not producing what it says it will produce. So those over that period of time with measure five, for that four years, I was cutting budgets all the time, and I had this new tool. It took a while for it to, you know, really develop, because the people who do that kind of auditing are, are different kind of auditors. They're not very few CPAs. Yeah, they're not CPAs. And so we were hiring a new kind of auditor in that process and doing examining the agencies through, through a different lens. And so there's no question it was a big change, but we were still doing all the dollar and cent audits, we just, we just were, and then how we really made it successful for a while, at least until it got to be acceptable, was the legislature chose the first number of performance audits. And we perform we audit it. Performance audit. What they wanted, yeah. And they got the tool in the legislature as well, right? So they buy into it, yeah, yeah.

And, and for us, we wanted to show that it could work. And, you know, we saved millions of dollars in this just first five or six audits where we could show that we had saved it so, but that was the that was really hard for me, because Vic just was not going to buy into that. It didn't matter how I designed it, or how I how I redesigned it, he wasn't going to buy into it. And and I was pretty upset about that, and we talked about it, but I. I just, I was really irritated. It was just, it seems so, it seems so contrary to a good businessman, you know, because performance audits are a business man's tool in a company, yeah, and they basically do performance audits as much as they do financial audits. But somehow this just for him, it was just an intrusion for the secretary of state into the governor's authority, and I was never going to get by that, and I understood that. So when, when Vic's term was over, I knew that I had to, if I wanted it, I had to get Goldschmidt to be there. And I probably, I don't know whether he cared that much. He just said, Sure, you know, that kind of thing, but maybe he thought it was a good idea. I guess he did, but it was just that was the difference so and the other big project I had, through Vic's term and then through Neil's, was the archives building, because I started that, well, he was, you know, I made the first legislative request for design money and to do the first look at it. Yeah, serious, look at it. And, I mean, I can't remember now, I think, I think I went through four regular legislative sessions package here, and got that one done, and then we move on to the next one, and then we get another piece done, and then we get the land it all straightened out. And it was a very complex, very complex project. It, when I wrote in it, in my autobiography, I I partly chose that in such detail to kind of show how much detail there is in a big project like that. Because, you know, you get one piece done.

Okay, we're going to let you look at the design, Madam Secretary of State, but don't you dare go one inch past that. So now we've got a proposed design, and then we've got to talk about land, and then we have to move the houses that are on there. And then we, you know, every time, you know, then in every committee in the world had to approve it, in the legislature in the city of Salem. And, I mean, it really was complex. And so I thought it was kind of a lesson in the workings of government, and it had a successful ending. But, you know, then that stupid carpet thing. And you know, the thing that was so funny about that the only reason that ever came up was because the old building were audits where archives was held. The other half of that was a carpet warehouse. And the guy who owned the carpet warehouse did not want them to move out of the building, right? So he liked the carpet thing, and so he showed that he could do cheaper carpet than we of course, he did cheaper carpet. It was junk, you know, and but that's where it started from. Was from there. And, you know, this, this, but this building came in on time, under budget, you know, it did everything you would want a really important building to do, and we got just killed on that goddamn carpet. But I never drive by the building. I don't feel proud of it. I mean, it was, you know, but and, and that was one that that could have said to me, you know, I don't know that we need this. I don't know that we can afford this. I mean, he could have stepped up enough and supportive of that, but he didn't, you know, and I think partly because, as I knew him better over the years, I realized that he liked the history. He liked the history a lot. And his own history is so beautifully on display at Pacific University. It just represents, I think his belief in the things he saved tells you he cared about the history. Yeah, you know, and some people toss stuff all the time, and they don't have any sense of it being historical. And I think those of us who care about history, know, it's those little things that make the history fun and exciting and interesting, and so you, you know it's, it's like Carrie Jim check with his with his things at the Oregon Historical Society, he shows off those Oh yeah, things Every time there's a public meeting, because it's so exciting. It's the little thing that's so exciting, absolutely.

James Moore 1:09:25

Let me show you a fun thing here. I have to spell it correctly. There we go. So this is just one. Just one of those fun things. This is the memo from Gerry to the governor about who was with them and who wasn't on the unitary tax. So you read the memo, and as you go down then there he's written in more names.

Barbara Roberts 1:09:56

Isn't this wonderful? So

James Moore 1:09:58

it's just doing things like. That she saved her, he saved and, yeah, you know, just so valuable. Oh, yeah,

Barbara Roberts 1:10:05

these are just, these are terrific. And then he added some North senators, huh,

James Moore 1:10:15

yeah. And she, he didn't ever tell her, these are with us or not. He just added them and they gave it back to her. Your list isn't quite complete. Well, he didn't say that. He just did it. But, yeah, that kind of stuff is

Barbara Roberts 1:10:32

just funny to see. Isaac Regan stripes. Name is Ike Rebecca Regan stripe, because nobody ever called Isaac Regan stripe Ike. That was kind of stopped me when I read Pamela Hank Crawford. That's a name I haven't thought about for a long time. God isn't that exciting? Now? Why is she way down here?

James Moore 1:11:03

I don't know

Barbara Roberts 1:11:06

that may be appropriate, but yeah, God, she was hard to wear

James Moore 1:11:12

when I was talking with Hardy. He's not sure that he was actually sworn in the speaker when Victor was inaugurated, because they had a kerfuffle in the house. Yeah, they did. And so he can't quite remember, and I was remembering, it turned out that there's, there's a five day rule. Once you start, if the house isn't formed by five days, then you know, the

session is suspended, or something. That was a wonderful tool to get people to vote, yeah. But I was just remembering when may Yee held up the organization of the Senate for, you know, like two weeks. Oh, yeah, it was, and it was for what?

Barbara Roberts 1:11:52

But she always there, you know, there used to be these [?]-isms that got told around the Capitol building, you know, things that she'd said that when she didn't understand something, and she spoke out in a committee and the one I always remember the most was the one about the school busses. Do you know that one? There was a piece of legislation that would require that every school bus had a backup signal, so when it was backing up, it made noise, and she reported that she was going to vote against that stupid bill, because all you had to do when you were backing up was back up and just honk your horn all while you were Backing up. And we were thinking, oh my god, 12 school children run over by bus driver, you know I mean, but she just, she never wanted to spend money on anything like that. And the other one was the big argument she got in in a committee one day with a agency head who was reporting how much something was going to cost, and he said, you know, the estimate on this is, it's going to be five \$500,000 and then is the testimony went on and more questions. Were asking me, you went back to him and said, Now the cost on this again is, and he said, it's a half a million dollars. And she said, Make up your mind. See, you called it 500,000 and now you're telling us a half a million. And what do you do? There you go.

So there used to be a whole series of those, and in because she'd served in both the House and Senate, we got to get, oh, the stories. If anybody had ever printed them, they would have been a really amazing set of but my final contact with her when, after Frank died, and he was he still had an office because he hadn't. We hadn't cleaned it out yet. We were ready to clean it out. You know, after he was out of the Senate and may you was going to get the office, and she got so anxious to get in there, she started moving Frank stuff out. She bought she got staff in there, and they're boxing Frank's office. Oh, my Christ, I almost went through the ceiling. You know, she's in my husband's office, who just died, and she's over there box, getting her staff, she wasn't boxing, of course, getting her staff to box all his stuff, to clean his files out. Oh, I was furious. I was, I was still home. I took five or six days off after Frank's services before I came back to the Capitol. And by the time I came back, she was almost done cleaning out his office. And I found it out when she was part way done, I just, I was just devastated, because, you know, I don't. Know, if things got thrown away, I don't know, you know, I think they did. Yeah, and it was very upsetting. So, you know, that was my last encounter with her, and that so that left a very bad taste in my mouth. But you know, that's not many people. I don't think anybody else in that building would have done that. No, I don't think there's another person of either party who would have done that. It was just, it was

James Moore 1:15:25

just on her own planet. Yep,

Barbara Roberts 1:15:27

that's the case. So,

James Moore 1:15:30

so talk to me. I mean, he leaves office in January of 87 any encounters with him, you know, around the coffee shop he might pop in or something

Barbara Roberts 1:15:45

I don't remember other than, you know, I always knew when we when we showed up for a new governor to be sworn in, or for a new session to start right, or for the state's birthday. I always knew he'd be there. There was never any question, Will is Vic Atiyeh coming? Of course, he's coming. I mean, he, he always was there for those things. So when they did Christmas holidays in the capital, he was there. I mean, so he was just not unexpected to run into him and so. And even after I went away, after I left the governor's office and went back east for those four and a half years and came back, I mean, the first things I started doing going to those things that I missed, like state birthdays and things like that and so. And Ted Kulongowski started the governor, the governor's Gold Award. So then every year I knew also that Vic would be there, that that other thing that was so special between the governors and and so it seemed like as time went on, when Neil Goldschmidt was no longer in public as a former governor and Kitzhaber between his second and third term, when he had that eight years off, he wasn't much in evidence, and Ted Kulongowski was busy being governor. It was often

just dick and me and we, we kidded about, you know, we'd show up any place, you know, for the opening of a, you know, an envelope, you know, I mean, we laughed about it sometime, but, you know, we'd be at Camp Rosenbaum, and we'd be at some veterans parade, and we'd be at some tribal thing, Vic, more than me. He certainly had a longer history there than I did. And then the governor's gold awards started, and we were, of course, always there. And we were at state's birthday. And I mean, just, I mean it just, it seemed like we were just at so many things and and often it was just the two of us, you know, in and then once Ted left office, then Ted was more attentive, like the two of us were, and so we had, we had that wonderful opportunity to spend time with camp Rosenbaum and places like that, and it was one of my fondest Memories in you probably won't want to quote this, but, but, well, you have to be sensitive about these things sometimes.

But the Courtland Rose Festival Association sold an auction item where Governor Atiyeh, Governor, Kulongowski and I were sold at auction, and the event took place in at the Allison Hotel in Newburgh, when they actually did it. And it was, it was a series of tables, actually was three big tables, and the people who bought seats at them, Vic and Ted and I would change tables, yeah. So, so we were all coming to the Ellison hotel, and it was a cold, dark, windy, nasty night, one of those awful nights I hated driving out there. Was driving out by myself, and it was cold and dark, and I didn't know exactly where I was supposed to park, and all that. And I remember walking into the hotel and looking down toward the the other side of the lobby where the fireplace were was, and there was governor Atiyeh and several other. There people, most of whom I knew, but not all, and they were standing there chatting in front of the fireplace. And Vic looked up, and I there's kind of that long haul. It runs right into the lobby area and Vic looked up and saw me coming, and he stopped. He just walked away from these guys he was talking to. Just walked away from him and started walking toward me. And it was right after Christmas, so it must have been January, and I had just sent out my my holiday newsletter, and for the first time in print, I had talked about Don Nelson, the man I'm who is my very special friend now, and, and, and I'd use the word you know about falling in love and, and Vic got the letter like he always got my letters, and, and he came up, and he put his arms around me, and he said, Oh, Barbara, I'm So sad. I thought I still had a chance.

I and, you know, I couldn't tell it, because, for Delores, it wouldn't have been appropriate for me to tell it, you know, I would not have said anything that is right, would even hint at anything that would be that would do that. But, but it just, it just tickled me so much. He said, Oh, Governor, I got your news, your Christmas newsletter. I'm so sad. I thought I still had a chance. And I came home and I told Don that, and I told one of my sons that it was just, it was just so warm and sweet and cute and but I it just, it was just, you know, there's some of those moments that happen, that that you know, that are so personal and after you've been with around someone that many years. But you know, we still, we're still former governors, and we behave like former governors, hopefully and but I can remember a number of times. I remember his coming up to me at Oregon Public Broadcasting. We were both walking into the studios one afternoon for something, and it was right after the story about Neil Goldschmidt and the scandal broke there, and he said, Governor, I'm so sorry. I mean, it was the assumption that I would be really sad, you know. And of course, you were so stunned, you didn't know whether you were sad or what, but, you know, yeah, but the just the fact that he understood that might be upsetting to me, yeah. And then we had a little discussion about it after that, but, but, you know, every time there's one of those points in time where you could, you could, you could, sort of ignore it and not be personal. Vic never did that. He always, he always took the, you know, the personal side, seriously, and that was really nice. But that night, I just, I, I thought about it so many times. It always makes me laugh, and I wanted to tell it at the service, but I just, I just knew I couldn't do that. I knew that wasn't appropriate. His family was there, and was not the kind of thing you can tell because it might be misunderstood. And so I, you know, it was done in great humor, but it was just, you know, and he would do that with me. I mean, we'd go over, I have something a VIX, but you can't have it, but I'll show it to you, okay, I probably should let you have it, but, well, you know where we are, I know, but I want you to see it, because I have to use it for a little bit longer before I actually hanging in my kitchen. This is this, oh yeah, and look at the back, wonderful. And it was given to me at the last at the last camp Rosenbaum, yeah. And they said, We think you should have this for a while. The Rosenbaum family gave it to me. Said, We think you should have this for a while. And so I'd like to wear it a couple more times to camp Rosenbaum, but then I'll probably just turn it over to the archives. You know where we are, yeah, but isn't that great? I don't know whether he made this one himself or not. You never know, but he sure signed it fabulous. Isn't that great? Fabulous?

James Moore 1:24:34

So one last question, yeah, the ex governor's club, is it the shared experience of being a governor that turns into friendship? Is it you guys just get along together and you know, go, have to go to the same events and so you you build

a relationship? I mean. Well, I mean, people talk about this, you know, with with the with the Presidents too. I mean, yeah, the way Clinton and Bush too have bonded, you know what?

Barbara Roberts 1:25:11

Well, you know, of each of the governors that there's just less than a handful of people that you know who've had that experience. So it's, it is a very limited group in number, and I don't think you can regardless of political affiliation or experience of any other kind about being a governor. There's no way you can look at another governor and not know what they've been through, not know how hard it is, how pressured it is, how much you give up, how many demands there are on your life, how much your family gets neglected you. You know all that because you've been there so nobody else can quite I think, have the respect that you have for another governor, because nobody else knows what it's like. I mean it, I think that's it. As much as anything, there is a bond that comes from that understanding and you, it doesn't matter how many years go by. You just, I mean, I Bob Strava, I can remember even when he was quite a bit older and not in good health and she's in his Alzheimer's was there. I can remember I have a picture of Neil and Straub and me and my parents that were was taken at a fundraiser when I was running for governor. And I've always loved the photograph, because, you know, you, at the time, you didn't get many photographs with three governors in him, and then I have associated Oregon industries. I'm sure you've come across the picture of the boys and me. We always refer to that as the boys and me. But, you know, there weren't many of those pictures, and there weren't many times we had that many governors. And the pictures were always important to me because they felt so unique and special and historical. And I have a bunch of stacks in there right now of newspapers that I'm going to clip pictures out of, of tape brown on me that were taken over the last few days. Yeah, and it's a lot, it's a lot of photographs, and I'm sure I don't have them all, but I have a lot and, and I know they're historical photographs, and someday somebody's going to want them, yeah, and, and even though they're news clips, they can go back and find originals, they'll know where to find them, yeah. And, as you isn't writing this book now, you know you get to pay for a lot of photographs. But

James Moore 1:28:03

yeah, we're having an interesting conversation with the Oregonian right now. Really, they're selling theirs, all of them, all of them a million prints they gave they they probably already have sold them, but they kept the rights. It's so we first found out because Denny Miles was just trolling around a few weeks ago and found a bunch of them on eBay. And so what they you sell them to a company. The company then digitizes them. You keep the rights, but the prints themselves. The company then sells to make beackets money and make a profit. I did not know they were doing that. Yeah. So they had a funny quote from Don Hamilton, who used to be reported there. His photo was on sale for like \$22.95 he said, Who on earth would pay \$22.95 for my photograph? Yeah, but there's a there's a ton of them of we just looked at the Vic ones, and you just go to eBay and put them in, and there's just all sorts of them. So I contacted the Oregonian. We're trying to figure out what the deal is, you know, all that kind of stuff. It's amazing. Wow.

Barbara Roberts 1:29:08

Well, you know, I paid for Oregonian photographs. I paid for, I paid for Associated Press photographs, and they're a little bit more expensive. A couple of them were so cheap that all I had to do was tell them I'd send them a free book and the photographer would let me off the hook. The advocate the African American paper, they'd give me any picture I'd print they were happy to have, as long as I gave them credit. And well, the other person who has photographs, of course you must know, is Gerry Lewin. And, yeah, yeah. God if his house ever burns down, history goes down the drain. Oh yeah. It scares the hell out of me. Yeah. I went in there and I looked at dozens and dozens and dozens of photographs when I was doing. My book, and I just there they are in that house, yeah, sort of unprotected, yeah, God, yeah, it's so scary. No, so, okay, yeah, that's interesting. Well, and I may, I may have some photographs of Vic, and if I come, if I can come across them, I'll let you have them. Okay, great, thanks. I'll look and see what I've got. Because sometimes we get these casual photographs taken on somebody's camera, you know, family member, you know, at some event. Yeah,

James Moore 1:30:30

Yep, absolutely. Do you have contact information for Governor Kulongowski? I do. Would you be willing to share it?

[The recording finishes with discussion of how to contact Kulongowski.]