

## David Sarasohn interview on Atiyeh

An interview of David Sarasohn regarding Oregon's Governor Victor Atiyeh, recorded on Feb. 17, 2015. Sarasohn was a former history professor who became the Opinion Editor for The Oregonian newspaper in 1983. The interviewer, James Moore, was as professor of political science at Pacific University and was Atiyeh's biographer.

The interview includes discussion of: Atiyeh's governorship, focusing on his economic strategies, political dynamics, and personal anecdotes; how Atiyeh's administration faced the Recession of the early 1980s, leading to a bipartisan agreement on an income tax surtax; Atiyeh's efforts to recruit business and promote international trade, particularly with Japan; Oregon's Unitary Tax reforms; Atiyeh's role in managing the Rajneesh movement; his international trade missions, including to the Middle East; Atiyeh's pragmatic approach, his relationship with Oregon's legislature, and the evolving political landscape in Oregon.

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.

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[The recording begins mid-conversation.]

James Moore 00:03

Yeah, just dots. And it's kind of fun for me, because I've started a bidding war between a couple of television stations. So hey, we'll see what comes of that. So you're totally out of the O [i.e. The Oregonian]. Just basically writing columns that...

David Sarasohn 00:21

I just write my columns and email them in, and they print them and send me a chat. Yeah, that's great. Not been to the new offices and don't have no interest in, yeah, in going there, yeah.

James Moore 00:37

It's just fascinating. Also just seeing the personnel and stuff. I just talked to Dennis Theriault at the Portland Mercury, who's going to start working in sailing for the other Oh, so it's like, geez. Well,

David Sarasohn 00:51

they desperately needed to strengthen that. I mean, it was, it was down to Jeff and Ian Culkins, who's very young, yeah? So, yeah,

James Moore 01:04

yeah. And Christian didn't last, so there you go, yeah,

David Sarasohn 01:09

when, what's happening with Christian now that Yeah?

James Moore 01:14

Mean, the last I heard he, he's been a good flag. So, like, when something would break in the alignment week that I would be in, he'd call me later and say, My employers want me to do this, and then we'd talk afterwards. So yeah, that kind of stuff. So the Atiyeh biography, all this is archival quality, and we'll eventually go into our archives. And when Vic asked me to write, it turns out his vision and my vision were the same, which is why I said yes. And so it's not just about him. And you said you had limited knowledge of Him, and that's great, but it's also about the times. So it's, you know, the 70s, but especially the 1980s you know, segue into the 1990s what was the time like? Economics, politics, the whole shebang. So that's where your brain comes in. You know, a nice perspective putting things in, although, you know, I have to say, as good social scientists, we have to look there and say, in light of the governor resigning tomorrow

and a new governor, we may have interesting frames as we look at this just today. So So tell me what you you know know about. Were you here when he was governor? Did you come right after?

David Sarasohn 02:33

I arrived here in 1977 Okay, to teach and read right, and I went into journalism in 1980 at Oregon Magazine. I was there for two years, and then I went back east for a year to New Jersey, and then I came back to be on the editorial board of The Oregonian in October of 83.

James Moore 03:00

so that's why your articles appear in the rajneeshee book. Just so you know, I'm this close from getting the key people in the rajneeshee stuff from inside the administration to tell me all. So, just excellent. Finally getting that side out would be this

David Sarasohn 03:22

great story that really should be told. Yeah, yeah.

James Moore 03:26

So, what do you remember about Atiyeh as governor?

David Sarasohn 03:32

Well, let me start with the first part, when he was running for governor, okay, yeah, in 1978 and you know this, this was a very remarkable thing, it seemed to me. There were, there were three candidates in 1978 No, there was Tom McCall trying to do a comeback, and there was Atiyeh, and there was Roger Martin, who was the Republican House leader from Lake, Lake Oswego. And what was remarkable about this was that Atiyeh was considered the Conservative candidate, you know, the alternative to the whole Hatfield McCall, moderate republican ascendancy. Yeah, and it's always struck me that thinking back to that, and 10 years later, Atiyeh was the face of the moderate group wing of the party. The party just sort of completely changed around it at that time. And, you know, it was, it was also impressive that he defeated McCall. McCall was already at legend. Status, yeah, at this point, you know, he'd been out for four years after being Governor for for eight years. And he, he was also, you know, in very bad health. And this was, this was pretty, pretty clear at the time, and you couldn't talk to him without this, this being evident. And also, you know, what we would have thought of is the moderate vote was somewhat divided by Roger Martin, but still it was, it was, it was an achievement for him to get the nomination. And you know, then he defeated Straub in what was a very good Republican year. But he also came out of this situation, which is almost unimaginable now. I mean, he was head of the Republicans in the Senate. You know, at times when they were wildly outnumbered,

James Moore 06:03

there were six or seven, right? It was

David Sarasohn 06:06

20. Was 20. It was 23, to seven, yes. And, you know, in in a situation like that, you didn't really have party line votes, right? You know there was, there was no point in Republicans holding to a party line situation. So everybody, you know, work together. And if you look at the arrangements of of the Senate, when, when, when Atiyeh was there, it was really a way that was unimaginable today. I mean, there were democratic state senators, conservative democratic state senators from Grants Pass and Klamath Falls and Pendleton. You know, there was Republican state senators who would be considered a pretty, pretty liberal, you know, lb day, a teamsters leader from Salem, who was a Republican state senator, yeah, and you wouldn't have any of this today, but at the time, it was a really non partisan operation because of the variations between the two parties and also the overwhelming advantage that the Democrats had. So he really came out of that situation. So although he was a Republican governor and working with a Democratic legislature, it was a way people could could still work together. And when you got to the massive economic downturn in the 1980s when suddenly the timber industry just collapsed, and what had seemed to be an endless Oregon rise in prosperity and population throughout the 1970s suddenly came into just screeching hump and reversal, you know, there, there, there were ways for everybody to work together.

James Moore 08:26

Yeah, yeah. So do you see that as a function of more of the times or more of the extreme minority the Republicans had in the Senate?

David Sarasohn 08:38

No, it was, it was really the times, because, first of all, at the time, Oregon politics was completely dominated by moderate Republicans, you know, Hatfield and Pat would, Dave from Meyer, Norma, Paulus, right? You know, various people who are state treasurer at the time, and these were folks who were accustomed to working with Democrats, who weren't that distant from Democrats, and no, they found ways to work across that would be very difficult to imagine today. Yeah, and you know, Democrats had this huge majority in the State Senate, a much smaller majority in the state house, but it was not difficult for for them to work with with the Republicans who dominated the executive branch. And you know, he, he fit into that, although he was among the more conservative Republicans at the time. Now they, and the the other thing they changed. I mean, two, two things changed. The. First was the structure of the Oregon Republican Party, because you got to a point in beginning in the 80s, but really coming into fruition in the 90s, where these folks could no longer win Republican primaries. So there was a change in the Republican Party, but, you know, there was, there was also a change in the Democratic Party, and the idea of Democrats representing, you know, the places I talked about, you know, Klamath Falls and Pendleton and Grant's past became impossible. And, you know, it seems to me, there was, there was always, there was an analogy between the way Democrats were sort of cleared out of the south on the race issue and the way Democrats were cleared out of rural Oregon on the environmental issue. Yeah.

James Moore 11:00

So you see the environmental issue is, the key was, did the Reagan ascendancy play a role in that, or was this? Did you see more of a local environmental angle, resource angle?

David Sarasohn 11:12

I think it was. It was mostly the resource angle. I mean, the timber industry collapsed, and people in rural Oregon saw democratic tree huggers from Portland as being a part of that, okay. And thus it became very difficult for for Democrats to contend, yeah, yeah. And much of the state. It's

James Moore 11:40

interesting, as I'm talking to people, people still conflate the spotted owl with the beginning of the 80s and the recession. Spotted Owl didn't come along until the mid 80s, right? So it's going to be something I'm going to really peg down and point out, you know how memories work and things, but it's, it's just fascinating.

David Sarasohn 11:57

Timber collapse, you know, was, was was pre spotted out. Yes, it always was, the early 80s. And, you know, it had a lot to do with no 14, 15% interest rates and pretty much the demise of a housing industry and sort of the market for timber collapsed, you know, before the the environmental issues came about, but there was still the the beginning of the sense that these, these environmentalists had something to do with it.

James Moore 12:34

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely so. So take me to Tia as a governor, you're going to the editorial board 83 so the economy has already fallen apart. We're trying to figure out what to do. Eventually, he decides that what we need to do is go to every country in the world and recruit business and things like that. But so talk about him as governor in this in this time,

David Sarasohn 13:04

there are two things, though there were striking about it. The first was the financial response to it. Now the idea is, yes, I mean, everybody cut things a great deal, and, you know, whacked away in all the various parts of of the state government. But then you got, got to a point where he and the legislative leadership, you know, concluded, as a as a bipartisan basis, that you you really couldn't whack away anymore, and they agreed on an income tax, surtax, you know, again, a very difficult thing to imagine happening today, yeah, especially a difficult thing to imagine a Republican governor who had been elected as an explicitly conservative Republican governor just agreeing to do this. But it happened. And you know, it happened, you know, relatively smoothly as I recall, and you know, if you set what happened in the early 1980s against what happened in the early 2000s with the five consecutive special sessions, which

didn't really end up amounting to much, you know, you You see the difference between a system where people were expected to make things somehow work out and a system where people were expected to nail down their colors on one side and just hold on to them. Yeah. So, so this was really a significant i. Achievement on his part. And then you got to the other aspect of it, to his belief that his role as governor was to become economic salesman for Oregon. And this was not uncontroversial. I mean, clearly nobody was against going around and telling people that Oregon was a good place and a place to make money, and you should be willing to come there. But you got to the major controversy of his second term, the unitary tax, yeah, where Oregon faltered its tax system to collect and the way it was going to collect money from corporations that were not based here. And you know this, was clearly a non negotiable demand on the part of the Japanese, you know, I don't want to say it was quite a gun to the head situation, but it was clearly a yes nose situation, and he did it. Yeah, I remember there was an omen cartoon at the time of, you know, nicotine is signing the repeal of the unitary tax on the deck of a battleship. That's great.

James Moore 16:38

Yeah, yeah. That's great. Yeah. I just last week was talking to Gerry Thompson, Chief of Staff, and she, what she says is exactly what you observed. They had one particular meeting. I can't remember which company, NEC or something, but they were coming back with the official car, and they weren't saying anything. But the next morning, they got up and they called each other and said, we just have to rebuild the unitary tax. That's just the way around it. And there have been other companies that had said it, but it was very clear they had reached that point. And it was,

David Sarasohn 17:15

it was a political decision, but, you know, it was also symbolic of the change in the Oregon economy and the change in the American economy that we were going to be from then on, a place where foreign manufacturers came in and assembled things and did business, which was clearly a reversal of the immediate post war, World War Two situation where Americans sent things out to be assembled in other countries. Yeah,

James Moore 17:53

yeah. So big, big shift. Talking about the unitary tax, there are some who say that the trade off with the budget wasn't worth it. In effect, I wrote the piece for the Oregon encyclopedia project, and very interesting how long that takes to go through. But one of the anonymous comments was about that basically said schools took a big hit because of it, and I looked cursorily as going through, and I couldn't find any evidence of that, and so I didn't even deal with it in that article. But it's something that I come up you know, people, people still remember that I'm going to talk to our Luminar later, and he has that sense as well. Did you get a sense of the unitary tax was not a great trade off. It might be initially or anything like that.

David Sarasohn 18:50

Well, I can't claim to be economically or mathematically expert on that, but we had a great desperation at that point for jobs, and the idea that this was going to produce jobs. I mean, it was a national recession. You know, Oregon's unemployment rate was above the national unemployment rate, and the question is, people either were or weren't going to come in and open factories and provide jobs and employ Oregonians, and they are this. This was a much more immediate and pressing situation. So jobs, number one, jobs, jobs were number one and no, also, you know, it wasn't like there. There was a real alternative here that, you know, if we didn't repeal the unitary tax, these companies were going to come in, set up operations and pay taxes at the previous level. Yeah. There was clearly, you know, a beginning at this point of a major shift in the taxing situation, a reduction of the proportion of taxes that were paid by corporations, an increase in the proportion of taxes that were paid by individuals, to the point now where our revenues are almost entirely individual income taxes. But you know, at the time, it seemed we were in a situation so desperate to try to find some employment that, you know, we, we made the deal, yeah, yeah. And no, there was a sort of political taking away at Edith, because of this. But, you know, I don't think there was, there were. There was a major wave of opposition.

James Moore 21:04

Okay, that's great. Anything you know, other other things that you remember, I mean, you were at Oregon magazine, and then you come back and there's so go and so Rajneesh, for instance, the impression, especially reading the Oregon magazine based book is, and it's very explicit in there. You know, nobody in the government was doing anything. So what, what was it like at the time? What were your perceptions about what was going on and how, how that was playing out? Viktor himself, and this is how I'm going to pry information out of some of the sources inside Vic said that the, you

know, he could have handled the Rajini, she's and he could have handled the recession, but handling both was really, really, really hard, and so that those kind of bookends is going to say, you know, the rajis are really important. We need to talk so tell me about about the rajneeshees and perceptions about what the state was doing. Vic's role, that kind of thing.

David Sarasohn 22:06

No, I remember him having a very active role in this. The person who comes to mind is Norma Paulus, who was running the elections, and that just had so much to do with the rajneeshee attempt to take over antelope, and later to try to take take over Wasco County, and her role and her prominence in that and it was a very strange situation with with the rajanisish, because the lethal, malevolent aspects of it were not immediately apparent. And, you know, it looked like there was this strange group, which seemed considerably off beat, but generally cheerful and not dangerous. Yeah, and they were coming into an area, putting a lot of money into it, which, again, was a considerable interest of Oregon in the, you know, early, mid 80s. And it was, it was interesting that this, this, this, this was happening, you know, this was remarkably small town, and there were, like a voting population of 12 people, yeah. And, you know, they there. There was this one or two room school which had a dozen kids, and suddenly there were hundreds and 1000s of these well educated, affluent people streaming in from all over the country, all over the world. And there was a while where people thought that the the antelope folks were just small minded, small town NIMBY people. Yeah, and, you know, I did a piece for Oregon magazine in the summer of 82 and we, we spoke to a lot of them. And they, they were, they were interesting people who were encountering something they they had never imagined. And then after that, of course, everything, got much, much more poisonous and dangerous. And, you know, we discovered all these things later on about what they were doing, but I really don't remember it being. A prime concern of his. It was mostly a matter of Norma Paulus making sure the process worked the way it was supposed to work, right? You know? I mean, he was certainly not sending in large numbers of the state troopers or the National Guard to try to maintain order in the vicinity. And I think he was, he was quite willing to leave that to her.

James Moore 25:29

Yeah, that's good. Vic, then, I mean, leave, let's leave aside the Rajesh. She's Vic, is Trader Vic going on all these trips. So what was the image of that? I mean, Trader Vic was a pejorative at the beginning. It became, you know, something he ended up being proud of. This is whole business after he left the office. So talk about Trader Vic heading off to, you know, especially East Asia, because the Middle East, you know, all those. So what was that like?

David Sarasohn 26:04

Well, for East Asia, I mean, there, there was a sense that, you know, we really needed some kind of different economic future, and he was going off in search of it. And there was, it was the first, he was the first governor, really, to do this. But you can see all kinds of governors since then have gone off on these regular trade missions to, you know, and then, then it was in Japan, and then it became South Korea, and now it's China. So he really did sort of set this pattern, which, which extended and broadened afterwards, yeah, and the the Middle East was, was, was something different, because this was a very striking thing, that this, this was the first American governor of Middle Eastern origins. And, you know, there, he was going back there, and, you know, no, nobody thought that we were going to have strong, booming jobs producing trade relationship with Syria and Lebanon. But there was clearly an impressive historic presence to his going there, and it had, it had more to do with building those kinds of ties. And I think for him, who also it was, it was a very personal thing.

James Moore 27:47

I talked to Mike Donahue, who was one of the journalists who went on that, that first trip. And, you know, there's the entire group of Oregon business people. And in Saudi Arabia, Mike was talking to a wheat farmer, and the wheat farmer said, you know, had good, good yields. But then Mike said, Well, what happens if the yields drop? Said, Oh, don't worry, there's oil under the entire so you have alternatives. And none of those alternatives wouldn't involve Oregon in any way, shape or form. So Middle East is a different, different ball of wax. Yeah, yeah. I'm discovering all sorts of interesting briefings and debriefings with the CIA and National Security Council and that kind of stuff. So he's an effective unofficial ambassador of the Reagan administration. Just, just fascinating to look at other things during his governorship, that stand out. He, for instance, had weekly press availabilities, had open houses. Did any of that, you know, hit your radar? Well, he

David Sarasohn 28:53

come into the editorial board frequently, and it always, it was a very casual atmosphere when, when, when he did. And, you know, it was, it was really a very, very casual atmosphere at the time. I mean, people on the editorial board were people who'd been writing about this for a long time, and had known him for a long time, and I remember and he and Hatfield and Packwood would come in, you know, it would be Vic and Mark and Bob, which struck me as a little unusual. And exactly I've, I've sort of been, been careful not to do. But you know, these, these, these people who had been, you know, operating at these levels of Oregon for, for a long time. And you know, also know he was a fairly enthusiastic smoker. And you know this. This was a time. This was at a time when you could actually still smoke in the same building, yeah, and I think it was Herbert tarritans, Oh, yeah. So, and this, this, this, this would just be, be constant, yeah? Me, he, he came in and I you know he was, he was clear. He was directing, talking about this. And you know, there's a dramatic difference between you know his, his visits, and say, the you know his, his successor as governor, which, which was gold because, I mean, you you would ask Goldschmidt a question, and you know, he would sort of roll out this rapid fire five minute intensely want the answer to it. And it was, it was, it was nothing like that with, with a team, a team would just give, give you a very relatively brief, straight, straightforward answer to these things. But you know, he certainly knew how state government operated. And you know, I think about the the 1982 re election, right? And, you know, here was this situation where the state was in a very bad economic situation. There was a national recession, a national Democratic trend, and there was Ted cool and gusty, who had surprised everybody by getting them 44 45% against Bob Packard in 1980 so they sent him out again against Tia in 82 he just got swamped. Yeah, you know, he lost by about as much as you know, anyone had lost the governor's race in

James Moore 32:05

Bill Sizemore to beat the record, right?

David Sarasohn 32:09

And if you consider that, I mean, not not only was that a historic victory, but it was the last time a Republican won a governor's race in Oregon. I mean, you you can see what a personal triumph this, this was for for Atiyeh that you know, he could do this in the midst of this, this economic problem, but people really had a sense that he was doing what he could do, and he was dealing with the problem not in a partisan manner, but in the practical and a most and most hopeful manner that that you could look for

James Moore 32:55

that brings up the concept of political capital, something that John kits clearly ran out of a week and a week and a half ago, did you, did you ever see a to or talk to people, kind of out in the hustings who were saying, wow, you know, he's our governor. He's the guy. I mean, did, did people respond to him like that? You know, Tom McCall was popular, right? I mean, people, when Tom McCall came through the town, people remembered it. It's like they put up blacks at went through probably more of those towns. But you know, what was the Did you sense the enthusiasm? Or he's one of us, you know, or that, what did you sense?

David Sarasohn 33:35

Well, he did go through all of those, those towns. And, you know, he was, he was a presence in those places. And, you know, again, you know Omen, who had an incredible eye for these things, would, would always draw him wearing this pin. And the pin was the state of Oregon, with a very small diamond where Baker was and he had been given this pin, no appearing in Baker for its centennial, Centennial or whatever, and he would always wear it. And it was sort of a reflection of his connection out to all of the different places in in the state. And, you know, there, then there, there was a sense, again, that this was a a reasonable person making reasonable decisions. He was very fond of bargain. He was certainly never, you know, in in any sense, an electric figure, right? A galvanizing figure the way, the way McCall was, yeah, and I remember once I. You know a member of the the editorial board went up to to Vancouver for an appearance by the last Republican governor of Washington. You know, Spillman. Yeah, thanks for and he came back after watching Spillman and said, boy, when, when Spillman meets with Atiyeh, the flies might just fall off the walls. Yeah. So, you know, it was never a kind of of electric sense, but deeply in a respected sense, and the idea that a Republican governor and democratic legislative leaders were working together to try to make sense out of a very desperate situation.

James Moore 36:02

The baker pin is great because that i a t is Governor exactly when I don't live in Oregon. I never think I'm going to live

in Oregon ever again. And but that gives wonderful resonance for when goldschmid comes in and disses Baker when he did he make, he

David Sarasohn 36:23  
made the middle of nowhere

James Moore 36:25  
about Ben.

David Sarasohn 36:29  
Okay, I thought it was about Baker. There was no question where he was going to debate, yeah, why he wasn't debating in Ben? And he said there was no point in debating in the middle of nowhere and the government,

James Moore 36:38  
yeah. Well, there you go. Clearly, not a skier, either. Yeah. Anything else about this governorship? Chimps out. I mean, you paint a picture of a nice, competent guy. I

David Sarasohn 37:04  
so this is really in the time before the Republican Party changes dramatically, you know, the very, very beginning of how this is this. This is happening. And no, he is, I say, more more conservative than than the the basic model. But still, he gets on with it. And, you know, there are a lot of things which you know become crucial subsequently, you know, such as Supportive Schools. And you know, nature of the the higher education system, and know how criminal justice is going to operate, which really didn't seem, you know, dramatic at the time and immediately pressing at the time. I mean, we were, we were trying to get through a an economic collapse. Yeah, but you know this, it he, he steered Oregon through this collapse. But it did sort of leave an opening for Goldschmidt in 1986 to say we need a more dynamic approach to reshaping the Oregon economy. Yeah, and have, yes. He was, was, was trader dick and yes, Atiyeh worked with the legislature and did some things that would now seem seem very difficult, but the idea that we were going to have an activist asserted dynamic figure in the governor to really try to bring the state back to where it was. You know, did seem to be a contrast to the way Atiyeh had run the office. Yeah.

James Moore 39:31  
Did you see Norma Paulus as having problems showing that dynamism?

David Sarasohn 39:37  
Very much. So, uh huh, no. Because she ran a very laid back campaign on the on the insistence that. Of well, she she really knew state government, and she in terms of this, the state budget and state finances, she knew where the bodies were buried, and she came come into the editorial board for her endorsement interview, and we'd say, So, where are some of these bodies? And she would just sort of nod, knowing so she she didn't give you the sense that she was someone who was going to come into office and really grab hold and drive things. I mean, she sort of took, took the idea that she was going to be a very knowing and well well informed manager of the operation, and there really was a sense at that point that we were looking for something a Little more dynamic and assertive than what we had. Yeah,

James Moore 41:03  
do you see that pattern is continuing? You know, in subsequent elections after that, you have Dave from Meyer, Barbara Roberts, kids, harbor and Smith. I mean, do you see that dynamic as continuing? Or do you see it as we kind of go, we want the manager, sometimes we want the dynamic person. Well,

David Sarasohn 41:27  
here's two things. The first is, you know, we have been economically just sort of rocketing back and forth between extremes since then. So, you know, sometimes you you you're looking for a manager. But you know, things can change so, so sharply and in this short period. And I remember, you know, Kulongowksi as he was, he was leaving office. And you know it was, it was in the middle of this historic post 2008 economic collapse. And you know he, he remembered the coming to office in in 2002 when we were still struggling out of the post 911 collapse, and he went to this educational session for for new governors at Harvard, at the Kennedy School, and they told them, Well, You folks are

very fortunate, because you're dealing with your recession at the very beginning of your term, and the idea that by the end of this term he was going to face a recession vastly bigger than the one that was in effect when he came into office. So there. So there's, there's been that part, the idea that immediate economic conditions have always been so pressing since then, and there's also been, you know, This extreme rise of partisanship since then. So you know, you look at the way a Tio works with a Democratic legislature in the beginning of the 1980s and you look at the way Kitzhaber works with a Republican legislature in the end of the 1990s and it's a different world.

James Moore 43:44

Yeah, and Vita vetoed a lot of stuff, but so there's still a sense that he's working with them. Yeah? I mean, he

David Sarasohn 43:51

knows a lot of stuff, but it's, it's in the process of finding a way to make it work, right? You know, whereas you look at the stretch where kits Hopper achieves a historic number of vetoes and becomes known as doctor, no, yeah, and the idea is, I mean this, this, this is not in pursuit of getting us somewhere. This is just in pursuit of preventing bad stuff from happening. Yeah,

James Moore 44:21

yeah. So both sides have changed in their

David Sarasohn 44:23

both sides have changed. Then, you know, also, you know, measure five changes everything,

James Moore 44:31

yeah, yeah. And during Vic's time he was there, while he was governor, there were three or four major fight ish votes, and he was just terrified. Every single one of them was able to push it off and push it off well, and

David Sarasohn 44:48

then, you know, it's, I think there during his time as as as governor, that he and the Democratic legislature, you. Adopt the kicker yeah as a way to try to ward off yeah, you know the tax limitation measures, and we sort of ended up with with the worst of both worlds measure five and the kicker. Yeah, that's

James Moore 45:19

one of the very first questions I asked him, because in public, he has offended the kicker. And he said, You know, I thought it was a bad idea. It was Deb spots thing, and but it had so much support that I signed it. And so that's really look into, you know, the dynamics of how that worked well.

David Sarasohn 45:43

So, I mean, first, first of all, as I say, people were supporting this as an idea, because they thought it was going to ward off tax limitation measures. You know, exactly 1978 the same year Atiyeh is elected. Governor California adopts proposition measure 13. And this is sort of the beginning of the whole tax revolt, and this, this is spreading into, into Aria. Of course, you know, it's got these, these hugely unforeseen implications. So you know when, when it Atiyeh is governor. I mean, don't nobody thinks this, the schools are going to close down, right? The schools are going to be hacked at dramatically. But you know, on the other hand, when, when he's governor, you know there are, there are large stretches of Oregon which are spending half as much per student as Portland is. And people figured that was just the way it was.

James Moore 47:14

Exactly put him in perspective. We already did that a little bit, but put him in perspective. For instance, by the time he died, people were looking, and I was one of them. I haven't done the research to see if it's true. The decisions made under his watch created the Silicon Forest, you know, brought Oregon into the 21st century economy, that kind of thing. You get a sense of that looking that, I mean, specifically asking him about it, it's interesting because, you know, he Packer was here before that kind of thing, and he saw the key dynamic is the fact that Tektronix was here. It was really the catalyst that made it possible to talk to those companies and get things going. So what's, what's your sense of that perspective?



David Sarasohn 47:59

Well, Tektronix and Hewlett Packard were here. You know they were, they were growing. And I guess Intel was in the early stages of coming up. But, you know, it really seemed that the increased Japanese presence changed things. Made us more of a world player, okay, yeah, but the other thing was that we never had know the kind of investment, you know, especially in higher education, that would turn us into a Silicon Valley. I mean, we were never going to be a Silicon Valley, but we were also pretty much going to be an assembly operation. And, you know, the the big money, the r, d money, was going to be spent elsewhere. Now, I mean, we were, we were way, way behind. You know, we were never going to catch up with Stanford or places like that, but, you know, we could have been more of a player, and that kind of thinking never really fit into mm. A tea is the economic planet, yeah. I mean, the the strategy was to get people to come in and invest, not to try to have a kind of, you know, higher education infrastructure that would lead to bunch of spin offs and grow a new generation of Tektronix. And eventually this began to happen a little because, but it was more because of the economic attractiveness of Oregon as compared to trying to get yourself started in Silicon Valley, then, because we were actually having the the intellectual, educational firepower to drive it

James Moore 50:51

right, it's interesting, during the recession, the only two things that weren't being cut and that were increased were economic development, Higher Ed, which surprised me, because my impression higher ed is exactly what you described. We've been doing it since the 1920s and teens. It's been a long, long room. And so what I'm going to really investigate and see. So what was that investment supposed to do, and what happened? You know, even if it, if it increased, for instance, Japanese language slots, that would be a big thing. But so what did it actually do, or in the recession, was increased simply not cutting.

David Sarasohn 51:32

Well, I think that was, that was really, really the case that, you know, if you could just sort of support things as they were. Was it was it was considered a triumph. But we were always. We were historically, way beyond, you know, California and Washington in terms of higher education, in terms of what we were producing. And, you know that that really didn't change much, I mean, but there was always this sense in Oregon that if you wanted the higher education, fine, but this, this, this was a place where you could make a living wage coming out of high school, and, you know, you, you wanted more that would that was sort of up to you. And, of course, that sort of collapsed during a tears administration. And you know, it would have been difficult to come up, come up with the money to sort of counter program to it, but it was, but it was clear that it was, it was going to be necessary, that we were going to need to be a more of an information technological economy to to survive in and it's, it's taken us a long time to get to that point, yeah, but we passed the lottery, I believe, in 84

James Moore 53:17

Yeah, yeah. Wichita posed all the way through, right? You know,

David Sarasohn 53:22

everybody opposed it. You know, the Argonian opposed it too. But, you know, one of the things that's striking about this, you know, aside from the idea that it was it was it was it was free money and it was that in Oregon, the lottery proceeds were connected to economic development. Now, there were other states where lottery proceeds were connected to education were connected to elderly services. No here, because of the situation we were in economic development was the magic worked. And if you said it was going to drive that, the arguments against it almost collapsed. Yeah,

James Moore 54:20

yeah, talking to the TS Chief of Staff once that thing passed, he was a tiger to make sure that no money went for anything except see. But then the you know, call on that money expands over

David Sarasohn 54:37

time. Well, it does. And then you then get this, this, this decision from the Attorney General, which essentially says that anything could be considered economic development. And that's, that's how all the money, sort of, most of the money, gets grabbed away to try to backfill the schools, right? Crisis? Yeah. It

James Moore 55:01

so any other, any other things about Atiyeh?

David Sarasohn 55:09

Well, as again, is this sense about how the Republican Party just sort of turned around, around him that he went from being the voice of the conservative wing of the Republican Party to being the voice of the moderate establishment wing. And

James Moore 55:38

so changing or no, he actually states change, you know? So it is a treat.

David Sarasohn 55:44

It's like he's here and the parties here, and then he's here from the party's here, uh huh. But, you know, I remember there was a a Dorchester conference, I think in the you know, early 2000s maybe where you have all of the leaders of the Republican Party who had been getting clobbered in elections, you know they were going to get together and assemble a Republican candidate who could actually win. And they all gather around this, this chair and sort of the surgeons and Barbara's operation, things are being pulled and things are being attached. And then when they all withdraw to show their successful achievement, sitting in the chair as Vicky Tia. And wouldn't have been the sense at the beginning of his career, but as he got at the end of it, that was what was there. Yeah. I'm

James Moore 57:02

going to be talking to some of the Republicans that he worked with. The last one he spent a significant amount of time with was Chris Dudley. He also did with Rob Cornelis. But Rob Cornelis didn't he just got steamrolled. And so talking to Dudley is going to be really interesting to see how that worked with modern campaign methods and all those other kinds of things. This other

David Sarasohn 57:30

example, which I talk about a lot, which is Atiyeh, is the state senator from Raleigh hills, you know, at a time when you know Washington County is Country Club Republican and dairy farms and dairy farms and you know it's the legislative delegation is heavily Republican, but it's sort of a moderate kind of kind of Republican. And you know now the delegation from Washington County is almost entirely

James Moore 58:20

democratic, yeah, only Republicans come in from other counties, right,

David Sarasohn 58:24

you know, like only, only John Davis, you know, yeah, yeah. Stick is sticking in through there. And, you know, in his, his own county, the party sort of Yeah, turns, turns around on him. And you know, they stop nominating people like Mary, Alice Ford, and they start nominating people like Eileen QTo, yeah, exactly. And

James Moore 58:53

you know that which was very successful in the mid 90s, very successful, but short term success, yeah, yeah. Vic describes that time. For instance, there was a time in the early 90s he ran for and was elected as a national Republican committeeman because the other person was a social conservative, and he didn't want to be a national Republican committeeman, but he knew that we couldn't have that. But he talks about the frustration late 80s, early 90s, of people coming into the Republican Party and then redefining what it means to be Republican, because he talks about principles. And so they were, in fact, redefining what the principles were, and just frustrated the heck out of it. And that's what he saw. You. So, yeah,

David Sarasohn 59:45

great. Well, I hope this has been, yeah,

James Moore 59:47

it's fantastic, useful, fantastic. Yeah, talking to Hardy Myers on Thursday, he was the speaker during a heavy special session time. Mm hmm. So just lots of good fun stories. Mm

David Sarasohn 1:00:03

hmm. Is Zack failey still around?

James Moore 1:00:08

He has been sighted.

[Recording ends.]