



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE CAPITOL  
SALEM 97310

### GOVERNOR ATIYEH'S MEDALLION

The Governor's medal is a 2-1/2 inch solid bronze medallion produced by Medallie Art Company of Danbury, Connecticut. Medallie Art is the country's leading producer of high-relief fine art medals including Presidential Inaugural medals, the Congressional Medal of Honor and International Olympic Committee Medals. Each of Governor Atiyeh's medallions is numbered and only 275 have been struck. The name of the Governor is engraved on the edge of the medal and they are presented only by him.

One side of the medallion depicts the Oregon State Seal. Although artists have created many artistic renditions of the State Seal, that used on the Governor's medallion is usually referred to as the "modern State Seal," first used on the large carved seal at the base of the rotunda in the State Capitol in Salem.

On May 17, 1859, House Bill 3, providing for a seal of the State of Oregon, was read for the first time. It was signed into law June 2nd of that year by Governor John Whiteaker. The passage of this bill was the culmination of several years of work by a select committee of the Constitutional Convention assigned the job of designing a State Seal. It is generally agreed that Harvey Gordon was the designer of the Oregon State Seal, and that it was he who submitted the basic design to the committee.

From the Journal of the Oregon Constitutional Convention we find the following description of the seal: "... an escutcheon supported by thirty-three stars, and divided by an ordinary, with the inscription, 'The Union.' In chief - mountains, an elk with branching antlers, a wagon, the Pacific Ocean, on which a British man-of-war departing, an American steamer arriving. The second - quartering with a sheaf, plough, and a pick-axe. Crest - the American Eagle. Legend - State of Oregon."



Although the formal State Seal of the State of Oregon is beautiful and has a rich historical background, Governor Atiyeh also has had a long-standing personal affection for Oregon's Territorial Seal. The motto emblazoned on our Territorial Seal, "Alis Volat Propriis" (She Flies with her Own Wings\*), speaks not only to the independence and pioneer spirit found in Oregon when the Territory was created in 1848, but also to that same philosophy found in Oregon today.

Shortly after an act of Congress created the Oregon Territory, Judge J. Quinn Thornton, who was a special envoy of Oregon's Provincial Government stationed in Washington, D.C. at the time, commissioned the design and engraving of the Territorial Seal. Although it was personally accepted by Governor Gaines in 1850, it wasn't until January 18, 1854, that the Territorial Legislature officially adopted the design of the seal.

The official description of the Territorial Seal is found in territorial Document No. 44 as a memorial to the Legislature dated July 25, 1849, and signed by Judge Thornton: "Arms argent. In chief a ship proper. In base, mountains, and underneath a plough, all proper. Crest a beaver. Supporters, on the dexter side an Indian with bow and arrows; - on the sinister side an eagle with wings displayed and bearing in his beak a latin motto in these words 'Alis Volat Propriis.'"

Although many renderings of the modern State Seal were available, the only renderings of the Territorial Seal to be found were rather primitive early designs. In 1983, Governor Atiyeh personally contracted with Jim Sargent, an Oregon artist, to research the original Territorial Seal documents, to review all available drawings and to draw a modern rendition of the Territorial Seal. The resulting design was used for this medallion.

#269 - Oct. 26, 2010  
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "L. Atiyeh".

---

\*The most commonly accepted translation is used here. Literal Latin translation of the motto is "He/she/it flies by his/her/its own wings." Other historical references translate the motto as "With her own wings," "I fly with my own wings," and "By her own wings."