



GOVERNOR VICTOR G. "VIC" ATIYEH
State of Oregon
Governor since 1979
Republican
Born February 20, 1923
(Pronounced "Uh-tee'-uh")

March 1986

Politics

Vic Atiyeh won his first election in 1958 when Washington County voters sent him to the Oregon House of Representatives. He served three terms in the House before being elected to four terms in the State Senate, including three terms as Senate Republican Leader.

Atiyeh won the Republican nomination for governor in 1974 over then-Secretary Clay Myers; his subsequent general-election loss to Democrat Bob Straub was the only electoral defeat of his political career. Four years later, winning the GOP nomination over former Gov. Tom McCall and State Rep. Roger Martin, Atiyeh carried 33 of Oregon's 36 counties to defeat Straub by 90,000 votes; in 1982, Atiyeh won re-election over Democrat Ted Kulongoski, carrying every Oregon county and 62 percent of the vote in the biggest Oregon gubernatorial landslide in 32 years.

Atiyeh's two decades in the Oregon House and Senate give him the longest legislative tenure of any of the state's 32 governors.

A Republican Governors Association past chairman, Atiyeh was a delegate to the 1968, 1972 and 1976 Republican national conventions and a convention floor leader for President Reagan in 1984.

Philosophy/Achievements

Atiyeh is committed to promoting responsible environmental stewardship, putting the human resource of Oregon on the same enthusiastic par with our natural resource, restoring common sense to government, and strengthening the Oregon economy through diversification. Among his accomplishments:

Environment: In the Oregon Legislature, Atiyeh wrote landmark clear-air and clean-water legislation. As governor, he led a successful campaign to put 12 miles along the Deschutes River into public ownership.

With Atiyeh's leadership, the Oregon Legislature passed more environmental legislation in 1983 than at any time since the early 1970s. Atiyeh has been an active proponent of federal legislation to guarantee orderly growth of the Columbia River Gorge, which he considers a national environmental treasure.

People: For Atiyeh's successful 1981 effort to enact laws against racial harassment, Atiyeh won the Oregon Distinguished Public Service Award of Oregon B'nai B'rith and the highest honor for public service from the U.S. Department of Justice.

When Oregonians began losing food stamp benefits in 1979, Atiyeh was instrumental in establishing Oregon Food Share, the nation's first statewide food bank.

As governor, Atiyeh conducts frequent public open houses and maintains a Citizens' Representative program to assist Oregonians with questions and problems.

Common sense: Atiyeh significantly reduced state government employment, won limits on state employment and spending, cut paperwork and red tape, and reinstitutes a state employee-suggestion program that is saving Oregon taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

Economy: Upon becoming governor in 1979, Atiyeh declared Oregon once again "open for business."

Moving to diversify and strengthen Oregon's timber-dependent economy without jeopardizing our national reputation for environmental leadership, Atiyeh dramatically reduced Workers' Compensation premiums that were the nation's highest, streamlined Oregon's innovative land-use laws, lobbied the White House for timber-contract relief, won legislative repeal of Oregon's controversial unitary-tax formula, launched a worldwide tourism initiative, led successful international and domestic trade missions, opened Oregon's first overseas trade office in Tokyo, signed a sister-state agreement with China's Fujian and Taiwan provinces.

Atiyeh is past chairman of the Western Governors' Conference, and currently vice chairman of the National Governors' Association committee on economic development and technological innovation and a member of NGA committees on international trade and foreign relations and on criminal justice and public protection.

School Years

Atiyeh was educated in Portland Public Schools. where he was a standout football lineman (left guard) at Washington High School.

He attended the University of Oregon for two years (1941-43), where he continued to play football.

In June 1944 he was offered a contract to play professional football for the Green Bay Packers. He turned down the offer to run Atiyeh Bros. following the death of his father in July (brothers Edward and Richard were in the military, and the service refused to take the governor because of an old injury).

Business

Atiyeh spent 35 years as president and director of Atiyeh Bros. in Portland, a family-owned rug business started by his immigrant father and uncle at the turn of the century. Now a rug and carpet sales and cleaning enterprise, Atiyeh Bros. celebrated its 85th anniversary during 1985.

He resigned as Atiyeh Bros. president upon his election as governor, although he continues to serve on the board of directors. He does not plan to return to the rug business upon conclusion of his term as governor.

Personal

Atiyeh, who was born in Portland, married Washington High School and U of O classmate Dolores Hewitt on July 5, 1944, in Portland.

An avid outdoorsman, Atiyeh is a golfer, fly fisherman and antique-gun collector. He also has an extensive personal collection of memorabilia from the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland. Active as a Boy Scout leader since age 21, holding most leadership positions including regional council president, Atiyeh has earned Scouting's highest council and regional volunteer awards.

Governor and Mrs. Atiyeh have two grown children and three grandchildren. His annual salary as governor is \$72,000. Atiyeh, an Episcopalian, enjoys reading American history.

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A native of Portland, Oregon, Vic Atiyeh is Oregon's 32nd governor.

For 20 years prior to becoming governor in January 1979, he served residents of the state's Washington County as a member of the Oregon Legislature.

Governor Atiyeh's service as a lawmaker -- three terms (1959-1964) in the House of Representatives and four terms (1965-1978) in the Oregon Senate -- is the longest legislative tenure of any governor in the history of Oregon.

Born February 20, 1923, in Portland, he attended Portland's Washington High School and the University of Oregon. He holds an honorary doctorate of public service degree from Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, and is a trustee emeritus of the University of Oregon Foundation.

A standout football lineman in both high school and college, Atiyeh turned down an offer to play professional football with the Green Bay Packers to help run Atiyeh Brothers, a family rug business in Portland started by his father and uncle.

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He worked for the family business from childhood until becoming governor, when he resigned as president of the corporation. He continues to serve on the board of directors of the firm.

Governor Atiyeh's parents both immigrated to this country from Syria, his father before the turn of the century.

Atiyeh was the Republican candidate for governor in 1974, suffering his only political defeat out of 18 lifetime races, when he lost the election to Bob Straub.

In his second try for Governor in 1978, Atiyeh won a three-way primary victory over State Representative Roger Martin and former Governor Tom McCall, tallying about 47 percent of the vote. In the general election rematch, Atiyeh defeated incumbent Governor Straub by 90,000 votes statewide, winning majorities in 33 of Oregon's 36 counties.

Governor Atiyeh presented a major conservation and alternate energy proposal to a rare joint session of the 1979 Legislature. This package of multi-purpose energy legislation passed nearly intact.

In 1981 he received several awards for the stand he took against racial harassment, the introduction and support of racial harassment legislation passed by the 1981 Oregon Legislature, and the establishment of Black and Hispanic commissions.

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The honors include the Golden Aztec Award from the Oregon Human Development Corporation, a special award from The Oregon Region of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Community Relations Services' Meritorious Service Award -- the highest honor for public service given by the U.S. Department of Justice, a special award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, and The Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'Rith of Oregon Distinguished Public Service Award.

Governor Atiyeh holds several national leadership positions including serving as:

-- a member of the National Governors' Association's Committee on Energy and Environment and the Committee on International Trade and Foreign Relations.

-- as chairman of the Education Commission of the States' National Task Force on Indian Education.

-- as a member of the Republican Governors' Association Campaign Committee.

-- as liaison between the Western Governors' Conference and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

Awards Governor Atiyeh has received include the Lloyd Center (Portland, Ore.) 1980 Metro Achievement Award, the Knight Commander of the Court of Honor which is the second-highest honor which can be conferred on Scottish Rite Masons, and membership in the Portland Interscholastic League Hall of Fame.

(more/over)

As a legislator, Vic Atiyeh was elected to leadership positions in both houses, serving for four terms as the Senate Republican leader.

Vic Atiyeh played a significant role in the writing of Oregon's famous clean water legislation in the mid-1960's and he was actively involved in other landmark environmental legislation.

Active in many community organizations and foundations, he has volunteered most of his free time to the Boy Scouts. From scoutmaster to regional council president, Vic Atiyeh has served in most scouting leadership positions, earning the highest council and regional volunteer awards. He is a member of the National Board of Exploring.

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