



**SPECIAL SPEECHES
GOVERNOR VICTOR ATIYEH
1979-1987**

This collection of speeches are the selected important ones during my tenure as Governor and begins with my first inaugural address on January 8, 1979. As an historical note, I was sworn in as the thirty-second Governor of Oregon at 11:42AM by Chief Justice Arno Denecke. Within these books will be found my "As Delivered" copies, identified as such by the pages that were marked by me and actually used at the events noted.

Here will be found my inaugural address', State of the State Speeches, special session messages and other important subjects during an eight year period. The last, hand written by me, was a brief farewell given on January 12, 1987, which was precisely twenty-eight years to the day after being first sworn in as a member of the House of Representatives on January 12, 1959 (an unusual coincidence of time). I served as Governor for 2,926 days. No other previous Chief Executive has served for a longer period of time.

These speeches evolved through a process that included meetings with my staff during which I would tell of my thoughts in respect to substance and approach. After that, drafts would be put on paper---up to six or seven in all---and ,upon acceptance by me, a final speech would be typed. As one will note, even the "final" document would often be changed before actual delivery.

Two comments should be made on the contents of these books. One unfortunate and the other, generally unknown until now, which could have been a potentially significant event.

Two copies of my "as delivered" speeches inadvertently found their way into the State Archives. One is the special session speech made to the 61st Legislative Assembly on Monday January 18, 1982. This was the second special session to rebalance the budget (the first being on August 4, 1980) and the first of three called for the same purpose in 1982. The second copy was the State of the State delivery made to the Eugene/Springfield Chambers of Commerce on January 11, 1984.

The Archives assured me that those two originals were sent to me by mail in February of 1990. Search as I might I found no trace of either. It remains an unexplained mystery. The two in this book are copies of the originals provided by the State Archives, with the January 18, 1982 address personally re-marked by me following the copy sent.

The generally unknown trivia item relates to my address to the legislature on January 14, 1985. On the evening prior to that session I became suddenly very ill and was rushed to the emergency room of the hospital. Tests were made, injections given and I stayed in the hospital for the remainder of that night, all the while being monitored with various pieces of equipment.

I was most anxious about what would be my last speech to the Legislature in joint session. While waiting for the decision of Dr. Bill Drips on the morning of January 14th I began going over my

speech. The green ink marks on the text were made in the hospital before I was released just in time for the session. The doctor never did determine the exact reason for my great distress that evening and the symptoms have not returned.

During these eight years many critical and momentous events took place in Oregon which certainly find their place into some author's history book. We were tormented by a deep and lingering recession, threatened by destructive ballot measures and tested by many opportunities won and lost. The reader of these speeches will find my response to many of those events.

Of course, this collection has the most intimate meaning to me because I personally lived those times with the keenest sense of responsibility. This also represents over 70,000 hours of my life.

Some have asked me how I will be treated by history and my reply has always been is that this not a decision I will make. That will be the role of the historian. However, there are some things of which I am extremely proud and a few of which the reader will find in these speeches.

Obviously, bringing Oregon through our recession in an orderly and non-destructive way has been most commonly mentioned. We started our decline in 1980, hit the bottom in 1982 and were emerging in late 1983. In 1982 our unemployment was at 12.6% and when I left office in January of 1987 we had brought that down to 7.3%. A remarkable 5.3% improvement.

All the while I was working to diversify our economy, which was successfully achieved by adding high-tech and international trade to our historic timber, agriculture and tourism base. This served us well for all during a most recent long national recession Oregon was below the national average unemployment rate for all but about two or three months. Most recently unemployment has incredibly been at under 5%.

From this point I will only list some of the highlights of my administration rather than narrate them in detail. Not that any of those that follow are less important in my mind for they are not. It is just that this text is getting too long.

Some of these accomplishments, although not exclusive, are:

- *Creation of the Northwest Power Planning Council
- *Sweeping welfare reform to benefit those in need of assistance
- *Established the Senior Services Commission which led to a Division for seniors
- *Created the Black and Hispanic Commissions
- *Made racial and religious harassment a felony crime
- *Established reform of our court system
- *Achieved protection of the Columbia River Gorge (further explanation below)
- *Made the lower Deschutes river open to the public
- *Appointed the first woman Chief of Staff
- *Appointed the first woman Supreme Court Justice
- *Put in place econometric economic forecasting replacing a single individual forecaster to quarterly monitor the fiscal health of the state
- *Established Economic Advisory Council
- *Originated Oregon Food Share, the first agency in the nation to collect, store and distribute food to the hungry
- *Created the Oregon Center for Advanced Technology Education (OCATE)
- *Opened our first foreign representative office in Tokyo, Japan

***Internationalized Oregon**

***Instituted and "Open House" for the public on a regular basis**

***Met Oregonians face to face by traveling over 250,000 miles throughout the state**

***Held weekly "Media Availability"**

I am sorely tempted to say so much more about the listed accomplishments and many, many others but his story must end. Read the speeches carefully. Many have said that my delivery may have been less than inspirational but I know that the contents are solid. Contrary to the observation of some, I have always favored substance over style believing that what one says is by far more important than how one says it.

(In regard to the Columbia River Gorge legislation, Senator Hatfield did a superb and masterful job in saving this bill and the Friends of the Gorge kept constant pressure on Congress. However, I got it off dead center with an agreement with Governor Spellman of the State of Washington and at the very end personally kept President Reagan from vetoing the bill)