



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE CAPITOL
SALEM 97310

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Statement by Governor Victor Atiyeh

Tom, it is terribly hard not to feel sad, not to feel a little bit lonely — not to feel an agonizing sense of loss. But in the spirit of your wishes, I also feel grateful for your life, am very proud that you were a product of Oregon and that, because of you, we all share the enormous joy of what God has given us.

You have not really gone, for in this room — and throughout this magnificent state — you still live. No one of us measures up to your grand scale, but we are here and collectively we love our state and the beauty of it as you did. And collectively, we will not let go all those virtues of which you spoke so brilliantly.

It might seem a little audacious of me, Tom, but I would like to answer a deep, nagging concern you once expressed. You said:

"I'm just living day to day, making speeches and challenging the know-nothings and trying to tell people that they're being heard again. And wondering where is the glow of yesteryear? Wondering where the heroes went. Gosh, I don't know how long ago they left.

"Heroes are not giant statues framed against a red sky. They are people who say: This is my community, and it's my responsibility to make it better. Interweave all these communities, and you really have an America that is back on its feet, a comfortable nation to live in again. I really think we're gonna have to reassess what constitutes a hero."

Wonder no more, Tom — you have shown us what constitutes a genuine hero.

Thank you — and God bless you.

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