

Duly Selected: Governor Vic Atiyeh

November, 1992

Portland native Victor George Atiyeh is a first generation American whose father and uncle realized the dream of immigrants the world over. It came not through wishful thinking, but hard work that Atiyeh Brothers, established in Portland at the turn of the century, grew into the most successful importer and retailer of fine Oriental rugs in the Northwest.

It was this work ethic that young Victor adhered to in pursuing two careers simultaneously — one in the family business, the other in public service.

He went to work full time at Atiyeh Brothers directly from the University of Oregon in 1943. Yet, even as his management responsibilities grew, he found time to become one of the most active adult leaders in the Columbia Pacific Council of the Boy Scouts of America and earned its highest national honors.

Already balancing what for most people would be as much as they could handle, he won his district's race for the state legislature in 1958 and served three terms. He won a state senate seat in 1965 and kept on winning for 12 years.

As Republican leader during three of his six sessions in the senate, Atiyeh gained his party's support for governor in 1974. Democrat Robert Straub beat him. But the next time around, the tables were turned. The voters had seen Straub in action for four years. And, although he could point to positive achievements, they had concluded he was no Tom McCall.

Atiyeh, on the other hand, came across with strength and self assurance. He advocated lower taxes, greater government efficiency, less spending, a concern for the environment, and sounded as if he meant it.

Although, philosophically, they were surprisingly similar, in the citizen activist, post-Proposition 13 climate, Atiyeh's form played better than Straub's substance. Pulling a reversal of 1970, he whipped the incumbent in 1974 by almost an equivalent margin to that of their earlier race — 55 percent to 45 percent.

Then, Atiyeh rolled up his sleeves and began making good on his campaign promises. Efficiencies were realized in state agencies, along with a dynamic, new economic development program. This was an especially crucial element with the state's economy going from bad to worse at the outset of the 1980s.

To help balance the budget, the governor instituted state welfare and workers' compensation reform measures. As personal proof positive of his sincerity, he even cut his own salary three times.

Seeking a second term in 1982, Atiyeh pointed to his solid administrative record and his commitment to diversifying the state's economic base with emphasis on attracting new business and promoting tourism.

"Oregon's economy has been like a stool with only two strong legs — timber and agriculture," the governor said. "By giving it a third strong one, we become much more stable." Oregonians bought his logic and returned



Gov. Victor G. Atiyeh (b. 1920)

him to office with nearly 62 percent of the vote.

The dilemma facing Governor Atiyeh in his second term was how to create a favorable climate for business without compromising his commitment to environmental protection.

He did it by streamlining the bloated workers compensation program, winning repeal of the much derided unitary tax, timber contract relief from Washington, a concentrated push for tourism and increased international trade, in particular through the Port of Portland, which was then able to expand and further improve its facilities.

Atiyeh's governmental belt-tightening received praise and still he was able to help the needy with Oregon Food Share, the first state-funded food bank in the country. His efforts to reduce racial discrimination brought recognition from B'nai Brith, which gave him their 1991 Distinguished Service Award. He was similarly honored by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Unlike his predecessor, who chose not to seek a third term, Atiyeh didn't have the option. New legislation prevented future Oregon governors, like U.S. Presidents, from serving more than two terms.

Although no longer active in Atiyeh Brothers, the "governor" still serves on its board. He operates a consulting business specializing in international trade where he is doing his part to turn to reality the benefits of the financial arena that he always felt would play an important role in Oregon's economic future.

Bully Selected: Senator Mark O. Hatfield

October, 1992

Already 16 years on the Oregon political scene in 1966, former governor Mark Hatfield was elected to serve six more on behalf of his home state in the U.S. Senate. Well primed for his new job, Hatfield hit the ground running when he reached Washington, D.C.

As he had while governor, he continued his condemnation of President Johnson's Vietnam policies and the war in general. Now, however, he had a position that brought him speaking engagements around the country.

Taking full advantage of this bully pulpit and not incidentally of the honorariums that go with it, Senator Hatfield's audiences have often been Christian groups who listened attentively to the message that he continues to this day.

To paraphrase the senator, "Life is taken too cheaply," he says, contending that Christian values can change these attitudes. "More people, both lay and clergy, with the conviction of their beliefs, should become involved in activities that shape our communities and, if possible, in the political process, itself."

An evangelical bent has never distracted Hatfield from the pragmatics of his job and the problems at hand, however. Always consistent in his moral views, the situation demanded he modify his political ones when it came time to stand up for his party in 1968.

The Republicans felt Nixon was their best bet to overcome eight years of Democratic rule and the Senator from Oregon was convinced that he needed to set aside his personal misgivings about the former vice president to support his campaign.

He also threw the prestige of his office behind a strong endorsement of fellow Oregonian Bob Packwood who was trying to unseat four-term incumbent Wayne Morse in that election year. In both cases Hatfield's horses emerged as winners.

All junior members of the seniority-imbued Senate harbor some resentment of an entrenched system that denies them real decision-making power during their first term. Hatfield, however, tried to do something about it. He was unsuccessful but he got his colleagues' attention.

When he chose the military establishment as a target of his wrath, people started to listen. Hatfield wanted to replace the draft with an all-volunteer Army. And, he felt that the U.S. had more than adequate nuclear deterrent already. Why finance the Pentagon's seemingly insatiable desire for more?

The expertise he built up won him the opportunity to head an unofficial House-Senate study group on defense spending. Hammering away at these issues time and time again, he finally won concessions. But, during his first term this intractability caused his loyalty to the party to be called into question. Some said he should join the opposition. Hatfield stood by his guns and



Senator Mark O. Hatfield

weathered the controversy.

The voters awarded him a second term in 1972 and new committee assignments, including chairmanship of Senate Public Works Appropriations, added to his influence. Though beginning to become a beneficiary of the system, he still called for its elimination as well as congressional term limits. He found few supporters.

Continuing in the forefront of the so-called Senate "doves," Hatfield's position was finally vindicated by America's ignominious pullout from Vietnam in 1975. He moved on to put his weight behind such positions as anti-abortion and the promotion of an international policy to overcome world hunger.

Not neglecting his constituents at home, Hatfield has always been involved in important legislation affecting Oregon, especially in the forest products industry. From securing the O&C lands for the state to the proposed National Forestry Supply Act and later the American Forestry Act, timber has taken priority.

That outlook played well for a long time due to the economic benefits, but when environmental issues began to pervade the public consciousness, it became a more difficult balancing act for Oregon's senior senator as well as the rest of the state's congressional delegation.

Passing the Endangered Species Act and wilderness bills in the face of dwindling old growth for industry while fighting for timber jobs has been no mean trick. But, resilient Mark Hatfield, having been reelected to his fifth term in 1990 and now one of the Senate's most powerful members, has learned how to play the game.

He's overcome criticism about outside earnings and improper gifts, won major battles with the Pentagon, brought to Portland such federal projects as the V.A. hospital on Marquam Hill and stopped a plan to sell the Bonneville Power Administration. Oregon may want term limits but it still recognizes the values of his considerable clout.

Duly Selected: Governor Mark O. Hatfield

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Gauged by the single yardstick of longevity, Mark O. Hatfield is the most successful politician in Oregon history. When he completes his fifth U.S. Senate term at the end of 1996, he will have served 45 consecutive years in public office including 37 as governor and senior senator. Not bad for a native son born in the little town of Dallas, a few miles west of Salem, on July 12, 1922. But, a continuing course high achievement seems to be in Hatfield's nature.

After graduating from Willamette University in 1943, he served in the Navy through the remainder of World War II, attaining the rank of Lieutenant, Junior Grade. At war's end, he went on to Stanford where he earned a master's degree in 1948, and then landed a teaching job back at his old alma mater, Willamette. From there it was on the ladder — instructor, associate professor of political science and dean of students.

In 1951, rather than simply teach politics, the young professor decided to participate in the process. Running successfully for the Oregon house, he served two terms then captured a state senate seat. Finally, in 1956, he had to leave his position at Willamette altogether. He'd been elected Secretary of State.

Two years later, in 1958, Mark Hatfield made it to the top. At 36, he defeated Democratic incumbent Robert Holmes to become Oregon's third youngest governor. That same year, in July, he married Portland teacher Antoinette Kuzmanich. Several hundred attended the wedding of the season. After honeymooning in Pebble Beach, the groom gave his bride a belated present by winning the election.

Just as he took office in January, he won his first political victory as governor. Holmes had appointed a new secretary of state to replace Hatfield before leaving office. Hatfield insisted the appointment was his prerogative. The Oregon Supreme Court ruled in favor of the new governor. A string of successes followed.

During his first year, he shepherded a major tax cut through the legislature. The desire of several of Hatfield's predecessors was realized when he accomplished what they couldn't — the repeal of capital punishment. Reapportionment proved even more difficult, coming as it did from the politicians rather than the people. But, that too was eventually achieved.

Running for reelection in 1962, Hatfield improved on his initial performance. Against Holmes he had won by a margin of more than 60,000 votes. He whipped Democrat Robert Y. Thornton by 80,000. Rumors surfaced, as they had during his first term, that he was being considered for the vice presidential spot. This time he quickly squelched them. It seems he did not hold Nixon in the same high regard that he had Eisenhower.

Television was coming into its own as the dominant mass medium and Hatfield made more than one guest appearance to showcase Oregon. In May 1964, his key-



Governor Mark O. Hatfield (b. 1922)

note address at the Republican National Convention was broadcast across the country. That same month his peers elected him chair of the Western Governors Conference.

That presidential year was filled with events both good and bad for Hatfield and Oregon. He campaigned hard for Barry Goldwater in the Republican candidate's losing cause against LBJ. He embarked on a trade mission to Japan that showed tremendous promise. Then in December 1964, western Oregon was hit by one of its worst-ever floods. The governor declared it a major disaster and sought federal assistance.

Representing Oregon at President Johnson's inaugural didn't mean that the incumbent wasn't fair game for continued criticism from the governor. Hatfield severely questioned the president's Vietnam policies in an early example of the moral philosophy that has characterized the man throughout his career.

A devout Christian, Hatfield has always carried the tenets of his beliefs into the arena of armed conflict. No only was war abhorrent, to be avoided if at all possible this particular war was absolutely unconscionable. In these views, though often assailed by opponents, he has always been unshakable and, in the case of Vietnam, a too right.

None of this proved detrimental in Hatfield's bid for the U.S. Senate in 1966. Rather than seek a third gubernatorial term, he chose to campaign for the seat vacated by Maurine Neuberger, who had decided not to run for reelection. In a closely contested race against Democratic congressman Robert Duncan, Hatfield emerged the winner by a slim margin. One journalist described his campaign as "the slickest ever seen in Oregon." And, it was the Hatfield family's ticket to Washington, D.C.