



**OREGON
STATE
TREASURY**

Elizabeth Steiner, MD
Oregon State Treasurer

George Naughton
Deputy State Treasurer

To the House Committee on Rules

Re: SCR 10 – In memoriam Senate President Peter Courtney

April 30, 2025

For the record, I'm Oregon State Treasurer Elizabeth Steiner. I had the privilege of serving in the Senate for thirteen years, ten of them under President Courtney's leadership.

Senator "Call me Peter" Courtney called me within 30 minutes of my appointment to the Senate to ask what committees I wanted. I was, as you can imagine, a little overwhelmed, and blurted out healthcare, education, and revenue. "Revenue? No one wants revenue!", he replied. Peter promptly assigned me to two budget subcommittees, thereby starting my legislative career as a budget writer.

I tell this story to illustrate one of Peter's many strengths – his uncanny ability to assign Senators to exactly the right committees. Even if it wasn't what they asked for initially they almost always came back to thank him for the assignment. As a result, Senate committees were highly productive and generally functioned extremely well.

Enumerating Peter's strengths would result in a book-length document, so I'll just focus on a few in addition to the one I just mentioned. Peter's casual manner belied a strategic mind that led the Senate successfully for twenty years. He always knew when to let things ride and when to step in. He modeled delegation brilliantly, always encouraging each member to take on whatever they could and to negotiate issues, standing behind them with advice as needed. He rarely spoke on the floor during his tenure as President but when he did you could hear a pin drop because his speeches were eloquent and compelling.

Peter never pushed his advice onto anyone but was always available to give it when asked, and it was almost always exactly what one needed to hear. His experience and wisdom helped me and so many others serve the people much more effectively.

Peter's gruff (ok, sometimes more than gruff) manner hid a very soft heart. He knew the names of all the Senate spouses and children. He was the first to reach out when one of us was ill or had a joyous event in our lives. He spoke with deep affection about his wonderful wife Margie, their three sons, their grandchildren, and of course Dilly the famous dachshund.

Peter was a complex man who was deeply committed to his family, public service, and his adopted home of "Oregon, my Oregon." May his memory be for a blessing.

Page 1 of 1



Treasurer's Office - Capitol
900 Court Street NE, Room 159
Salem, OR 97301-3896
503.378.4329

Main Office
867 Hawthorne Ave SE
Salem, OR 97301
503.378.4000

oregon.gov/treasury
oregon.treasurer@state.or.us