

BIOGRAPHY OF SLADE GORTON

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Slade Gorton's exceptional public service career began when he bought a one-way ticket from Boston, Massachusetts to Seattle, Washington during the summer of 1953. The young lawyer quickly made his mark on Washington state politics, eventually representing the people of the Evergreen State in the United States Senate for 18 years.

The 'Gorton Era' saw Slade guide Washington state through a series of interesting, tough, and prosperous times. Gorton successfully steered the region through timber harvest battles, fought to preserve the rural way of life for those left in the wake of the Puget Sound region's prosperity, and tackled the Clinton/Gore Department of Justice's attack on Microsoft. Slade Gorton quickly became the region's 'go-to-guy' because of his unique ability to get things done for Washington state and the Pacific Northwest region.

Slade was graduated magna cum laude from Dartmouth College in 1950 and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He earned a degree from Columbia University Law School in 1953.

Slade served in the United States Army from 1946 to 1947. He served as a 1st Lt. (JAG) in the United States Air Force from 1953-1956. He was in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, where he reached the rank of Colonel, from 1956 to 1981.

Although his career has been dominated by public service, Slade worked in the private sector and began his law career as an associate-junior partner at the firm Grosscup, Ambler, Stephan & Miller in 1953 and from 1956-69. During his two-year break between Senate terms from 1987-89, Gorton practiced law at Davis Wright Tremaine in Seattle.

Slade Gorton's dedication to public service began in 1959 when he was elected to the Washington State House of Representatives. He served in the state house for ten years, including the last two as Majority Leader.

In 1969, Gorton was sworn in as the state's Attorney General, a post he would hold for three terms. Gorton's illustrious career as Washington Attorney General saw him argue fourteen cases before the United States Supreme Court (1973-1980), prompting Chief Justice Warren Burger to comment: "[Slade Gorton] makes the best arguments before the Supreme Court of any Attorney General in America."

Gorton's years as Washington State Attorney General came during an interesting time with Slade at the center of the debate on issues ranging from prescription drug price fixing to the improvement of police training. Gorton's most important legacy came in the area of consumer affairs. His successful efforts in fighting a wide range of consumer fraud quickly earned him the distinction of being a staunch 'friend of the consumer.'

But Slade Gorton's most popular achievement as Attorney General came when he sued the American League in 1970 to keep baseball in Seattle. To this day, Slade Gorton is remembered by fans across the state for 'Saving the Mariners.'

In June of 1980, Gorton received the Wyman Award, the highest distinction offered by the National Association of Attorneys General.

Gorton's impressive career as Washington State's top law enforcement official launched his successful bid for the U.S. Senate in 1980. Gorton's years in the Senate saw him appointed to powerful committee posts including Appropriations, Budget, Commerce, Science and Transportation, and Energy and Natural Resources. Gorton served as the Chairman of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee (1995-2001), the Commerce Subcommittees on Consumer Affairs (1995-99), and Aviation (1999-2001).

"He's one of the most intelligent if not the most intelligent senator we have in this body," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott.

Gorton's Senate career highlights include: being the prime sponsor and major player in the 1983 budget resolution, a major involvement in crafting the Telecommunications Act of 1986, the Shipping Act of 1984, and this year's wide ranging reform of the Federal Aviation Administration.

One of his most stunning achievements came in 1991, with the passage of the Chinese Student Protection Act. Gorton successfully fought to allow some 45,000 Chinese students and other Chinese nationals to stay permanently in the U.S. after Tiananmen Square.

Gorton has been called "one of the great senators of the 20th Century" by his fellow Republicans and praised by Democrats for his "extraordinary character," "superior intellect," and "bipartisanship."

As his Majority Counsel, Gorton served at the right-hand of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott in Senate Republican Leadership, a position in which Gorton wielded considerable behind-the-scenes influence. As Senate Budget Chairman Pete Domenici of New Mexico said: "few pieces of legislation moved through the Senate without his fingerprints."

Gorton's stature in the Senate grew during his second and third terms. While always seen as the protector of the Pacific Northwest's interests, Slade worked across the aisle on a range of issues of national importance, including product liability reform and education reform, as the prime sponsor of the Republican "Straight A's" bill. Late in his third term, Gorton became a visible critic of the Clinton/Gore Administration's attack against the Microsoft Corp. His experience in arguing anti-trust cases and his reputation as a consumer advocate served him well and Gorton was seen as the company's most ardent and effective defender.

Slade Gorton has also served on the President's Consumer Advisory Council (1975-77) and on the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission from 1969-1981. He was Chairman of the Washington State Law & Justice Commission (1969-76), served as an instructor in Constitutional law to public administration graduate students at the University of Puget Sound (1977), and has served on the Board of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center since 1987.

Slade Gorton lives in Bellevue, Washington with his wife of 42 years, Sally. They have three children, Tod, Sarah, and Becky, and seven grandchildren. During the Summer of 1973, Slade and Sally bicycled with the entire family 3,328 miles from Olympia, Washington to Boston, Massachusetts. Slade's youngest daughter, Becky, was entered in the Guinness Book of Records for the feat.

SENATOR GORTON

Thomas Slade Gorton III was born on January 8, 1928 in Chicago, Illinois. After attending public school in Illinois, he served in the United States Army. After leaving the Army in 1946, he continued his education at Dartmouth College and Columbia Law School, graduating in 1950 and 1953, respectively. Senator Gorton served as an active lieutenant in the United States Air Force from 1953 until 1956 and continued to serve in the Air Force Reserve until 1980. Senator Gorton became interested in politics as a young man, but found the field crowded on the east coast. He decided to move to Washington State for the opportunity to run for elected office. He was elected in 1958 to the state legislature of Washington and served until 1969, all the time while practicing law in Seattle. In 1968, he was elected Washington State Attorney General and served until 1981. Senator Gorton transitioned to national politics when he was elected as to the United States Senate in 1980 but lost his reelection bid in 1986. After losing his seat, he resumed the practice of law, ran again and was elected to the open Senate seat in 1988. He was defeated in his reelection effort by Maria Cantwell in 2000. Since leaving the Senate, Senator Gorton's involvement includes serving on the National Commission on Federal Election Reform, as well as National Commission On Terrorists Attacks Upon the United States (9-11 Commission).

Slade Gorton attributes his successful political career to his commitment towards each position he held. By focusing on the job at hand rather than on strategizing his next career move, Senator Gorton led effectively. Many of his colleagues had pre-planned political career maps which lead them to view certain positions as merely "stepping-stones", and had short-lived political careers partially due to that. By viewing each position with the utmost seriousness, Slade Gorton remained committed and gained the respect of both his colleagues and constituents, allowing him to successfully continue pursuing elected positions.

The leadership principle, Modeling the Way, ties in most closely with Slade Gorton's approach towards his leadership positions. As noted by Kouzes and Posner, "modeling the way is essentially about earning the right and the respect to lead through direct individual involvement and action." By focusing on what needed to be accomplished in each leadership role he held, Slade Gorton earned the respect of others and was given the opportunity to continue pursuing additional leadership roles.

Senator Gorton attributes effective leadership partially to understanding the organizational and procedural framework of the institutions within which he worked. When he was Attorney General he led a disparate team of attorneys and staff, while in the state legislature he led within the context of a group of equal peers and when he was in the senate he led within both structures: as the head of a team with his staff and amongst peers with the other senators. Despite his success in large institutions, he acknowledged that the routines and procedures that had worked to accomplish things early in his political career no longer worked in the current modern Puget Sound environment. Specifically, Senator Gorton noted that he sees some of our current local structures as a hindrance to accomplishing some essential needs of our region especially in regard to transportation projects. As Kouzes and Posner say in their chapter on Challenging the Process "If organizations and societies are to make progress, then, leaders must be able to detect when routines are becoming dysfunctional. They must be able to see when routines are smothering creative planning and blocking necessary advancement."

In politics, relationships were paramount for Senator Gorton. While having spent his public service career in both pyramidal and linear organizational structures, effective and productive professional relationships were key to getting things done. These relationships relied on respect. Senator Gorton was known for being well-read, prepared, and thorough throughout his career and that served him well in the senate. The most memorable example he gave was about fishing rights in Alaska during his U.S. Senate days. Senator Ted Stevens from Alaska wanted one program that favored Alaskans, and Senator Gorton wanted another that was more balanced. Senator Gorton was good friends with majority leader Senator Trent Lott, who wouldn't introduce Senator Stevens' legislation until he compromised with Senator Gorton. Senator Gorton achieved his goals because of his relationship with the majority leader.

When asked about how to inspire others to act to make an impact on the community, Senator Gorton emphasized that a leader cannot tell a person what her or his cause should be. Instead, a leader should stress to others that it is important in and of itself to have a cause that aligns with that person's values and interests. A person will only be able to be an effective leader herself or himself if that person truly believes in the cause in which she or he has taken a leadership role. It is incumbent upon a leader to engage others to be leaders in an area in which they feel strongly about, and not to tell them in what area to focus their leadership skills, which is ultimately up to each individual.

Senator Gorton is a respected elder statesman and has many accomplishments to his name. He is intelligent, a hard worker, confident leader, and is able to maintain and effectively use relationships even with people with whom he does not agree. His venues have been highly structured institutions and he has been successful by understanding how use that structure to achieve his goals. In contrast, many of us have been inspired by those who have chosen to work outside the system, to change the system, or in institutions that are loosely organized and under funded. Regardless of which type of leader inspires us, we can all learn something from Senator Gorton's actions and opinions as a leader within his institutions. And although he has admitted that he has never read any books on leadership, he clearly exemplifies leadership principles.