

# Atkinson: Faith and family cornerstones of senator's personal philosophy

Continued from page 1A

allow him to drive. He asked Atkinson to come speak to his class about how a bill becomes a law. On the way out of the classroom, Atkinson remembers saying to Mathews, "Now you've got an A for bringing the Senator to your class, but if you really want to change the world, come see me next year and we'll write this bill."

Mathews, who excelled in high school sports despite his disability, said he worked with Atkinson, and a bill allowing him to drive passed in the House, but failed in the Senate.

"He got up at 5 a.m. and talked to everyone that voted against it and explained it to them," Mathews said. The bill passed in a re-vote.

"He made a huge difference in my life," Mathews said. "He's truly what a public servant should be."

Atkinson said his philosophy is based on faith, family and friends. Both of his parents were involved in ministry, and he's been a part of

Fellowship of Christian Athletes since he was a child. He also serves on the board of International United Christian Broadcasters.

"For my own person, it's a center-core issue," he said. "It's who I am."

According to the American Civil Liberties Union's 2005 legislative report, Atkinson voted in accordance with the union's positions 29 percent of the time. He voted against Senate Bill 756, which would have forced health insurance policies to cover prescription contraceptives. He also voted against SB 1000, which would have created civil unions for same-sex couples and prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

In 2005, according to the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organization, the labor-

union federation supported Atkinson's votes on "issues important to working families in Oregon" about 47 percent of the time. While Atkinson voted in favor of bills that would have created jobs through natural resource restoration and railroad, airport and other non-highway improvement projects, he also voted in favor of a bill giving Nike, Columbia Sports-wear, Tektronics and ESI a 30-year exemption from annexation and

taxation by the City of Beaverton, according to the AFL-CIO. Atkinson said he is "crazy-passionate" about higher education.

"In 1999, I was the guy that worked so hard on the entrepreneurial model" to ensure students' tuition dollars stay within the school they're attending, he said. "Before that time, your tuition

would go into a state system and the University of Oregon wouldn't get all of your tuition dollars. It made colleges compete."

He said there are four things he wants to do for the Oregon University System as governor: advocate "tirelessly" to make sure that students who are trying to put themselves through college like he did can afford to do it, "take the politics out of the higher-ed board," ensure that Oregon invests in research, and be the "only candidate, Republican or Democrat, that will work day and night to make sure that if you graduate from a college in Oregon, you've got a job."

A significant difference exists between his campaign and those of his competitors, he said. He said he wants to make public service a noble thing to do again.

"Right now it's more scandal than anything," which is why he's running a campaign "based on people," he said.

Atkinson said people think politi-

cians are involved in politics to stroke their egos or to take part in mean-spirited politics, not living up to their promises.

When he represented District 51, Secretary of State Bill Bradbury redraw the district line around Atkinson's house so that he would have to move to stay in the Oregon Senate, Atkinson said.

"I was the guy that the secretary of state threw out of his house to discourage me from being in politics," he said.

Bradbury's spokeswoman Anne Martens said the allegations are "nonsense," and "We've never wanted anyone out of politics."

Atkinson said he thinks one of the biggest problems in Oregon today is that funding increases for various programs, but the money never gets to the levels in a place it's supposed to. That happened with the Oregon Health Plan, he said.

esmith@dailyemerald.com

## IN BRIEF

### Google donates \$350,000 for open source technology

SALEM — Search engine giant Google is contributing \$350,000 to create a joint program by two Oregon universities to develop more open source — freely shared — computer technology, Gov. Ted Kulongoski announced Tuesday.

The grant will create an open source technology program, operated by OSU and Portland State University, in early 2006. Both schools have open source experts on their faculties.

The venture "is a critical piece of our

plan for growing the open source industry," Kulongoski said at a news conference.

He said the schools already are doing major work in the field and that OSU has developed a "world-class open source lab."

The Linux operating system and Mozilla web browser are examples of open source technology that are not privately owned or licensed and are free for downloading.

The open source process gives users the right to copy, modify and redistribute software. Backers say that allows people to modify and improve the technology, sometimes at a faster pace than in the conventional commercial development process.

— The Associated Press

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