

# POLITICAL HISTORY OF NEVADA

(TWELFTH EDITION)



Issued by  
BARBARA K. CEGAVSKE  
Nevada Secretary of State

Produced jointly with the Research Division  
of the Legislative Counsel Bureau



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## INTRODUCTION

It is an honor and privilege to serve as Nevada's 17th Secretary of State as we publish the 2016 Edition of the *Political History of Nevada*. Compiling an accurate and relevant historical reference of the Silver State's elections and previous public servants was very important to the office and those who contributed to this significant effort. Since its pamphlet form was first published in 1910 by Secretary of State William Douglas, the *Political History of Nevada* has evolved into a collection of facts and interesting accounts of Nevada's political past. In this book, we build on previous editions published by former Secretaries of State William Douglas, Malcom McEachin, John Koontz, William Swackhamer, Frankie Sue Del Papa, and Dean Heller; including information from Nevada's territorial beginnings through the 2016 election, which was one of the most interesting and contentious election cycles in our country's history.



Barbara K. Cegavske  
Nevada Secretary of State

When I took office in January of 2015, I wanted to know more about the Secretaries of State that served before me. With that in mind, we created the Secretary of State Photo Galleries that are proudly displayed in our offices in Carson City and Las Vegas. These photos are included as a fitting tribute to those Secretaries and their immeasurable service to our great State. You may discover that you recognize the names of many long-time Nevada families that were dedicated public servants and who have left a permanent impression on over 150 years of statehood.

Enjoy this 2016 Edition of the *Political History of Nevada*. We hope you find it not only a resource but also an educational and enlightening account of the Nevada's elections and political trends, as well as a memorable tribute to those who have served our great State.

Barbara K. Cegavske

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara K. Cegavske". The signature is fluid and cursive, matching the printed name above it.

Secretary of State  
Carson City, Nevada

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

By BARBARA K. CEGAVSKE  
Nevada Secretary of State

In compiling the information contained herewith, I must acknowledge first and foremost the tireless efforts of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), starting with H. Pepper Sturm, retired Deputy Director of the Research Division, who was committed to the project from the beginning. His successor, Michael J. Stewart, was absolutely invaluable to the team, taking on each and every detail and laying out the vision for the twelfth edition. With the assistance of Michelle L. Van Geel, Administrator of Publications, they spent countless hours not only working on the actual publication but attending meetings with various members of the Secretary of State team over a period of almost two years. Special thanks also must be given to Vance A. Hughey, former Chief Principal Research Analyst; Kennedy, Design and Production Specialist; and Maysha Watson, Editor of Publications. Teresa Wilt, Legislative Librarian, and Danielle Mayabb, Assistant Librarian, contributed a significant amount of time converting the previous version of the document into the current version. Keeping all the facts and figures accurate and updated is a massive undertaking, and I am grateful for their hard work. The LCB has also spearheaded the effort to make the book available online so that it can be updated every two years. For this twelfth print edition, we are grateful for the participation and professionalism of the Silver State Industries Printing Shop. We appreciate the wonderful job that they did.

Other members of the working group included Alan Glover, former State legislator and retired Carson City clerk, who offered his expertise and unique perspective as he guided this project from start to finish. His stories alone offered the team an even better understanding of how events played out over the years and made assembling this book an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. We are thankful to Emerson Marcus, Nevada National Guard State Historian and technical sergeant of the 152nd Airlift Wing in Reno, who has a great passion for the subject matter. His chapter, “Nevada: A Brief Historiography,” sets the tone for this edition as it looks at the growth of Nevada through the eyes of the writers who have sought to record various periods of our history. Special thanks also must be given to all of the contributors: Patricia D. Cafferata; Edan Strekal; Michael S. Green, Ph.D.; William D. Rowley; and Sean Whaley, as well as Marty Bibb and Mike Archer, who authored the dedications—all of whom are great storytellers and were willing to share their observations with our readers.

This book would not have been possible without the work of the former Secretaries of State who took on the task of publishing the previous editions of the *Political History of Nevada*. They set the groundwork for this project and

contributed to the content included in these pages. The Secretary of State Photo Gallery would not have been possible without the contributions of the Division of State Library, Archives and Public Records; the Division of Museums and History; the University of Nevada, Reno—Special Collections Department; the James D. Minor family; the Malcom McEachin family; Tim Stenger; and Silver State Industries. Special thanks are given to Jennifer Russell for leading the efforts in creating this tribute to our previous Secretaries of State.

Taking on responsibility of this significance requires a great team, and I am thankful for Scott Anderson, Chief Deputy Secretary of State, and all of those who assisted with this endeavor in the Secretary of State's office. I would like to give special thanks to Wayne Thorley, Deputy Secretary for Elections, who was tasked with updating historical facts and figures and putting them in a format that we could understand and appreciate. His participation was essential to the publishing of this edition.

I am grateful to all those who contributed to this edition, without whose efforts the *Political History of Nevada* would not have been possible.

**DEDICATIONS**

This edition of Nevada's political history is dedicated to two legislative giants. One a Republican and one a Democrat, their length of service in the State Senate and State Assembly exceeded that of any others in Nevada's 152-year history.

William (Bill) J. Raggio (1926-2012) served 38 years in the Senate from 1972-2011, and Joseph (Joe) E. Dini, Jr., (1929-2014) served 36 years in the Assembly from 1966-2002. Both Reno Republican Raggio and Yerington Democrat Dini earned well-deserved State, national, and international reputations and were widely respected for their skill in politics and dedication to their constituents.

Combined, their legislative service spans every decade from the 1960s to the 2010s, lending to their expertise in halting attempts by others to change facts and to inaccurately recall legislative history for personal gain.

Prior to legislative sessions being limited to 120 days, when the process bogged down near adjournment, Joe Dini and Bill Raggio were essential. They could break logjams on unresolved issues and bring consensus in a form that could win approval from a majority of their fellow lawmakers.

In the crucible of those final moments, these two undisputed legislative leaders met often, one-on-one, with each making his points. There were, at times, spirited exchanges—occasionally conducted in Italian, their native tongue—in an effort to hammer out agreements. Those meetings concluded upon encountering the gathered throng of news reporters, legislators, and others, and neither criticized the other. Bill Raggio and Joe Dini respected Nevada, the process, and each other too much to allow that to happen.



Assembly Speaker Joe Dini and Senate Majority Leader Bill Raggio.

Also included in the dedication section is Carole Vilardo, President of the Nevada Taxpayers Association, who retired in 2016. Her contributions to Nevada over the last few decades are worthy of our recognition.

**BILL RAGGIO**

By MICHAEL ARCHER



No legislator in the annals of Nevada history left a larger footprint on the political landscape of the State than Bill Raggio. A product of the old school of Nevada politics, Bill was a Republican conservative by philosophical orientation—but he was no ideologue. Former Nevada Governor and U.S. Senator Richard Bryan, a Democrat and colleague of Bill's in the State Senate during the 1970s, once described him as a pragmatist who recognized early on that compromise was not an act of betrayal or surrender but the only way in the legislative process to achieve results for his constituents. "What was best for the State of Nevada," Bryan

added, "was always Bill's guiding star." Indeed, no one loved Nevada more than Bill Raggio.

William John Raggio, Jr. was born in Reno (just a few hours short of Nevada Day) on October 30, 1926, a fourth-generation Nevadan and descendant of immigrants from northern Italy who arrived penniless but, by hard work and thrift, saved enough to become successful landowners. These values, along with an abiding respect for the country that provided such a golden opportunity, were passed along and instilled in Bill as a boy growing up during the Great Depression.

He developed self-sufficiency, leadership skills, and a strong sense of civility through his active participation in scouting, eventually earning the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. Along with a sharp intellect and natural curiosity about all things, Bill's character was well established by the time he entered Reno High School in 1940.

After graduation, and with World War II still raging, Bill entered officer training and was commissioned as a Marine Corps second lieutenant. Upon his release from active duty in 1947, he entered the University of Nevada majoring in political science. After graduation, he married his high school sweetheart, Dorothy Brigman, and moved to San Francisco where Bill attended the University of California's Hastings School of Law. Upon his admission to the State Bar of Nevada, Bill and Dorothy returned to Reno where he established a private practice.

Bill soon accepted an offer to become an assistant district attorney for Washoe County and, in 1958, was elected to the office of District Attorney, a position he would hold for the next 12 years. His tenure was extraordinarily busy and often dangerous, as he simultaneously prosecuted in cases of some of the most heinous crimes ever committed in Nevada—several cases drawing national and international news coverage.

Bill reinstated the use of the grand jury in Washoe County to rid Reno of widespread corruption in its city government and police department, as well as the local hoodlums who were bribing officials in those organizations. But all of this came at a personal cost, with the lives of Bill and his family disrupted by threats of violence to the point where trusted police sentries kept watch on the Raggio home often for weeks at a time and frequently escorted his three children to school for their protection.

Because of his reputation as a tough, fearless, and highly competent district attorney, Bill's peers nationwide honored him in 1967 as "Outstanding Prosecutor in the United States," and subsequently elected him president of the National District Attorneys Association.

As his popularity grew, Bill set his sights on the Governor's Mansion in Carson City and, by early 1970, polls showed him holding a wide lead over any other potential challenger. It would have taken a stroke of exceedingly bad luck to prevent him from becoming Nevada's next governor; yet such misfortune soon befell him when President Richard M. Nixon decided to take a personal interest in Bill Raggio's political career. Bill was soon under intense pressure from the President, Vice President, and other members of the Administration, as well as State and national Republican Party leaders, to postpone his dream of the governorship and run for the U.S. Senate against incumbent Democrat Howard Cannon.

Loyal to his party, even in the face of a decision he knew to be misguided, Bill ran a hard campaign despite being saddled during the race with a faltering national economy and negative political fallout from several highly unpopular decisions the President made, including the invasion of Cambodia. In the end, Nixon betrayed Bill for the sake of political expediency by cutting a deal with Cannon—ensuring his reelection. "It was the biggest mistake of my political life," Bill later said. "The White House pulled the rug out from under me, after they had persuaded me to run."

He had given up his job as district attorney to campaign and, now deeply frustrated with having been so awed by the President's attention that he failed to trust his own political instincts, Bill had reached the low point in his professional career. Yet he would rebound within a few months, partnering in

a prestigious Las Vegas law firm and, in 1972, after rekindling his love of public service, Bill Raggio was elected to the Nevada State Senate.

Once there, he spent long hours learning his job, impressing colleagues with his dedication and work ethic. Within just two sessions he had not only moved from the back bench but was chosen as Senate Minority Floor Leader. Republicans would remain as the minority party for another 14 years and, throughout most of that time, Bill was a member of the Senate Committee on Finance where he carefully studied the intricacies of the State budget and became widely admired for his prodigious intellect and extraordinary retention, even among those who did not share his conservative political views.

In 1987, when Republicans won the Senate, Bill became Majority Floor Leader and Chair of the Finance Committee, guiding that governing body over most of the next two decades with a willingness to listen and consider the needs and opinions of others. His charisma, patience, and sense of fairness—balanced, when he felt it necessary, with an intimidating presence and an occasional calculated fit of temper—steered colleagues to acceptable compromises and kept the Legislature functioning.

Bill's longevity in these legislative posts was all the more remarkable because of the dramatic political power shift from Washoe to Clark County during his tenure. Despite southern Nevada legislators comprising a significant majority in the Senate, northerner Bill remained in leadership positions largely due to his cleverness and experience, which allowed him to play the political game like an accomplished chess master—always several moves ahead of his rivals.

He also benefited from having built a good working relationship with his Democratic counterpart in the State Assembly from rural Yerington, Speaker Joe Dini. Though they shared the same heritage, Raggio and Dini were nothing alike. Where Raggio was dazzlingly charming and manifestly clever, Dini was low key and contemplative, an incarnation of the quiet westerner who said little, but when he did everyone listened. Of Raggio, Dini once said, "He's a class act. Because there is not a lot of politicking going on, we can sit down and work out our problems, get past the issues, play it straight up."

Bill credited Joe, who had been in the Legislature six years longer than he had, with teaching him never to put his name on too many bills. "I put my name on 30 bills one year," Bill said, only to find "Joe held every one of them" to leverage for his own aims. Raggio quickly mastered the technique of using parts of legislation being proposed by others—often those in the other house or party—to artfully quilt together what he wanted in the end, once telling a reporter, "I have nothing with my fingerprints on it."

About such craftiness, Lorne Malkiewich, longtime Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, said, “Dini and Raggio loved the game, but they loved Nevada more, and that was always the bond that brought them together at the end of session to reach the final agreements.”

Among Senator Raggio’s many accomplishments were a change limiting legislative sessions to 120 days and the formation of the Nevada Economic Forum to help avoid last-minute budgetary chaos. However, Bill was most proud of his prominent role in the creation and passage of the Nevada Education Reform Act, which strengthened school accountability, adopted higher measurable statewide standards in academic subjects, and increased classroom technology. It was one of the most complex and controversial pieces of legislation ever to challenge State lawmakers, but Bill was able to lead them through that maze with his encyclopedic knowledge and talent for synthesizing a discussion down to its essence.

Raggio was also an ardent supporter of Nevada’s colleges and universities. Students at the University of Nevada, Reno, campus are reminded of this daily by the looming presence of the William J. Raggio College of Education Building. In Clark County, his contribution as an outstanding role model for those entering the legal profession is seen in his name on the largest classroom facility at the Boyd School of Law. Bill considered himself a “traditional Republican,” who championed a friendly business environment and small, but competent, government; with both those goals advanced by excellence in the State’s system of higher education.

He also strove to keep taxes low but understood that circumstances change and increases were sometimes necessary. During the 2003 Legislative Session, Bill, who by then had been widowed for several years, married Dale Checket, a ray of sunshine amid the dark clouds of discord forming between him and what he termed “far right” conservatives within the Senate’s Republican caucus. This split was largely the result of Bill’s decision to join Republican Governor Kenny Guinn and over two-thirds of the Legislature in voting for a tax increase to keep Nevada schools open. It was a tough choice, Bill later said, but necessary because Nevada’s children deserved teachers, books, and decent classrooms “like those of us had who came before them.”

This internal political rift widened and, during the 2008 Republican Primary Election, the Tea Party faction ran their own candidate in a heated, but ultimately unsuccessful, campaign to oust the incumbent Raggio. Rather than discounting these challenges, Senator Raggio embraced them as an opportunity to remind his fellow lawmakers that they were elected “not just to serve Republican or Democrat constituents, but in the best interest of all the people of Nevada” and that inflexible political positions, pledges, and narrow, overly simplistic answers for solving the broad and complex issues facing the

State were an abdication of their duty to thoughtfully vet information and make informed decisions.

During the 2010 election for Nevada's U.S. Senate seat, Bill was among more than 200 prominent Republicans in the State who endorsed Senator Harry Reid against his Tea Party opponent. Nevertheless, it was Bill who quickly became the lightning rod for ire when Reid won reelection. Two weeks later, the Republican Senate caucus stripped Raggio of his leadership position. On January 5, 2011, Senator Bill Raggio announced the end of his 56-year-long career in public service, citing health reasons. He died just over a year later as the result of a respiratory illness.

Throughout his 38 years of service—the longest service of any senator in Nevada history—Bill had overcome his share of tragedy, including the deaths of his wife Dorothy and son Mark and several serious, sometimes life-threatening, health issues. Nevertheless, he pressed on resolutely in his sworn duty to the citizens of the State, never losing his keen wit and polished humor.

Bill had delighted in cultivating an almost comical personal image of a grumpy penny-pincher; yet he was actually a person of intense compassion, loyalty and anonymous generosity. His personal records contain hundreds of notes and letters thanking him for some act of kindness or monetary help. It would be impossible to count the number of flowers and cards, calls of encouragement or congratulations, visits to sick beds, and words of condolence or eulogies Bill provided over the years, or to imagine where, among the demands of his personal and professional life, he found the time and the energy to be there for so many people.

Though his values came to be derided by some as too quaint to survive in the increasingly cynical and acrimonious arena of modern American politics, Bill Raggio chose not to change—nor would his principles have allowed him to. One evening, as his political life was coming to a close, he spoke to an audience of young people in Reno, quoting one of his favorite essayists, John Henry Cardinal Newman:

The true gentleman has no ears for gossip or slander and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean in his disputes, never takes an unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments. He observes the maxim of the ancient age that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend.

Senator Bill Raggio, Nevada's most significant statesman and lawmaker, remained a "true gentleman" to the end.

**JOE DINI**

By MARTY BIBB



First elected to the Nevada State Assembly in November 1966, Joe Dini served longer in Nevada's Assembly than any other person. His remarkable career spanned from the 1960s to the 2000s, a crucial time when the State's population exploded from 400,000 to 2 million and the program needs of the Silver State grew exponentially.

Speaker Dini was truly one of a kind, known for his intelligence, legislative skill, preparation, and strength of character, all of which were balanced with a genuine concern for people and a patient, reserved demeanor seldom seen in the political arena.

When he was elected Speaker for a fourth regular session in 1991, Joe Dini eclipsed a record set by Lemuel Allen of Churchill County nearly a century earlier (1899). By the end of his career, Joe Dini had served eight regular sessions as Speaker, including one in 1995 as Co-Speaker with Republican Lynn Hettrick when Democrats and Republicans each held 21 Assembly seats.

Joe Dini's legacy is far greater than the length of his legislative service. It is summed up by 14 words engraved on a brass plate on the oversized gavel behind the Assembly Speaker's rostrum. The plaque reads, "In Perpetual Honor of Joseph E. Dini, Jr., Speaker of the Nevada State Assembly."

When he first sought the District 38 Assembly seat in 1966, Joe Dini pledged to serve the people of the district with "honesty, skill and dignity." In the mid-1990s, Carson City's daily newspaper the *Nevada Appeal* endorsed Joe Dini for reelection, terming him "Nevada's first statesman."

He was designated Speaker Emeritus by a 2001 Assembly Resolution. Legislative action in 2005 added Joe's name and photo to the Assembly's Wall of Distinction citing his integrity and fairness.

A first generation Nevadan, Joe Dini was born to Italian immigrants. His father, Giuseppe (Joe) Dini, came to Nevada from the Lucca Province of Italy in the early 1900s settling in Yerington. Joe's mother, Elvira Castellani, arrived later from Lucca. Giuseppe and Elvira married, and Joseph E. Dini, Jr. was born on March 28, 1929.

As a youth, Joe excelled in school. Too young to serve in World War II, he began developing his work ethic at various jobs in Yerington. At 13, the friendly youngster worked for the local market, driving their truck delivering grocery orders and meeting people throughout the region. He was salutatorian of his high school class, then enrolled at the University of Nevada. There Joe earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and joined Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity. In 1990, its national fraternity named him an outstanding alumnus.

While an undergraduate at Nevada, Joe met his future wife, Jeanne Demuth, a nursing student. Just before their wedding day, Joe was a passenger in a car involved in a terrible auto accident. The vehicle's brakes failed, leaving him seriously injured and hospitalized for months at Washoe Medical Center. Before being released, Joe summoned a priest, and he and Jeanne were married at his hospital bedside in 1949.

Upon graduation, he went to work for a Reno accounting firm. The couple's first son, Jay, was born in Reno, then the young couple moved to the pastoral Mason Valley where sons George, David, and Michael were born.

Joe Dini's father had opened the Wooden Shoe Tavern in Yerington in 1933 upon the repeal of Prohibition. Joe joined him in the business and, in 1960, purchased Dini's Lucky Club from him.

Soon after, he began his lifetime of public service modestly enough as chairman of the swimming pool district board. A self-described "not too mechanical" chairman, he packed a toolbox to work daily. Over lunch hours, Joe could regularly be found repairing the pool's operating system or replacing rogue sprinkler heads in the adjacent park.

Local leaders urged him to seek higher office; so, in 1966, Joe Dini sought and won the Assembly District 38 seat he would hold continuously until his 2002 retirement from the Legislature. He won reelections in landslide proportions but rejected repeated efforts to recruit him to seek higher office including Nevada's governorship and the U.S. House of Representatives. Instead, Joe honed his legislative skills on major issues affecting his largely agricultural district, water chief among them. Today, water remains a vital issue for Assembly District 38 and the State of Nevada.

In the 1970s, Congress mandated creation of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), a bi-state effort to oversee Lake Tahoe. Joe Dini and respected State Senator Spike Wilson were chosen to represent Nevada in delicate rulemaking negotiations with two California legislators.

Widely regarded as Nevada's most knowledgeable lawmaker in the area of water law, Speaker Dini was later named chairman of the prestigious Water Policy Committee of the Western Legislative Conference, a position he held

for six years. In 1990, he testified before the U.S. Senate during the crucial negotiated settlement involving distribution of the Truckee River's waters. He played lead roles in re-establishment of the much needed State of Nevada Division of Water Planning and the Carson Water Subconservancy District.

Among Joe Dini's other top legislative priorities were education, economic development, budgets, senior citizens, veterans, health care and, cultural preservation. He played a key role in the creation of Nevada's community college system and the State's medical and law schools.

A 2002 Act of Congress honored him, naming Yerington's postal facility as the "Joseph E. Dini, Jr. Post Office." His efforts in foreign trade matters affecting Nevada saw Joe honored with the Friendship Medal of Diplomacy by Taiwan in 2000.

In 2004, the Joe Dini Jr. Library and Student Center at Western Nevada College in Carson City was dedicated in his honor. Joe also worked on behalf of K-12 education as a major supporter of adoption of the Nevada Plan to stabilize education funding. Always the champion of rural schools and local control in education, he successfully fought efforts to consolidate rural county school districts.

A half century after he began his legislative career, many improvements to the everyday lives of Nevadans exist through his efforts to create State parks, better and safer highways, improved recreational support facilities including the Northern Nevada Fish Hatchery, and more.

Speaker Dini strongly supported his wife Jeanne in her fierce advocacy for improvements to Nevada's system of rural and urban mental health care. Today Sparks' Dini-Townsend Psychiatric Hospital serves the mental health needs of northern Nevadans by offering rapid screening and stabilization of individuals in acute psychiatric crisis. It is jointly named for him and former State Senator Randolph Townsend.

Perhaps no single legislative challenge demonstrated Joe Dini's tenacity more clearly than his bill, Assembly Bill 42 of the 1987 Legislative Session, creating the Northern Nevada Veterans Cemetery in Fernley.

There was widespread recognition of the need for a veterans cemetery in Nevada. However, budget constraints and southern Nevada's population boom led to calls for it to be located in Boulder City. Joe Dini also saw the crying need for a cemetery for veterans in northern Nevada—residents there could have to travel as many as 500 miles to Boulder City.

The significant costs for constructing a second cemetery posed a seemingly insurmountable roadblock, so Joe rolled up his sleeves and worked around it.

Without fanfare, creatively and quietly he lined up strong support among veterans groups, media, and others including the construction and development sectors. He obtained commitments for substantial donations of goods and services to fund the desert-themed veterans cemetery in Fernley so important to northern Nevadans.

For Joe Dini, moving Nevada forward was the measuring stick of his service.

A passion for Nevada led him to reach out across the aisle to Republican lawmakers and to legislators from all parts of Nevada. In 1985, Jack McCloskey of Hawthorne, dean of Nevada newspaper editors and a Republican, editorialized about him, saying, “Joe Dini of Yerington was like a searchlight at the legislative session clearing the fog.”

As Speaker, Dini took genuine joy in mentoring young State legislators, as evidenced by the legion of future leaders whose lives he touched. They include Nevada governors, congressional representatives, and U.S. Senators.

His advice to them was to do their homework and listen to all sides and positions on legislation before taking a position. Failing to do so, he cautioned, would result in a loss of credibility by “flip-flopping” or by taking the wrong side of an issue.

Former Governor and U.S. Senator Richard Bryan said, “Joe was the legislative equivalent of a grand master of chess.” Senator Bryan added:

In all probability Joe will be the last Speaker from rural Nevada. It is a tribute to the respect which he enjoyed, that his Democratic colleagues in the State Assembly elected Joe Dini Speaker on seven occasions. Making that achievement more impressive is the fact that it occurred at a time when the majority of Assembly members were from Southern Nevada.

Governor Brian Sandoval said, “As a first-term assemblyman in the minority party, I worked hard to develop a thorough understanding of the legislative process. When I visited Speaker Dini to discuss the issues, he welcomed me into his office and shared his wisdom, which I greatly appreciated.”

Joe Dini respected the legislative process and expected others to do the same. You could count on the fingers of a hand the times he lost his cool. During one particularly contentious floor session, several unruly Assembly Members failed to observe protocol as he gavelled the Assembly to order. Joe simply laid the gavel on the Speaker’s rostrum, turned, and quietly began walking

out of the chamber. Before he reached the door, a complete hush fell over the Assembly. You could have heard a pin drop. A couple of minutes later, as he approached the rostrum, the members came to order on their own.

Speaker Dini embraced spirited debate but wouldn't tolerate a lack of respect for parliamentary procedure or lawmakers who were not good to their word.

In the 1980s, at 2 a.m. on the last day of one session he angrily gaveled the session to a one-minute recess. It seemed the chairman of a committee had broken his promise not to hear a particularly bad bill and tried to slip it through the Legislature at the twelfth hour. That chairman never again chaired a committee, served only one more term, and then lost his reelection bid.

Joe Dini's life was turned upside down in early 1994 when his wife, soulmate, and greatest supporter, Jeanne Dini, died. Joe struggled through the summer, the reelection cycle, and the 1995 Session.

For years as Speaker, Joe had worked professionally on a daily basis with respected and nationally recognized, long-time Nevada Assembly Chief Clerk Mouryne Landing who herself had lost a spouse a few years earlier. The two had a mutual respect for each other, found love, and were married in late 1995, living happily together until his death in 2014. Mouryne's service as Chief Clerk for many years earned her a place on the Assembly's Wall of Distinction.

During his legislative career, Speaker Dini built a reputation as a workhorse. He relished long days filled with committee hearings and even multiple, daily draining floor sessions. Joe often worked late in his office, arrived early the next morning, and was always familiar with and prepared for the rigor of all the day's bills.

On the weekends during legislative sessions, he returned to Yerington and worked at the Lucky Club. On occasion, Joe could be found in the restaurant refilling coffee cups for customers, his constituents. Many of them in truth wanted the inside scoop about what was happening at the legislative session in Carson City as much as a coffee warm-up. It was just another way Joe made sure he never lost touch with his people.

Speaker Joe Dini's impressive record of legislative accomplishments focused on the short-term and long-term needs of the people of Nevada. His innate reserved nature was his calling card.

For decades, in Nevada and beyond, Joe Dini was referred to as "Mr. Speaker." Perhaps more important to him was that the people of his State and district simply called him Joe.

## CAROLE VILARDO

By EMERSON MARCUS



Carole Vilardo spent her career as an unbiased champion of fair tax laws in Nevada. After teaming up with former Nevada State Senator Ann O'Connell in the mid-1970s in the pursuit of tougher shoplifting laws, Vilardo joined the Nevada Taxpayers Association (NTA) in 1986. During her tenure with the Association, Vilardo earned a reputation as an impartial watchdog; approachable

with a knack for explaining complex tax laws in a clear manner. Additionally, Vilardo authored and edited numerous NTA publications and worked on several committees and commissions in both northern and southern Nevada throughout her career.

Vilardo retired from NTA in 2016 with an honorary dinner at the Gold Coast Casino in Las Vegas attended by lawmakers from both sides of the political aisle, reporters, lobbyists, and many other Nevadans.

Vilardo, who often donned elegant hats and never lost her New York accent, left an indelible mark on Nevada. Her work over the course of the last four decades helped shape Nevada tax law today and will be felt for decades to come.

This edition of the *Political History of Nevada* is dedicated to that work.

She doesn't normally play politics at all. She is there to give you the facts. She has very strong private feelings, but she is a person of her word and when she tells you she will do something, she will do it. In politics, you don't always find somebody without an agenda like that.

—Former Nevada State Senator Ann O'Connell

Legislators trusted her. The press trusted her. Editorial boards trusted her. The public benefited from her expertise. Without her as a tax policy watchdog, special interests would have slipped in language for their own benefit.

—Jane Ann Morrison, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*

Vilardo was respected for her knowledge and dedication, but she became beloved because she was always willing to take time to help, whether to impart knowledge or to mentor a newcomer . . . so many Nevada laws would be worse, so many statutes would exist that should not if Vilardo had not been ever-vigilant.

—Jon Ralston, *Reno Gazette-Journal*

Ms. Vilardo has demonstrated true commitment to Nevada, exemplifying what it means to fight for the greater good of our great State . . . I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in thanking Ms. Vilardo for her years of service, and I wish her well in all of her future endeavors.

—United States Senator Dean Heller  
on the floor of the U.S. Senate, May 12, 2016

## PRESENT CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS AND DUTIES



*Governor Brian Sandoval*

The Governor is the highest-ranking constitutional officer in Nevada, and serves as the State's Chief Executive. He is responsible for coordinating the work of all State agencies, recommends the budget to the Legislature and serves on many State boards and commissions.

Brian Sandoval was elected the 30th Governor of Nevada in 2010 and re-elected in 2014. In 2005 he was appointed United States District Judge for the District of Nevada and in 2002 he was elected Attorney General of Nevada. He has previously served as chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission and in the Nevada Legislature.

His accomplishments as Governor include work to make Nevada the most veteran and military-friendly State in the nation, transforming Nevada's approach to economic development, expanding health care coverage, implementing new innovative gaming policy and leading the effort for an unprecedented investment in and modernization of Nevada's public education system.

During his inaugural legislative session, Sandoval transformed Nevada's approach to economic development by moving the duties directly under his authority and created the Governor's Office of Economic Development. During Sandoval's tenure, GOED successfully partnered the State with cutting-edge companies, technology innovations, and helped develop new industries across the Silver State.

The Governor has also directed regulation and innovation for gaming policy. By setting the pace and standards through pioneering legislation and State policy he identified the potential within the industry for interactive gaming, skill-based games and other developments in an evolving industry.

The hallmark of the Governor's administration is his vision for transforming and modernizing Nevada's education system. An unprecedented investment to reform Nevada's education system was enacted in 2015 that will provide targeted programs to boost student achievement and equip students and teachers with the tools for success as innovators, job creators, and leaders of the new Nevada economy.

During the 2015 Legislative Session a comprehensive plan to provide additional support to military veterans and their families through educational, employment and healthcare services was signed by the Governor. In addition to these policy changes, he also pursued substantial funding for veterans initiatives including State-match funding for construction of the Northern Nevada Veterans Home.

The Governor has held several national positions during his tenure, including the chairmanships of the Western Governors Association, the Education Commission of the States and the Council of State Governments. He also serves as a member of the Governors for the National Governors Association (NGA) and will serve as the Chairman of the NGA in 2018.

The Governor is married to Kathleen, his wife of 26 years, who is the Director of Operations for the Children's Cabinet and has three children, James, Maddy, and Marisa.



*Lieutenant Governor Mark Hutchison*

A third generation Nevadan, born and raised in Las Vegas, Lieutenant Governor Mark Hutchison is a husband, father and grandfather, constitutional lawyer, and business owner. He has a strong sense of commitment and dedication to Nevada and is deeply honored to represent the Silver State.

Mark was raised in a modest blue-collar family and is the product of Nevada's public education system. After he graduated from Bonanza High School, Mark earned his business administration degree, Phi Kappa Phi, from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and received his law degree, magna cum laude, from Brigham Young University. Following law school, Mark clerked for a judge on the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Indiana. Mark then worked for a national law firm until returning to Nevada and founding his own law firm in 1996 with his good friend, John Steffen. Today, Mark is the senior partner at Hutchison & Steffen, one of the largest law firms in the State, employing nearly one hundred Nevadans. Mark has been widely recognized by his peers and clients as a skilled and effective lawyer. As a result, Mark has been a key figure in some of Nevada's most significant governmental disputes at the intersection of law and politics.

On November 4, 2014, Mark Hutchison was elected to serve as Nevada's 34th Lieutenant Governor. Prior to running for lieutenant governor, Mark had a long history of public service. Mark served on the Nevada Commission on Ethics for six years, two of which he chaired the Commission. Mark also had the pleasure of serving in the Nevada State Senate (Senate District 6) to which he was elected in 2012. In addition to his service in the public sector, Mark served as a member of numerous non-profit and community organizations, some of which he is still active in today.

Mark was sworn in to office on January 5, 2015. As Lieutenant Governor, Mark is a member of Governor Brian Sandoval's cabinet and serves as President of the State Senate. Mark is the chairman of the Commission on Tourism, Vice-Chairman of the State Board of Transportation, a member of the Board of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, and a member of the Executive Budget Audit Committee. On November 17, 2015, Mark was appointed to the Governor's Commission on Homeland Security. Mark also serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Public Education Foundation and as co-chair of What's Next Nevada?

When not focused on his duties as Lieutenant Governor or at his law firm, Mark is focused on his family. Mark and his wife Cary have been married for thirty years and together they have six children and four grandchildren. Mark enjoys doing just about anything with his family and has spent many enjoyable years coaching the athletic teams of his children and their friends. When he can, Mark continues to help the football team at Palo Verde High School where his youngest son still plays. Mark and his family are also active in their church. During his limited free time, Mark enjoys running, collecting leatherback books, and writing.



*Secretary of State Barbara K. Cegavske*

Barbara Cegavske was elected to her first term as Nevada Secretary of State in 2014 and assumed office on January 5, 2015. With more than 33 years of combined public service and small business experience, Cegavske brings a unique blend of business acumen and legislative expertise to the Secretary of State's office.

Cegavske entered public service in 1996 when she was elected to serve in the Nevada Assembly representing Clark County District 5 for three consecutive terms. In 2002, Cegavske ran for and successfully won a State Senate seat for Clark County District 8. She served three full terms before assuming the role of Secretary of State.

During her time in the Nevada Legislature, Cegavske assumed leadership roles as Co-Assembly Assistant Minority Floor Leader, Assistant Assembly Minority Whip, Senate Minority Whip, and Senate Assistant Minority Leader. She also chaired the Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections for three legislative sessions and was vice-chair of the Senate Committees on Human Resources and Education; Human Resources and Facilities; and Legislative Affairs and Operations. In all, Cegavske served in 9 regular sessions and 13 special sessions of the Nevada Legislature.

As a daughter of small business owners, Cegavske rolled up her sleeves and pitched in with her siblings after school and during summer vacations to help the family business. Her introduction to the free-market system proved to be valuable first-hand knowledge when she and her husband Tim became owners of a 7-Eleven franchise. Over the course of 13 years, the Cegavskes faced daily challenges but also experienced the rewards of employing fellow Nevadans and contributing to the State's economy. They also learned about onerous regulations that placed burdens on their business and disincentives for a business to be able to grow and thrive.

Born and raised in Minnesota, Cegavske has been a proud Nevadan for the past 40 years. She has two sons, Adam and Bret, who graduated from UNR and UNLV respectively and are raising their own families in Las Vegas. Cegavske and her husband are the proud grandparents of six grandchildren.



*State Treasurer Dan Schwartz*

Dan Schwartz is Nevada's State Treasurer. Since taking office in January 2015, the Treasurer's Office has revamped the State's investment program and increased returns; launched a College Savings Program aimed at creating a "culture of education" in Nevada; steered the Education Savings Account program through its early days; and, brought unclaimed property within statutory guidelines. He also oversees the State's debt issuance, which has maintained its AA/AA+/Aa2 rating. The Treasurer's Office expects to expand its programs in education; to further increase returns on the State's portfolios; and to work toward improving the economy and lives of Nevadans.

Dan grew up in suburban Chicago, and received his undergraduate degree from Princeton, J.D. (law degree) from Boston University; and his MBA from Columbia. He also studied at the Institute d'Etudes Politiques in Paris during his junior year in college, receiving his Certificat. He served as an enlisted man in the United States Army and was stationed on a Pershing missile base in Germany.

Dan has over 35 years of financial experience in the banking and securities industries. He is an experienced and accredited investor in the public and private markets.

Dan has also been an entrepreneur. Over the past 25 years, he has started and built several companies. He served as the CEO of AVCJ Group, Ltd. (AVCJ), which publishes the highly-regarded *Asian Venture Capital Journal*. Dan and his team built AVCJ into Asia's leading source on private equity and venture capital. AVCJ was purchased by a UK company in 2006.

Dan is Founder, President and CEO of Qiosk.com, “The World’s Newsstand,” one of the pioneers and innovative leaders in digital magazine delivery and media. Fifteen years after its creation, Qiosk continues to be profitable and a leader in its field.

Dan is the author of two books, *The Future of Finance: How Private Equity and Venture Capital Will Shape the Global Economy* (published by John Wiley) and *Principles of the American Republic*.

Dan is married, the father of two daughters, and resides with his wife, Yanan, in Las Vegas and Carson City.



*State Controller Ron Knecht*

The State Controller, Nevada's Chief Fiscal Officer, administers its accounting system and may recommend to the Governor and Legislature plans for support of public credit, for promoting frugality and economy, and for better management and understanding of State fiscal affairs. He's responsible to settle claims against the State, collect debts owed to it, process and record its financial transactions, conduct the final audit and ensure compliance with *Nevada's Constitution* and State and federal laws. He provides the citizens, legislature, governor and others extensive, accurate and impartial financial information and works to assure the citizens' money is spent efficiently and cost-effectively. The Controller serves on Nevada's Board of Finance, Executive Branch Audit Committee and its Department of Transportation Board of Directors.

Ron Knecht, an economist, financial and policy analyst, and professional mechanical engineer (registered in California), became Controller January 5, 2015. Before being elected Controller, he divided 44 working years between public service and entrepreneurial small business, all in senior professional and managerial positions, testifying often as an expert witness. He's been a founder, executive or director for 12 firms, charities, community-service and public-interest groups.

Ron was elected to the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education in 2006 and re-elected in 2012. He was elected to the Nevada Assembly for 2002-2004, representing Carson City and Washoe City. A graduate of the University of Illinois in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Stanford University in Engineering Economic Systems, and the University of San Francisco Law School, he and his wife Kathy have a teen-aged daughter Karyn.



*Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt*

The Attorney General is the State's chief law enforcement officer, who with a statewide staff of 392, provides legal counsel and representation for all Nevada state agencies, including most boards and commissions. The Attorney General retains criminal jurisdiction over consumer, Medicaid, mortgage and insurance fraud, as well as public integrity crimes committed by government employees and human trafficking offenses, among other categories of crimes in an effort to protect society's most vulnerable populations. Along with its prosecutors, the Attorney General's Office maintains a criminal investigations division with nearly fifty sworn peace officers that possess jurisdiction to investigate these offenses. The breadth and depth of his duties extend to his participation on a number of State boards and committees, including the Board of Examiners, the Board of Prison Commissioners, the Board of Pardons Commissioners, the Executive Branch Audit Committee, the Advisory Committee on the Administration of Justice, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, the Substance Abuse Working Group, the Prosecution Advisory Council and the Technological Crime Advisory Board.

Attorney General Laxalt aims to boost his Office's capacities to be an indispensable resource for the State and a leader of the law enforcement community. The Office is committed to ensuring the safety of Nevada's communities, and partners with other law enforcement agencies throughout the State to discuss emerging trends and identify the most effective role it can play in providing assistance and support.

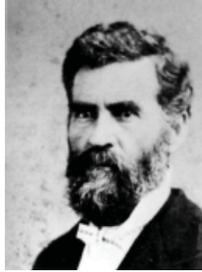
Laxalt was sworn in as Attorney General in January, 2015, making him the youngest in the country. As a former Lieutenant in the United States Navy, he previously served his country as a Judge Advocate General. His experiences in the Navy reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the military, and propelled

him to initiate the Office of Military Legal Assistance, a first-of-its-kind Attorney General-led program that partners with private sector attorneys to offer our military communities access to pro bono civil legal services.

Laxalt graduated from the Georgetown University Law Center, and worked in private practice solving problems for a wide array of Nevadans and their businesses. He has also served on the Board of Trustees for Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada, the largest private social services in the State. Laxalt also co-founded the Saint Thomas More Society in Nevada, a legal ethics and leadership society that has sponsored numerous legal education and leadership events.

**SECRETARIES OF STATE, 1861–CURRENT**

***Orion  
Clemens  
(Secretary  
of Nevada  
Territory)  
1861-1864***



***Chauncey  
Norman  
Noteware  
1864-1871***



***James D.  
Minor  
1871-1879***



***Jasper  
Babcock  
1879-1883***



***John M.  
Dormer  
1883-1891***



***Oscar H.  
Grey  
1891-1895***



***Eugene  
Howell  
1895-1903***



***William Gibb  
Douglass  
1903-1911***



*George  
Brodigan  
1911-1923*



*William G.  
Greathouse  
1923-1937*



*Malcolm  
McEachin  
1937-1947*



*John  
Koontz  
1947-1973*



*William D.  
Swackhamer  
1973-1987*



*Frankie Sue  
Del Papa  
1987-1991*



*Cheryl  
Lau  
1991-1995*



*Dean  
Heller  
1995-2007*



***Ross  
Miller  
2007-2015***



***Barbara K.  
Cegavske  
2015-present***

2015 LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

2015 Senate Leadership



Joseph (Joe) P. Hardy, M.D.  
*President Pro Tempore*



Michael Roberson  
*Majority Leader*



Ben Kieckhefer  
*Assistant Majority Leader*



Scott T. Hammond  
*Majority Whip*



James A. Settlemeyer  
*Majority Whip*



Aaron D. Ford  
*Minority Leader*



Debbie Smith  
*Assistant Minority Leader*



Kelvin D. Atkinson  
*Minority Whip*



Ruben J. Kihuen  
*Minority Whip*

**2015 LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP**

*2015 Assembly Leadership*



John Hambrick  
*Speaker*



John C. Ellison  
*Speaker Pro Tempore*



D. Paul Anderson  
*Majority Floor Leader*



Ira Hansen  
*Assistant Majority  
Floor Leader*



Jim Wheeler  
*Majority Whip*



Jill Dickman  
*Assistant Majority  
Whip-North*



Victoria Seaman  
*Assistant Majority  
Whip-South*



Marilyn Kirkpatrick  
*Minority Floor Leader*



Teresa Benitez-Thompson  
*Assistant Minority  
Floor Leader*



Maggie Carlton  
*Assistant Minority  
Floor Leader*

2016 SUPREME COURT AND APPELLATE COURT



Supreme Court: Standing (l. to r.): Justice Kristina Pickering, Justice Nancy Saitta, Chief Justice Ron Parraguirre, and Justice Michael Douglas  
Sitting: (l. to r.): Justice James Hardesty, Justice Michael Cherry, and Justice Mark Gibbons



Court of Appeals: Judge Abbi Silver, Chief Judge Michael Gibbons, and Judge Jerome Tao

