

Arthur Olsen

February 13, 1916—

Elected 1958 4 years, 1962

Arthur Olsen moved to Las Vegas in 1952 and served as Deputy District Attorney, Justice of the Peace, on the County Commission, and in the Nevada State Assembly.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Olsen attended DePaul University for his bachelor's degree and for law school. After serving in the Army during World War II, Olsen made his home in southern Nevada. He began working as a tour guide for the Bureau of Reclamation at Hoover Dam while studying for the Nevada Bar. He passed the bar in 1952 and began practicing as an attorney.

In 1954, Olsen was appointed Deputy District Attorney. In 1956, he was elected Las Vegas Justice of the Peace. He then ran for the Clark County Commission in 1958 on a platform that included creating a public defender's office. He won election in 1958 and was re-elected in 1962 by a wide margin.

Olsen resigned from the County Commission in 1963 in order to take over as general manager of a company planning to lease space at the airport. Governor Grant Sawyer appointed Ralph Denton to fill the rest of Olsen's term.

In 1964, Olsen again sought public office when he ran for the Nevada State Assembly. He won a seat in the Assembly and served during the 1965 session. In 1966, he ran for the Nevada State Senate but lost. Olsen was re-elected to the Assembly in 1970. During the 1971 session, Olsen made waves when he asked Nevada's Attorney General to issue an opinion on the constitutionality of the death penalty. Despite Olsen's efforts, the death penalty remained legal in Nevada.

Olsen was active in business and civic affairs throughout his years in office. He opened his own law practice in 1959. Olsen worked as an attorney, ran a construction business, and as a real estate broker. He served on the Clark County Juvenile Board, on the City of Hope board, and was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Olsen continues to live in southern Nevada. He is active in his church and involved in a number of philanthropic causes including UNLV and the Boulder City Hospital.

