



1578 West 1700 South, Suite 201  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

(801) 972-8814  
[www.utahtaxpayers.org](http://www.utahtaxpayers.org)

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For Information Contact:  
Howard Stephenson  
801.815.6800  
[howard@utahtaxpayers.org](mailto:howard@utahtaxpayers.org)

## **Taxpayer Advocate Jack A. Olson Passes**

Salt Lake City—Utah’s taxpayer advocate for more than a quarter century, Jack A. Olson, passed away on November 5, 2009 of natural causes at the age of 84. Mr. Olson served as Executive Vice President of the Utah Taxpayers Association for 26 years, replacing Dr. M. Hyrum Harris in 1964 and retiring in January 1990. (The Taxpayers Association was founded in 1922.)

Mr. Olson expanded the mission and membership of the Association, working to prevent tax and spending increases at the state legislature, 29 counties, 40 school districts, and major cities in the Beehive State. He took the Association’s membership from a few hundred to over 2,000 members, making it one of the largest statewide taxpayers associations in the nation.

“Jack was a fearless defender of taxpayers,” said Senator Howard Stephenson, current president of the Utah Taxpayers Association. “He took on politicians when the proposed unreasonable tax increases. He also led the Association through the nationwide taxpayer revolt in the late 1970s and the 1980s, attempting to convert taxpayer outrage into constructive outcomes.”

He was a trusted and respected tax expert, often the first person legislators and local elected officials turned to for advice on complex tax and spending issues. Believing that essential government services needed to be supported, occasionally he was known to recommend small tax increases early in order to avoid large tax hikes later on.

“One of the first people I met at the Legislature was Jack Olson,” said Senator Lyle Hillyard (R-25). “I found him very engaging, not only because of his understanding of tax policy, but because of his deep respect for Utah and the taxpayers he represented. He left a lasting mark on me, and made Utah a better place.”

Mr. Olson kept the Association’s staff small and lean, believing he couldn’t demand lean government if his own office was not following that ideal. Operating the Association with only a secretary for many years, he hired Howard A. Stephenson as research analyst in 1977, who later was tapped to head the organization when Mr. Olson retired.

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