


[DOT Historian's Home Page](#)
[DOT](#)
[DOT Library](#)
[Ask DOT Historian](#)
[About DOT Office of the Historian](#)
[A Brief History of the DOT](#)
[Biographical Sketches of the Secretaries of Transportation](#)
[Dates of Service: Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, and Heads of Operating Administrations](#)
[Chronology of Dates Significant to the Origins and History of the DOT](#)
[Selected Bibliography](#)
[Other Useful Links](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)

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Biographical Sketches of the Secretaries of Transportation



Alan Stephenson Boyd (January 16, 1967-January 20, 1969)
Appointed by Lyndon B. Johnson
b. July 20, 1922

On October 8, 1966, President Lyndon Johnson tasked Alan Stephenson Boyd, age forty-four, the former Civil Aeronautics Board Chairman and Under Secretary of Commerce for Transportation, with the challenge of setting up the new department. Formerly chairman of the Florida Railroad and Public Utilities Commission, Boyd headed the Task Force that proposed establishing a Cabinet-level Department, which included the Federal Aviation Agency, the Bureau of Public Roads, the United States Coast Guard, and the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, as well as the Great Lakes Pilotage Association, the Car Service Division of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the subsidy function of the CAB. During his tenure, the Department issued the first national safety and federal motor vehicle standards, and Johnson transferred the Urban Mass Transportation Administration from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to DOT. Boyd subsequently served as the president of the Illinois Central Railroad, the president of Amtrak, and the chairman of Airbus Industrie of North America.



John Anthony Volpe (January 22, 1969-February 2, 1973)
Appointed by Richard M. Nixon
b. December 8, 1908, d. November 11, 1994

In December 1968, President Richard Nixon nominated as the nation's second Secretary of Transportation a man whom many have considered the Department's most talented Secretary, the moderate, thrice-elected Governor of Massachusetts, John Anthony Volpe. A contemporary "Horatio Alger" story, Volpe, then sixty years of age, was the son of poor Italian immigrants. His family-owned construction company built hospitals, schools, shopping centers, public buildings (Including DOT's Nassif Building), and military installations along the Eastern seaboard and in other parts of the country. In 1956, President Dwight Eisenhower named the former Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Works as the interim—but first--Federal Highway Administrator, in charge of the new Interstate highway program. In 1960, when John F. Kennedy led the Democratic ticket, Volpe, a Republican, won election as Governor of Massachusetts. He lost in 1962, but won again in 1964, the year of the Goldwater debacle, and in 1966, this time to a four-year term. In 1968, Volpe was often rumored as Nixon's Vice Presidential running mate--until Governor Spiro T. Agnew of Maryland received the nod at the Republican convention. During Volpe's tenure, DOT established the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as a discrete operating administration, supported the enactment of laws to upgrade the nation's airport-airways system, to renovate urban transit systems, and to create Amtrak, showcased America's transportation vitality in TRANSCO '72, and completed the nation's first definitive transportation "needs" report. Volpe later served as the American Ambassador to Italy between 1973 and 1977. From 1982 to 1983, Ronald Reagan named Volpe to chair his

Commission on Drunk Driving. In September 1990, the Department renamed the Transportation Systems Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center in his honor. On November 11, 1994, John Volpe died.



Claude Stout Brinegar (February 2, 1973-February 1, 1975)

Appointed by Richard M. Nixon

b. December 16, 1926

On December 1, 1972, President Richard Nixon chose Claude Stout Brinegar, age forty-five, to succeed Volpe, and become the nation's third Secretary of Transportation. A senior vice president for refining and marketing at the Los Angeles-based Union Oil Company, Brinegar held a Ph.D. in economic research from Stanford and had been a self-styled professional manager. While Secretary, Brinegar confronted railroad revitalization and proposed regulatory reforms that the collapse of the Northeastern railroads made necessary, reauthorization of the federal highway program, and the impact of transportation on energy consumption and the environment, triggered by the energy shortage of 1973-74. Brinegar also steered the Department through Watergate. When Gerald Ford said that he intended to seek the Presidency in his own right, Brinegar, not wanting to be part of a reelection campaign, resigned, effective February 1, 1975, and returned to the Union Oil Company, where he was elected senior vice president and member of the Executive Committee. He subsequently served as leader of the Reagan transition team for the Department of Transportation. After retiring as Vice Chairman from Unocal Corp., as it was later named, Claude Brinegar was elected to the Conrail Board of Directors.



William Thaddeus Coleman, Jr. (March 7, 1975-January 20, 1977)

Appointed by Gerald R. Ford

b. July 7, 1920

On March 7, 1975, William Thaddeus Coleman, Jr., age fifty-four, became the nation's fourth Secretary of Transportation--and the second African-American to serve in the Cabinet. Coleman was a distinguished lawyer who, with Thurgood Marshall, had played a major role in significant civil rights cases, including *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Later, Coleman met and impressed Gerald R. Ford, when the then-House Minority Leader served on the Warren Commission investigating the assassination of John F. Kennedy; Coleman was senior consultant and assistant counsel to the Commission. A prominent black intellectual who called himself a Republican, Coleman was an otherwise typical Philadelphia lawyer. During Coleman's tenure at the Department, NHTSA's automobile test facility at East Liberty, Ohio, commenced operations, and DOT established the Materials Transportation Bureau to address pipeline safety and the safe shipment of hazardous materials. On leaving the Department, Coleman returned to Philadelphia, but subsequently became a partner in the Washington office of the Los Angeles-based law firm of O'Melveny and Myers. In 1996, in the wake of the July 17 crash of TWA Flight 800, he served on the President's Commission on Airline and Airport Security. That same year, Coleman received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to civilians by the United States.



Brockman "Brock" Adams (January 23, 1977-July 20, 1979)

Appointed by Jimmy Carter

b. January 13, 1927

To be the nation's fifth Secretary of Transportation, President Jimmy Carter nominated Brock Adams, the six-term member of the House of Representatives from Washington State. There, he became the chairman of the recently organized Budget Committee, and had been rumored to be a strong candidate for Speaker.

Adams, age fifty, had been a leading authority on transportation issues in the House, and was the principal author of the legislation that reorganized the bankrupt northeastern rail lines into the government-backed Conrail system. While Secretary, Adams challenged the automobile industry to make dramatic changes in design, including increased fuel efficiency and mandatory air bags. During his tenure, the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978 became law. On July 20, 1979, Adams resigned as Secretary. After becoming a successful lobbyist for the CSX Corporation and other carriers, Adams served as United States Senator from Washington from 1987-1993. Following a 10-year battle with Parkinson's disease, Brock Adams died at his home in Stevensville, Maryland, on September 10, 2004.



Neil Edward Goldschmidt (August 15, 1979-January 20, 1981)

Appointed by Jimmy Carter

b. June 16, 1940

To succeed Adams and to become the nation's sixth Secretary of Transportation, President Jimmy Carter tapped Neil Edward Goldschmidt, who had been the mayor of Portland, Oregon, since 1972, and later president of the United States Conference of Mayors. While mayor, Goldschmidt had improved Portland by renovating its neighborhoods, promoting growth in the center city, and championing mass transit there. While many viewed mass transit as a credible part of the solution to the energy crisis, Goldschmidt, age thirty-nine, was the first Secretary of Transportation with a transit background. During his term at DOT, the Department issued regulations on child restraints, and established the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization within the Office of the Secretary. Both the Staggers Rail Act and the Motor Carrier Act became law, deregulating the railroad and trucking industries, respectively. The Chrysler Loan Guarantee Act of 1979 helped to keep the Chrysler Corporation afloat, following the oil shortages and the flood of foreign automobiles into the American market. Goldschmidt worked for Nike, Inc., sat on the board of various companies, including Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and National Semiconductor, served as governor of Oregon from 1987 to 1991, and currently has his own law practice.



Andrew Lindsay "Drew" Lewis, Jr. (January 23, 1981-February 1, 1983)

Appointed by Ronald Reagan

b. November 3, 1931

Possessing a unique combination of business and political experience, Drew Lewis, at age forty-nine, met President Ronald Reagan's standards to be the nation's seventh Secretary of Transportation. He received a B.S. in economics at Haverford College in 1953, and an M.B.A. in 1955 from the Harvard Graduate School of Business. Moving up the corporate ladder at American Olean Tile, and its parent company, National Gypsum, Lewis set up his own consulting firm and concentrated on turning around faltering businesses. Simultaneously, he served in several political capacities: county committee member, chairman of the Pennsylvania Republican Party's finance committee, GOP candidate for Governor in 1974, chairman of the Pennsylvania delegation to the 1976 GOP convention, and Deputy Chairman of the Republican National Committee. While Lewis was Secretary, Congress transferred the Maritime Administration to DOT from the Department of Commerce. During the strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in 1981, Lewis worked with the FAA to keep the air transport system running safely, and later to design the National Airspace System Plan, a blueprint for modernizing the nation's airspace system. Before leaving for private industry in February 1983, Lewis maneuvered to secure passage of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982--and the user fees to finance it. Lewis was chairman and CEO of Union Pacific Railroad Corporation from 1986 to 1987, and more recently served on the Board of Directors of Gannett, American Express, Ford Motor Co., and SmithKlein Beckman Corp.



Elizabeth Hanford Dole (February 7, 1983-September 30, 1987)

Appointed by Ronald Reagan

b. July 20, 1936

When President Ronald Reagan nominated her to be the nation's eighth Secretary of Transportation, Elizabeth Hanford Dole had been White House assistant for public liaison. At forty-six, she brought to the job experience in consumer and trade issues from stints as a consumer adviser in two administrations and as a member of the Federal Trade Commission during the Nixon and Ford Administrations. From 1971 to 1973, she served as the assistant to Nixon's advisor on consumer affairs. Earlier, she had been deputy director of the Office of Consumer Affairs at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. She was a graduate of Duke University, where she had been May Queen and Campus Leader of the Year for both the men and women's colleges, and of Harvard Law School, also earning a master's in education from Harvard. At DOT, Dole highlighted many safety-related issues, resulting in deadlines for installing air bags and other passive restraints in motor vehicles, major increases in seat belt usage by the public, and incentives to manufacturers to equip new cars with air bags. She helped to engineer the transfer of Washington's National and Dulles Airports from the FAA to a regional authority, and was a leader in privatizing federal assets, including the \$1.9 billion sale of Conrail. After leaving the Department—to help her husband campaign for the GOP presidential nomination, Dole served briefly as George H. W. Bush's Secretary of Labor. In 1991, she became president of the American Red Cross, taking a leave of absence in 1996, again to campaign for her husband. In January 1999, Dole resigned her post at the Red Cross. Two months later, she launched a presidential exploratory committee, a critical first step toward seeking the GOP nomination for President in the year 2000. Two years later, Dole entered the campaign to succeed retiring U.S. Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), which she won in November 2002.



James Horace Burnley IV (December 3, 1987-January 30, 1989)

Appointed by Ronald Reagan

b. July 30, 1948

President Ronald Reagan chose Dole's Deputy Secretary, and the Department's former General Counsel, James Horace Burnley IV to be the nation's ninth Secretary of Transportation. While number two at DOT, Burnley, age thirty-nine, helped to negotiate the sale of Conrail, directed the privatization of Amtrak, enabled the transfer of the Washington airports to a regional authority, and helped to assemble an ATC work force in the wake of the 1981 PATCO strike. He also helped to produce the Department's policies on aviation safety and security. Burnley emphasized programs to eliminate drug use by issuing regulations requiring drug tests for employees in safety or security-sensitive positions in transportation-related industries. He also set up policies to encourage greater private-sector participation in meeting transportation needs, and supported Coast Guard efforts to upgrade equipment and facilities. Burnley currently is with the law firm of Venable Baetjer Howard & Civiletti LLP..



Samuel Knox Skinner (February 6, 1989-December 13, 1991)

Appointed by George H. W. Bush

b. June 10, 1938

Samuel Knox Skinner was one of Illinois' former Governor James R. Thompson's "kiddie corps," and became his top assistant prosecutor. In 1984, Thompson appointed Skinner head of the Regional Transportation Authority of Northeastern Illinois, the second largest transportation system in the United States. For the nation's tenth Secretary of Transportation, President George H. W. Bush selected Skinner, age fifty, who, much like Bush, had an activist view of government. Skinner had been Bush's

1988 Illinois campaign manager, helping to secure an important primary victory over Bob Dole. Dubbed the "Master of Disaster," Skinner handled crises including the Eastern Airlines Strike, the EXXON VALDEZ oil spill, the Loma Prieta earthquake, Hurricane Hugo, and the mobilization of civilian transportation for Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM. He issued a comprehensive National Transportation Policy to guide transportation into the 21st century. During his tenure, Congress passed legislation to reduce aircraft noise, expand airport capacity, and authorize a major federal surface transportation program. Skinner resigned to become White House chief of staff in December 1991. Later, Skinner became President of the Commonwealth Edison Company in Chicago, a post that he resigned in early 1998. He is a member of the Board of Directors of LTV Corporation and ANTEC Corporation, and is a capital partner and co-chairman of the Chicago-based law firm of Hopkins & Sutter. In June 2000, Skinner was named president and chief executive officer of the Rosemont, Illinois-based USFreightways Corp. Following his retirement there, Skinner entered into an Of Counsel relationship with the international law firm of Greenberg Traurig LLP, and is Chair of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Legal Reform.



Andrew Hill Card, Jr. (February 24, 1992-January 20, 1993)

Appointed by George H. W. Bush

b. May 10, 1947

President George Herbert Walker Bush nominated Andrew Hill Card, Jr., age forty-one, to succeed Samuel Skinner and to become the nation's eleventh Secretary of Transportation. Between 1989 and 1992, the one-time structural design engineer had been Assistant to the President, director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, and Deputy White House Chief of Staff. Between 1983 and 1987, Card had served Ronald Reagan as Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs. Before that, the Holbrook, Massachusetts, native had been a member of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and had campaigned unsuccessfully for governor of the Bay State in 1982. During that contest, Card, who had attended the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in 1966 and 1967, had produced a white paper on transportation, which expressed convictions that proved similar to those in Skinner's National Transportation Policy. Bush Administration spokespersons contended that Card's white paper had been ahead of its time, a focus on intermodal planning that had strengthened the financial base for transportation. During his eleven months as Secretary, Card strove to overhaul the American maritime subsidy program, and served as coordinator of the federal response to Hurricane Andrew. Following Bush's defeat in the 1992 election, Card served as the Bush Administration liaison during the transition. Between 1993 and 1998, he served as president of the American Automobile Manufacturers Association, the lobbying group for the Big Three automakers, which dissolved in December 1998, when the German automaker Daimler-Benz took over the Chrysler Corporation. Subsequently, he became General Motors' Vice President for Government Operations, and in November 2000, then-Texas Governor George W. Bush announced his intention to name Andrew Card to be his White House Chief of Staff.



Federico Fabian Peña (January 21, 1993-February 14, 1997)

Appointed by William J. Clinton

b. March 15, 1947

William Jefferson Clinton, following his commitment to have a Cabinet that reflected American diversity, tapped Federico Fabian Peña of Colorado, initially to head his transportation transition team, and ultimately to be the nation's twelfth Secretary of Transportation. Peña had been a two-term member of the Colorado legislature when he successfully ran for mayor of Denver in 1983. There, he headed the city's renaissance with

initiatives that included construction of Denver International Airport, which, while Secretary of Transportation, after numerous delays, he helped to open in February 1995. In 1991, Peña chose not to seek reelection, instead starting Peña Investment Advisors, Inc., a corporate pension fund investment company. While at DOT, Peña championed moves to rehabilitate the aviation and maritime industries, including aviation agreements with forty nations to open markets for American airlines and cargo carriers. He helped to improve the safety of travel by emphasizing the same level of safety for all flights--from jumbo jets to commuters, and by spurring the truck, bus, and rail industries to promote safety. Peña executed National Performance Review recommendations to make the Department run more like a business, with emphases on strategic plans, performance agreements, customer service, and streamlining, downsizing DOT's work force by 11,000. Peña spent the first year and a half of President Clinton's second term as Secretary at the Department of Energy. In July 1998, he joined the New York-based investment firm, Vestar Capital Partners, as a Senior Advisor, with an office in Denver.



Rodney Earl Slater (February 14, 1997-January 20, 2001)

Appointed by William J. Clinton

b. February 23, 1955

Putting together his second-term Cabinet, President Bill Clinton named Federal Highway Administrator Rodney Earl Slater, age forty-one, to succeed Peña, and to become the nation's thirteenth Secretary of Transportation. His fellow Arkansan became the first federal highway administrator since John Volpe and the first African-American since Bill Coleman to become Secretary of Transportation--and only the third resident of Arkansas to become a member of the Cabinet. A scholar-athlete at Eastern Michigan University, Slater received a law degree from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1980. Before becoming the nation's thirteenth Federal Highway Administrator, he had been Assistant Attorney General of Arkansas, a member of then-Governor Clinton's staff, executive assistant for economic and community programs, director of governmental relations at Arkansas State University, secretary-treasurer of the Arkansas Bar Association, and a member of the Arkansas State Highway Commission from 1987 to 1992, and its Chairman in 1992. As FHWA Administrator, Slater stressed Clinton's goals of infrastructure investment and putting people first. He emphasized strengthening partnerships, investing in new technologies, and working to achieve a seamless intermodal transportation network, with the National Highway System as its backbone. During Slater's first year and a half at DOT, Congress passed the largest public works legislation in history--the Transportation Equity Assistance Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21); airline and railroad mergers--with proposed limitations--again became fashionable; Department negotiators helped to avert a strike against Amtrak--and Congress mandated that Corporation's overhaul; NHTSA issued regulations allowing consumers to turn off their airbag switches where necessary; and the United States finalized a long-sought, liberalized aviation agreement with Japan. Also, in keeping with his conviction that transportation was about "more than concrete, asphalt, and steel," Slater announced the Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures program to encourage students to choose careers in transportation; a "Safe Skies for Africa" Initiative to promote sustainable improvements in aviation safety and airport security in Africa; and on October 8, 1998, proposed the idea of creating a unified Department--ONE DOT, able to act as an integrated, purposeful leader increasing transportation efficiency and effectiveness. On leaving DOT, Slater joined the Washington-based firm of Patton-Boggs as a partner in its public practice group.



Norman Yoshio Mineta (January 25, 2001- July 7, 2006)

Appointed by George W. Bush

b. November 12, 1931

In the wake of the Election of 2000, President-elect George W. Bush (R) reached out to the Democratic Party for his nominee to head DOT. After the closest race in 112 years, the issue hung on the contested vote in Florida, with electoral votes that could have swung the election to either Bush or his Democratic opponent, Vice President Al Gore. Following a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that essentially certified the Republican standard bearer's victory, Bush chose former San Jose Mayor and Representative Norman Yoshio Mineta (D-CA), a Japanese-American who, along with his family, had been held in a relocation camp during the Second World War. Mineta, age sixty-nine, was, when Bush nominated him to be the nation's fourteenth Secretary of Transportation, Bill Clinton's Secretary of Commerce. As such, he would become the first Asian-Pacific American to serve as Secretary of Transportation—and the first DOT Secretary to have served in a previous Cabinet position.

While Congressman from San Jose, Mineta specialized in transportation issues, chairing the then-called House Public Works and Transportation Committee, between 1993 and 1995. He was a principal author of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), which effectively shifted decision making on highway and transit planning to state and local entities, including metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). Moreover, the ISTEA legislation, precursor of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century, also cracked the Highway Trust Fund for mass transit and environmentally friendly projects such as bike paths and wetlands.

After Mineta left Congress to work with Lockheed Martin Corporation, Clinton called him back to Washington in 1997, to head the National Civil Aviation Review Commission, which recommended overhauling FAA management and modernizing the air traffic control system. While a member of Congress, Mineta had been the chief sponsor of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which officially apologized to—and tendered reparations to—those Japanese Americans who, like his family, had been interned in relocation camps after Pearl Harbor. Prior to becoming Mayor of San Jose, Mineta graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, served as an army intelligence officer, and worked in his father's insurance agency.

As Secretary, Norman Mineta saw both his profile and responsibilities, and that of the Department he led, elevated by the horrific events of September 11, 2001, shutting down the nation's civil air fleet, establishing interim security measures to ensure its safety, as well as assuming responsibility for standing up the Transportation Security Administration, meeting thirty-six Congressionally imposed deadlines in the process. On Mineta's watch, Congress passed and, on August 19, 2005, Bush signed into law, the surface transportation bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Implementation of the Norman Y. Mineta Research and Special Programs Improvement Act of 2004, signed on November 30, created the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), which will help to define the parameters of DOT's mission. On June 23, 2006, Mineta, having served as Transportation Secretary for sixty-five months, longer than anyone before him, announced that he would retire, effective July 7. On December 15, 2006, Norman Yoshio Mineta was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award an American civilian can receive.



Mary E. Peters (October 17, 2006-2009)

Appointed by George W. Bush

b. December 4, 1948

To succeed Norman Mineta as the Nation's fifteenth Secretary of Transportation, President George W. Bush turned to Mary Elizabeth Peters, a fourth-generation Arizonan. The Peoria native had administered the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) between 1998 and 2001, prior to serving as George W. Bush's Federal Highway Administrator between 2001 and 2005. After John Volpe and Rodney Slater, Peters was the third Secretary to have been Federal Highway Administrator; after Elizabeth Hanford Dole, the second woman. Befitting her generation's experiences in transportation, Peters brought a very different résumé to her job than Dole. While Dole had tackled the "man's world at DOT" with behind-the-desk skills gained in executive and regulatory positions, Peters' story read more like Volpe and Slater, Horatio Alger tales all, Peters starting out as a hog butcher.

Mary Peters and her husband raised a family of three, learned to ride a Harley-Davidson, and at thirty-six, she commenced work as a secretary at ADOT. While there, she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix, studied state and local government at the Kennedy School at Harvard University, and steadily rose through the ranks at ADOT. Thirteen years later, Mary Peters headed that agency, employed more than 4,800 people, responsible for more than 6,100 miles of highways and Arizona Highways magazine, which tastefully—and famously—showed highways and the environment as good neighbors. Following tenures at ADOT and FHWA, where she became a force in deliberations of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the Transportation Research Board, Bush chose Peters (the Women Transportation Seminar's Person of the Year in 2004) to bring her administrative skills and balanced transportation agenda to the Office of Secretary of Transportation.

Peters's emphasis on public-private transportation projects, such as congestion pricing, dovetailed nicely with the president's attempt to move away from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act, even the surface transportation bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), passed the year before. What Bush and Peters were saying was that, even with wake-up calls like the collapse of the I-35 bridge outside Minneapolis, Washington needed to reconsider how it was spending monies already ticketed for infrastructure rehabilitation. Before joining President Bush's Cabinet, Peters had worked in Phoenix as the national director for transportation policy and consulting at HDR, Inc., a major engineering firm.



Ray H. LaHood (January 23, 2009-2013)

Appointed by Barack H. Obama

b. December 6, 1945

The ultimate test for marketers and politicians in the twentieth century was captured in the question, "Will it play in Peoria." Not only did the phrase have a literary quality about it; Peoria, Illinois, evoked "Main Street" and the "Heartland of America." Into this Midwestern city, Ray LaHood was born of immigrant grandparents, part of a secure community of 11,000 Lebanese-Americans there. He graduated from Peoria's Bradley University in 1971, with degrees in sociology and education, and taught junior high school social studies for six years.

LaHood burnished his moderate Republican credentials by working as the District Administrative Assistant for Rep. Tom Railsback, a member of the House Judiciary Committee who moved in early summer 1974 to support articles of impeachment against

President Richard Nixon. Then, LaHood served as Chief of Staff for Bob Michel, the moderate leader of the House Republicans, and succeeded Michel to his seat in 1994. That year, however, LaHood did not sign the "Contract with America," which helped to increase partisan rancor over the next fifteen years; rather than adhering to a scorecard, LaHood was, as the *Chicago Tribune* pointed out, "an institutionalist who maintained a diplomatic style and cosponsored (with Rahm Emmanuel) retreats designed to promote civility in Congress."

Given these traits, House Speaker Newt Gingrich chose LaHood to preside over the 1998 impeachment trial of President William J. Clinton—because of his even-handedness and his even temperament. Not unlike George Bush's selection of Norman Mineta, President Obama reached across the partisan divide for his nominee as Secretary of Transportation. On January 23, 2009, Assistant Secretary for Administration Linda Washington administered Ray H. LaHood the oath of office as the Nation's 16th Secretary of Transportation.

Note: this is an archival version of a non-working webpage authored in 2009 and retrieved from the Wayback Machine in 2019. The content has been migrated to PDF and edited for format.