

Dole salutes school's leader at graduation

Senator speaks to St. John's graduates

By CAROL LICHTI
The Salina Journal

Sen. Bob Dole was promoted Sunday. He's now a colonel.

Dole, an Army lieutenant from Russell injured during World War II, was made an honorary colonel of St. John's Military School in Salina by the school's president Keith Duckers.

"He's never forgotten his Kansas roots and his loyalty and support for St. John's," Duckers said.

Dole, R-Kan., also bestowed some honors Sunday.

"I'm proud to have been here to help honor Colonel Duckers' 43 years of outstanding service, the impact he's had on thousands of men over the years and what that has meant to their state and their nation," Dole said. "He has taught the students here more than just science and math."

Duckers' leadership has shown them the value of "duty, honor and country," Dole said.

Sunday's commencement was Duckers' last as president of the school. He is retiring.

Dole told the 31 graduating cadets to remember life doesn't always go as planned.

"The one thing I've learned over the years is that the only sure thing in life is change," Dole said.

His plans changed while a freshman in college, where he hoped to study to become a doctor. Then Pearl Harbor was bombed and the country was pulled into World War II.

"Instead of holding a scalpel, I spent a few years under the scalpel," Dole said. "I learned a lot, and one thing I learned that is when something is taken away from you, something else takes its place."



Sen. Bob Dole accepts a plaque from Keith Duckers, president of St. John's Military School, during graduation Sunday.

Scott Williams/Salina Journal

He followed the advice of a librarian and enrolled in law school. In the 1950s, his association with St. John's and Duckers began when Dole — who was Russell County attorney — asked Duckers if some cadets from the school could provide a program for his Kiwanis

Club. Since then, Dole said he's also learned "the more visible you become, the more flack you take." When things go wrong or mistakes are made, you can quit or you can learn a lesson and keep going, he said.

Back in the 1890s, someone suggested to President William McKinley that the patent office should be closed because everything that could be invented had

been, Dole said. But since then the automobile, airplanes, space ships and computers were invented. Harvests are more abundant than ever before. And, advances in medicine have helped Dole live beyond what his life expectancy then would have been, "much to disappointment of George Pyle, editor of the Salina Journal," Dole said during the graduation speech.

The senator told the cadets not to ignore their dreams and never to stop listening, learning, observing, listening to their parents and putting discipline in their lives.

"We take a lot of things for granted," Dole said. "But as bad as we think things are in America, we don't have to look very far or long" to find much worse.

Dole said he supports President Bill Clinton in whatever he decides to do in Bosnia, where ethnic warfare has killed thousands.

"Bosnia is a tough call," Dole said after his speech.

But the president must define what the national interest is in that part of the world, "or Americans will not be ready for this," Dole said.

Those who work with Duckers took up where the senator left off.

"He is an education leader who built St. John's into a premiere military school," said Ken Faerber, the school's academic dean. "His leadership has allowed thousands of young men to reach academic levels they never thought possible."

Over the years, Duckers also has learned many lessons.

"Enthusiasm is caught, not taught," Duckers said. "If you pursue happiness it will elude you."

Instead, focus on family, the needs of others and meeting new people, he said.



Associated Press

Waiting his turn. As President Clinton's news conference plays on television in the background Friday, Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole of Kansas waits to respond on Capitol Hill. After Clinton's news conference, Dole said he thought that the president had a bad week by dropping in the polls and that the American people think there are too many taxes in the president's economic package.

Dole visits famous boathouse-to-be

By Martha Severson
The Wichita Eagle

Sen. Bob Dole popped in at the soon-to-be Wichita Boathouse on Sunday afternoon to give one last boost of publicity to the project and enjoy one last round of laughs about the presidential boathouse barb.

"I'm sure when (President Clinton) comes to Wichita, he'll want to see the boathouse," Dole said, smiling. If not, he said, Clinton spokesman George Stephanopoulos "ought to be confined to the boathouse."

Two weeks ago, at a White House correspondents' dinner, Clinton put the boathouse in the national spotlight by accusing Dole of funneling federal pork money to a "\$23 million boathouse in Kansas."

Clinton later said it was a joke — and it became one. He was wrong about the federal money and the price tag.

A week ago, Dole and Clinton wrote a chummy make-up letter to the Arkansas River Foundation, taking credit for \$23 million worth of publicity and wishing the boathouse sponsors well.

During a photo opportunity on the makeshift boathouse dock Sunday, Dole gave the group the original copy of a letter. It was on plain paper, he pointed out, not letterhead.

"We couldn't decide whose letterhead to put it on," he said.

The crowd fittered. Dole said Clinton's staff had stalled on the letter, and a woman in the crowd said perhaps they had stumbled over a big word. Dole chuckled in return and took credit for writing the letter.

While he was there, Dole also boarded the Jayhawk, one of the boats used by the America's team, and had a brief chat with the crew



Mc Welford/Correspondent

Sen. Bob Dole stands on the deck of the Jayhawk, docked in the Arkansas River, with members of the America's Cup-winning America team on Sunday.

that won the America's Cup a year ago. Former Wichitan Bill Koch, owner of the boat, has docked it here and has promised \$1 million to get the boathouse project going and was hoping to raise \$250,000 this week.

Dole stood behind the wheel and joked that he didn't know what he was doing. But perhaps he did: He casually steered the wheel to the right.

Boathouse sponsors wouldn't say Sunday how much money they raised during the River Festival. The group needs about \$1.4 million to get the boathouse project going and was hoping to raise \$250,000 this week.

Dan Clothier, head of the foundation, said the group appreciated Dole's help. Dole said he was glad to lend a hand, even if it initially

came at his own expense.

"There are a lot of big problems in America," Dole said. "This didn't happen to be one of them."

During his brief stay in Wichita, Dole also stopped for a little lunch — hmm, what was that smell of bacon on the air? — and listened to a country band, which played the hit song "Hard Working Man" to greet him.

Dole booking in the works at 'Tonight'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole of Kansas, known for his sharp-edged quips, may have a chance to display his talents on late-night network television with one of the nation's best-known comedians.

Dole said Friday that Jay Leno, host of NBC's "Tonight Show," was trying to get him on his show.

"We're trying to work it out. We haven't been able to do it yet," Dole said, adding that a June appearance was possible.

Dole has been the subject of Leno's political jokes, but he said he didn't mind the attention, "as long as it's funny."

Boisterous crowd spices ceremony for Butler grads

By Dave Higdon
The Wichita Eagle

EL DORADO — Scholars and supporters merged in a whoop-it-up ceremony celebrating the 66th commencement of Butler County Community College on Saturday. The atmosphere inside the College Field House suited the occasion, which transformed a temple of athletics into a shrine to education.

Serenaded by members of the school music department, cheered by classmates, applauded by families, the 312 members of BCCC's Class of '93 took it all in stride as each member received a two-year diploma, "YEAH, WANDA JEAN," someone screamed from the rafters, and Wanda Jean Albert thrust a fist skyward with glee, accepted a diploma and fairly skipped back to her seat.

"GO, Michel," another voice shouted as Michel Keintz stepped forward for his, grinning at the compliment. Even Kansas Sen. Bob Dole, the commencement speaker, seemed to grasp the atmosphere in the field house and, as promised, kept his address brief. "Commencement speakers are a little bit like the body at a funeral," Dole began. "They need him to hold the event, but nobody expects him to say very much."

What Dole did say on the serious side silenced the packed house.

On mistakes in life: They will come, he noted, but "it's

what you do after the mistake that matters."

"The doors to the world are wide open to you," he stressed. "And when one door closes, where ever you are, another door opens."

Even failure, he said, is not a bar to future success. He recited the failures of a politician who was defeated in bids for the state House of Representatives, failed in a drive to be elected speaker of the House before being voted out of the chamber, won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and then was voted out, then failed in a run for the vice presidential nomination of his party before winning the presidency.

"That man was Abraham Lincoln," Dole said. And, he explained, even as president, Lincoln was considered a failure by people at home and abroad.

"Wherever you go in life, I hope you will remember that the diploma you receive today does not mean you are an educated person," he said, urging the class to keep learning more about other people and life long after their formal schooling ends.

A record 644 BCCC students have earned associate's degrees in the past year, according to registrar Paul Kyle, but not all attended the

ceremony. The Class of '93 ranged in age from 20 to 67, finished with an average 3.28 grade-point average and represented eight states and 22 foreign countries. Forty-two students earned nursing degrees.

More than 75 percent say they plan to continue their educations at four-year institutions, including Darlene Renae Lefert.

Lefert was named the 1993 R.D.

Hubbard scholar and received the Hubbard Award of Excellence established in 1985 to encourage BCCC students to complete four-year degrees.

A Burns native, Lefert will start this fall at the University of Kansas. The Hubbard Scholarship of \$4,000, paid over four semesters, will help Lefert pursue a degree in sports medicine.