

A8 Thursday, July 20, 1995

## Over the hill?

### As Dole turns 72, he's finding it hard to escape the issue of age

By The Associated Press  
WASHINGTON — Bob Dole turns 72 Saturday, a vigorous septuagenarian with a daily regimen to exhaust men half his age. Still, with political opponents insinuating he is over the hill, Dole would probably rather skip this birthday.

If elected president, Dole would be 73 at the time of his inauguration, the oldest president ever to enter the White House. The record-holder is Ronald Reagan, who took office at 69 and was 77 when his two terms ended.

The age question has percolated quietly since Dole began his bid for the Republican nomination to run against baby-boomer President Clinton.

It emerged more pointedly when rival Lamar Alexander suggested Dole was from the wrong generation to lead America in the new century. Dole aides called that a desperate bid for advantage.

Dole defies any stereotype of a senior citizen, and his campaign has tried to neutralize the age issue by promoting him as seasoned and steady against a wobbly and inexperienced Clinton.

"The bottom line is voters elect presidents on the basis of leadership, character and philosophy," said Dole deputy campaign manager Bill Lacy.

Despite a World War II injury



File photo  
Presidential hopeful Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., works the crowd in March at the annual Hillsborough County Republican Committee's fund-raising dinner. Dole turns 72 on Saturday.

that rendered his right arm all but useless, Dole is robust — keeping long hours in his demanding role as Senate majority leader, arriving by 8 a.m. and staying for late night sessions, then hitting the campaign trail when the Senate is not in session. The tall, trim Kansan uses a

treadmill several times a week, has few streaks of gray in his hair and says he has had no resurgence of his 1991 prostate cancer. Dole declared himself "in great health" as he entered the race in April.

While other rivals have declined to join Alexander's sniping, Dole

aides soon will take the preemptive step of releasing Dole's medical records. They "demonstrate Sen. Dole is in excellent health," said Dole spokesman Nelson Warfield.

"You can't escape the fact that ... he is 72 and people comment on it," said Fred Malek, a longtime Dole associate and the Republican National Committee's fund-raising chairman. "But he's about the youngest 72-year-old and has the most energy that I've ever seen."

Opponents give Dole his due. "Bob Dole is down there every day, working just as hard as any of these other candidates. That's saying a lot," said Charlie Black, adviser to Dole's presidential rival Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas.

A broader issue is whether Dole is linked with politics of the past at a time when House Speaker Newt Gingrich and others are seen as new leaders for dramatic change.

Dave Brinkley, director of the Eisenhower Center at the University of New Orleans and Jimmy Carter's biographer, said age doesn't rule out Dole, who is young by some European and Asian standards.

But he added, "It's who Dole is. He's very out of fashion with the Gingrich revolution. It's very hard to sell Bob Dole as a new

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## Dole aides try to ease any doubts on his age

By Rita Beamish  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Bob Dole is about to celebrate his 72nd birthday in vigorous health and at the pinnacle of his congressional career — but forced to confront insinuation that he may be too old for the White House.

As part of an effort to preempt questions about his age and health, aides Thursday said the campaign will release a health report today, the day before his birthday.

The materials will include results of a recent physical, and a "detailed medical history going back to World War II," when he suffered a disabling war injury, press secretary Nelson Warfield said.

"He's about the youngest 72-year-old and has the most energy that I've ever seen," said Fred Malek, a longtime Dole associate and chairman of a Republican National Committee fund-raising

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campaign for the presidential election.

Few would disagree after seeing Dole's long hours as Senate majority leader and extra grueling hours to run for president at the same time.

But questions about his age do arise. GOP rival Lamar Alexander suggests the Kansas senator, whose birthday is Saturday, is from the wrong generation to take on baby boomer President Clinton next year.

If elected, Dole would be 73 at his inauguration, the oldest person ever to enter the presidency. The record-holder is Ronald Reagan, who took office at 69 and left it after two terms at 77.

Dole backers say concerns about Reagan's age were dispelled by his presidency. But other Republicans also recall that during his second term, Reagan showed his age more and appeared more disengaged.

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## Dole tackles the age question

### Checkups show 'excellent health'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican presidential front-runner Bob Dole, approaching his 72nd birthday and seeking to head off concerns about his age, released medical records Thursday saying he enjoys "excellent health."

Dole's staff disclosed results of a series of physical examinations that the Senate majority leader from Kansas underwent in June and July.

"The patient is in excellent health with all medical conditions stable or controlled," said a report signed by John Elsold, the attending physician at the Capitol.

"He has excellent physical conditioning," Charles Peck, Dole's personal physician added in an interview. The exams were conducted at the Capitol and at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Dole, who turns 72 on Saturday, keeps a vigorous schedule but faces sniping from some of his younger GOP presidential rivals that he is too old. If elected, Dole would be the oldest person to ever assume the presidency.

His campaign is hoping to get the age question out of the way early and to mitigate it by showing he is strong and healthy. Dole is the front-runner in polling, endorsements and

fund-raising for the GOP nomination.

"As the presidential contest has evolved more and more as a choice between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole, we felt it was important to assure the American public that Bob Dole is fit and ready to do the job," said Nelson Warfield, Dole's press secretary.

Dole's blood pressure, cholesterol, pulse, lungs and heart were all described as good or normal in the report.

"Cardiac risk factors such as hypertension, diabetes and smoking are not present," Elsold said in his report, dated July 5.

In 1991, Dole's prostate was removed after it was found to be cancerous.

"A surgical cure is presumed," the report said. There was no indication the cancer has spread else-

where in the body, and he is examined twice a year for that.

Dole takes medication to keep his cholesterol down. Peck said it was mildly elevated, above 200, in 1986, and now is 182 — which is considered normal.

He also takes Zantac daily, a medication for a heartburn condition called gastroesophageal reflux. The stomach acid-caused ailment is suffered by 40 percent to 50 percent of adults, according to Peck. Many people treat the condition with over-the-counter antacids.

The senator uses a treadmill several times a week and eats a low cholesterol, high-fiber diet.

Dole, who lost use of his right arm fighting in World War II, suffered a muscle tear in his good shoulder in April while campaigning in Kansas. That is causing him stiffness and some pain, Peck said, but is using ice treatments, physical therapy and an anti-inflammatory medication to treat it.

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## Dole would need social conservative as running mate

By WILLIAM A. RUSHER

■ Gen. Colin Powell is not (so far as we know) a movement conservative, but his widespread popularity will undoubtedly put him high on Dole's list anyway.

Recently I pointed out that the conservative movement, for all the power it wields in the Republican Party today, is not united behind any one candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. Indeed, it may almost be said not to have one.

Instead, Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas is far ahead in the race for the nomination, and he hauls from the old economic-conservative crowd that dominated the GOP back in the days before there even was a conservative movement.

But most "movement conservatives" will support him, however grudgingly, if he is nominated; there will be no attempt at a veto.

That raises the question of what to do about the vice presidency — a position that has often led to the presidency, and

that is sure to seem especially important if Dole is nominated for president, since he will be 73 in 1996. Strangely enough, the conservative movement seems almost as short of ideas on the vice presidency as it is on the presidency itself.

Bear in mind that Dole, if he is nominated for president, will do the picking. If he is sensible, he won't even put the conservatives to the trouble of vetoing some "moderate" like Gov. William Weld of Massachusetts or Gov. Pete Wilson of California, let alone that pillar of Rockefeller Republicanism, Gov. Christine Whitman of New Jersey. The same probably applies to Lamar Alexander, whose conservatism is of suspiciously late vintage.

Dole would need a running mate from the social-conservative wing of the movement and party, or at the very least someone acceptable to them. He will

also want somebody loyal to him, and not disposed to litigate in the media any disagreements that may arise.

That latter requirement probably rules out both Pat Buchanan and Jack Kemp, either of whom would almost surely be too outspoken for Dole's good. The same probably goes for Alan Keyes, an attractive black Republican whose obsessive pro-life views would make him difficult to get along with, and Bill Bennett, who is compulsively articulate on just about everything.

Colin Powell is not (so far as we know) a movement conservative, but his widespread popularity will undoubtedly put him high on Dole's list anyway, and conservatives might agree to settle for him if there were some evidence that he is not a die-hard "moderate."

The chances are, however, that Powell is a woody apolitical centrist of the Eisenhower type, and conservatives

would be understandably reluctant to see such a person next in line for the leadership of what they sincerely believe is a conservative revolution.

Another possible vice presidential nominee who, though not known as a movement conservative, is highly respected in the movement, and who would probably pass Dole's tests for loyalty and low charisma as well, is Michigan Gov. John Engler. At the moment he must be ranked as a hot possibility.

But there is another possibility for Dole and movement conservatives to consider. How about Cheney? I am not speaking here of Bush's defense secretary Dick Cheney, but rather of his wife, Lynne Cheney. Wyoming-born, with a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, she served as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities in the Bush administration, making a record

for herself as a smart and articulate conservative. She may not qualify as a movement conservative, but she's close. If Bob Dole wants to signal that he is open to the politics of the future, he could do far worse than make Lynne Cheney his running mate.

In saying this I do not mean to overlook Dick Cheney, who would also almost certainly be acceptable to the conservative movement, as well as loyal to Dole. But Cheney underwent bypass heart surgery in 1988 at the age of 47 after several heart attacks, and that inevitably affects analyses of his political viability.

Any further nominations?

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## Gramm wins support of Dole backer

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Phil Gramm has lured away a top South Carolina supporter of Bob Dole in the run-up to next year's first Southern primary of the GOP presidential contest.

Former Rep. Arthur Ravenel Jr., who had been vice chairman of Dole's state campaign operation, announced he is defecting to Gramm because the Texas senator "shares our pride of heritage, speaks our language," and is a strong conservative.

Ravenel said he was influenced by a news article portraying Dole's top Senate aide, Sheila Burke, as a liberal. Conservatives worry she is pulling Dole to moderate positions. Ravenel will become statewide co-chairman for Gramm.

While Gramm partisans hailed the defection as a major coup, Dole backers dismissed it as a fall-out from last year's bitter gubernatorial primary which Ravenel lost to Gov. David Beasley.

Dole is heavily courting Beasley for an endorsement and has backing from several Beasley associates and people connected to his ally, former Gov. Carroll Campbell.

"This has a lot to do with South Carolina politics and little to do with presidential politics," said Dole spokesman Nelson Warfield.