

STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE  
125TH ANNIVERSARY OF KANSAS STATEHOOD  
JANUARY 29, 1986

MR. PRESIDENT. IT WAS A CENTURY AND A QUARTER AGO THAT THIS CONGRESS PASSED LEGISLATION - SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT JAMES BUCHANAN - WHICH PERMITTED KANSAS TO JOIN OUR UNION AS A STATE.

TODAY WE OBSERVE WHAT IS KNOWN AS "KANSAS DAY" - THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUNFLOWER STATE AS A PARTNER IN THESE UNITED STATES.

THE CELEBRATION TODAY MAY BE MUTED AS WE REFLECT ON THE NATION'S TRAGEDY OF YESTERDAY. YET WHILE WE QUIETLY PONDER WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS, WE GAIN STRENGTH FROM THE MOTTO OF KANSAS ITSELF: "AD ASTRA PER ASPERA" - "TO THE STARS THROUGH DIFFICULTIES".

ALTHOUGH WE LOST NO KANSANS IN YESTERDAY'S ACCIDENT, THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS SHARE IN THE NATION'S GRIEF BECAUSE WE HAVE NATIVE SONS WHO HAVE RACED TO THE STARS AS PARTICIPANTS IN OUR COUNTRY'S SPACE PROGRAM.

APPOLLO COMMANDER RON EVANS WAS BORN IN ST. FRANCIS. SHUTTLE COMMANDER JOE ENGLE CAME FROM CHAPMAN. AND ANOTHER SHUTTLE ASTRONAUT, STEVE HAWLEY, CALLS SALINA HOME.

EVEN BEFORE THESE BRAVE MEN SOARED THROUGH SPACE, ANOTHER KANSAN - A WOMAN - LONG AGO SERVED AS A PIONEER IN FLIGHT. AND, LIKE THE COURAGEOUS EDUCATOR WHO LEFT US YESTERDAY, SHE TOO NEVER RETURNED. AMELIA EARHART OF ATCHISON HELPED PAVE THE WAY TO THE STARS.

BUT THESE ARE NOT THE ONLY MEN AND WOMEN OF KANSAS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO OUR COUNTRY. THE LIST IS LONG, AND ON THIS 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF KANSAS' BIRTHDAY, WE REMEMBER WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE, CHARLES CURTIS, DWIGHT EISENHOWER AND JIM RYUN. WE REMEMBER TOO THE SCORES OF LESSER KNOWN SONS AND DAUGHTERS WHO IN THEIR OWN TIME AND THEIR OWN WAY ALSO REACHED TO THE STARS.

AND IN THEIR WAKE, THROUGH DIFFICULTIES - INDEED, THROUGH GREAT SACRIFICE AND AT TIMES WITH TRAGIC PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES - KANSANS HAVE MADE OUR STATE, OUR NATION AND OUR WORLD A BETTER PLACE. OUT OF THE SOIL OF KANSAS, FROM ITS VAST PRAIRIES AND OUT OF THE STARS, HAVE COME A UNIQUE PEOPLE DESTINED TO LEAD THE WAY.

THE REGION THAT IS NOW KANSAS HAD FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEEN INHABITED BY NATIVE INDIANS BEFORE THE FIRST WHITE SETTLER APPEARED. SOME 80 YEARS BEFORE THE PILGRIMS LANDED AT PLYMOUTH ROCK, SPANISH CONQUISTADOR VASQUEZ DE CORONADO EXPLORED FOR GOLD IN KANSAS.

FRENCH MILITARY AND TRADING POSTS WERE ESTABLISHED IN KANSAS BY THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, AND WITHIN ANOTHER CENTURY THE SANTA FE AND OREGON TRAILS CROSSED THROUGH KANSAS TO OPEN UP THE WESTERN WILDERNESS TO A YOUNG COUNTRY.

THE PONY EXPRESS BEGAN IN KANSAS. NO OTHER STATE SENT A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF ITS YOUNG MEN TO HELP SAVE THE UNION DURING OUR CIVIL WAR. THE FIRST AMERICAN INDIAN TO SERVE AS VICE PRESIDENT - CHARLES CURTIS - CAME FROM KANSAS. THE SUNFLOWER STATE SERVES AS THE BREADBASKET FOR THE WORLD.

YES, WE HAVE OUR CHALLENGES TODAY. BUT ON THIS 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF KANSAS DAY, I SHARE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS WHO KNOW THESE CHALLENGES CAN BE MET. OUR MOTTO - "AD ASTRA PER ASPERA" SERVES AS OUR RALLYING CRY, FOR WE WILL GET TO THE STARS, EVEN THROUGH DIFFICULTY.