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Dole tough competitor, basketball coach recalls

By MATT WALSH
The Capital-Journal Staff

RUSSELL — When Sen. Bob Dole went to Russell High School, the school's boys basketball team never won any conference or state championships, but it was a good team that placed high.

Dole played basketball in high school, and although his coach said he wasn't outstanding, "He was a very fierce competitor. When the going was tough, he was the toughest."

"He had his wit and humor then, too," Harold Elliott, his old coach, said Thursday. "It wasn't a sarcastic humor that he's gotten a little in politics, but he was very, very quick with the quip."

"It was always good to have someone on the team like that to ease the tension. He really was a most likeable individual. I never had anyone in my career who was as easy to coach as him."

A competitor and hard worker. That's how a lot of people in Russell



remember Dole when he was growing up in this central Kansas town of 6,000 population. They still think him that way, even as President Ford's choice as the Republican vice presidential candidate.

"In our books he's top" said Mrs. Thomas Iden, whose husband was the high school superintendent when Dole was a student there. "We saw him grow up. Our impression of Bob is a fine boy.

We think he has the possibilities and credentials that are well suited to the position. I think the people as a whole are delighted because they have faith in him."

Barring the late President Eisenhower, John Woelk, a Russell acquaintance of Dole, said, "He's probably the best politician that ever came down the pike in Kansas. John Hamilton was the national (GOP) chairman and (Charles) Curtis was the vice president. Dole may be both."

Woelk described Dole as a "very handsome, articulate person. Extremely hard worker and capable. And, now this is just hearsay, but someone said when he was a small boy he said he would be president some day."

Dole's aunt, Mrs. Carl Friesen, also a Russell resident, said, "I'm real

proud. I'm sure he's the one. "I tell you this is kind of a small town and we never thought of such a thing until he was senator. And then we wondered how high up he was going to go. It's kind of a shock."

Mrs. Friesen described Dole as "very high in character. Very dependable." She said as a boy Dole "always worked," holding a paper route, assisting in a drug store and helping his father at a cream and eggs station on Saturdays. "He was very active in sports."

Russell's citizens say they respect Dole and think it's an honor for their town to be his home.

And, a town banker added, "I don't think President Ford could have picked a more honest man to run with than Bob Dole."

Kansas Reagan forces not thrilled with Dole

By The Capital-Journal Staff

KANSAS CITY — Most Kansas delegates to the Republican National Convention may be exuberant about the selection of Sen. Bob Dole for vice president, but there are a few who greeted President Ford's selection with less than enthusiasm.

They are the delegates committed to Ronald Reagan, the presidential challenger who almost toppled the incumbent President.

George Miles of Prairie Village said he does not regard Dole as conservative enough. Mrs. Betty Hanicke said Dole "talks out of both sides of his mouth."

Their real disaffection with the Republican ticket is directed at Ford, with Dole's selection a side issue.

During delegate polling at a Thursday afternoon caucus, they were the only delegates to abstain — temporarily, they said — from selecting Dole.

The other two Reagan delegates, Dwight Sutherland of Lawrence and Marteen Newcomb of Leawood, said they would support Dole.

"It's sort of ho-hum," Mrs. Hanicke said of Dole's nomination. "I don't

think Dole is better because Ford has written off the South and I don't."

The two dissenters are even divided between themselves. Miles was holding on to the thin hope that the convention would start a draft Reagan movement for vice president. Mrs. Hanicke feels just the opposite — that Reagan should not accept a draft and that he should devote his time to help elect Republican candidates to Congress.

"Ford's a loser. A majority of the delegates supported Reagan, but couldn't vote their choice because of some state laws binding them to vote for Ford," Miles said.

Miles insisted his remarks were not, as he said, "sour grapes," but rather sadness because the Republicans lost the White House when they chose Ford Wednesday night.

Mrs. Hanicke accused Dole of talking out of both sides of his mouth based on an experience she had during platform hearings on the Equal Rights Amendment last week. Mrs. Hanicke testified against ERA, said she asked Dole why he didn't oppose the constitutional amendment.

She said Dole replied, "I voted for it when I was in the Senate, but everyone makes a mistake," a remark she says was made with a number of anti-ERA forces around. She claims she asked Dole later why he made the remark and he said he couldn't say anything else with all the anti-ERA people around, according to her story.

"The choice between Carter and Ford is awful," Miles said, noting that on a scale of 100 he would rate Carter at 4 1/2 and Ford at 3 1/2.

President to attend cookout today in Dole's hometown

KANSAS CITY (UPI) — President Ford will attend a picnic-barbecue Friday in Russell, Kan., hometown of Sen. Robert Dole.

Press Secretary Ron Nease told reporters Thursday that Ford will fly to Salina, Kan., at 10 a.m. CDT, then motor the 80 miles to Russell.

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Dole support was gauged

By KEN PETERSON
Staff Writer

KANSAS CITY — Kansas delegates to the Republican National Convention, through an entangled communications network Wednesday night, may have perceived the potential support Sen. Bob Dole had for vice president.

Three delegates, all Ford campaign workers in Kansas, sent several members of the Kansas delegation to various areas of the convention floor to boost support for Dole.

The results aren't that conclusive yet, but Dave Owen, general states coordinator for the Ford campaign, said the response was committed to the presidential nomination of Ronald Reagan.

The delegates were sent out with a set of "if" circumstances, Owen said. The delegation chairmen were asked if they would accept Dole for vice president if Ford won the nomination and if Reagan declined to be Ford's running mate.

Bill Falstad, state chairman of the Ford campaign, said Oklahoma and Nebraska — the two delegations he was watching — said they would be almost unanimous in their support of Dole for vice president.

"I was having a hell of a time keeping track of the Kansas delegation," Falstad said. "They were all over the damned floor."
Carol Wiebe, Kansas co-chairman of the Ford campaign,

was the third delegate to coordinate efforts to see how the Dole support was progressing.

The results were relayed to President Ford by his staff, Falstad said.

When Ford selected Dole for vice president Thursday morning, the Ford leaders in Kansas still were surprised.

"I don't think I've ever worked any harder for something in my life and I've never been so surprised at anything before," Owen said. "I was just flabbergasted. I know Sen. Dole is the best man for the job, but I didn't think we were able to get our message sufficiently conveyed to the President."

Falstad and Owen have differing views on why Dole was selected. Owen attributes the selection to his belief that Dole is compatible with Reagan forces and that his voting record coincides with Ford's record as a congressman and President.

Dole said he helped bridge the gap between Ford and Reagan forces during platform committee hearings last week.

Ford also needs farm state support and Dole will bring that to the ticket, Owen said.

Falstad said he believes the chief reason for Dole's selection is the President's belief that Dole would be a good successor if something should happen to him.

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Dole staffers caught off guard by announcement

By GENE SMITH
Staff Writer

KANSAS CITY — Bob Dole, who wanted very badly to join President Ford on this fall's Republican ticket, had almost given up hope Thursday morning when the lightning struck.

It apparently left him as nearly speechless as he has been in 26 years of public life — and his staff was similarly affected.

"I still can't believe it," said Cindy Harris, a Dole aide, late this morning, minutes after she watched Air Force One lift off from Kansas City Municipal Airport 400 yards away from her motel room here and bank toward Salina.

Abroad, of course, was the Kansas junior senator — now the GOP vice presidential nominee — his wife Mary Elizabeth Hanford Dole, his daughter Robin, the Ford family and key staff members for Ford and Dole.

Dole was discouraged and depressed Wednesday night, when he told reporters on the convention floor in Kemper Arena that he was sure he was no longer

under consideration — because he hadn't heard a word from the White House since he was asked weeks earlier to supply personal and financial background information for the President's evaluation.

"We all thought Wednesday night it would be a 'draft Reagan' movement or (Tennessee Sen. Howard) Baker. Particularly when Baker and his staff had been in constant communication with the White House" and all of this, we hadn't talked to them at all," Dole said.

Dole was with his wife in their suite on the 17th floor of Kansas City's Radisson-Muehlebach Hotel here when the call came through.

His staff, on a lower floor, was almost as depressed as their chief, since they, like most of the Kansas delegation and scattered Dole supporters from out of state, had conducted an intensive lobbying effort on Dole's behalf throughout the convention.

It was nearly an hour from the time he got the call until he left for Crown Center and his appearance with the

President — but, as he stood beside his one-time colleague in the House of Representatives, it was obvious Dole still was stunned.

"Robin told me Wednesday night she was very down herself," Harris continued. "He told Robin he was just certain he was not under consideration."

"The first word we got was, ABC somehow leaked it to Janet Anderson (a Dole Washington aide). Somebody called her and said it had just come across the AP wire. She came flying through our room. We still didn't believe it. We thought maybe they were just trying to smoke us out to see if we had heard anything."

Perhaps four minutes later, Dole called to see what they'd heard, fearing that perhaps the word had leaked out.

"Then three minutes later they broke in on ABC with a special report and just about two minutes later after that he called us and said he was on his way to Crown Center — that they had called him about 40 minutes prior to that," Harris said.

The Dole staffers bundled into the first available cars and trailed the official party to Crown Center, where they were unable even to get into the room where the press conference was being held.

"We had to watch it on TV in the hall. And from then on, it's been sheer pandemonium," Harris said.

She noted life "completely changed" in the Dole headquarters as the Secret Service promptly moved in and began sealing off elevators and installing other security measures required for the protection of a major candidate. The Secret Service also had been caught off guard and Dole's newly assigned bodyguard was unable to catch up with him until after he arrived at the Crown Center.

The phone in the Dole camp was swamped instantly, Harris continued. "As fast as you'd put it down, it would ring again."

Among other things, she said she's been besieged by requests for campaign material. "We have nothing.

There's just so much coordination that has to be done."

Asked who arranged for the sunflower buttons bearing the GOP stylized elephant and Dole's name Wednesday night, and the Dole-Ford posters so much in evidence during the convention's final session Thursday night, she said she has no idea.

"Where they got those super Ford-Dole posters, I'd love to know. I'd like to have one." Even more amazing, she reported T-shirts with the legend "Ford-Dole '76" were on sale outside Kemper Arena Thursday evening.

Meanwhile, Judy Cook, the only Dole staffer at the Topeka office, reported an immediate rush of telephone calls and walk-in visitors at 7th and Quincy, with many requests for campaign material.

"We had a lot of people yesterday wanting buttons and so forth," but none is available, she said.

She pointed out she's not sure just what can be done, since "this is not a campaign office; this is a Senate office. We're on the federal payroll and the taxpayers. We just are really in the dark on this."