

Dole can add much to Ford's presidency bid

By GIL STUENKEL
Daily Capital Wire Editor

In selecting Sen. Bob Dole as his running mate, President Ford tabbed someone who can keep the conservative wing of the Republican party from re-treating to the sidelines, yet probably maintain peace with the liberal side of the GOP.

The President's decision, which caught almost everyone — even Dole — by surprise, came after an all-night rap session with his closest advisers following Ford's nomination by the national convention.

The choice probably came down to Dole because he was the one among the prospective running mates who brought the most pluses, and the fewest minuses, to the ticket.

The networks and wire services were geared up with plenty of advance material and background information on several of the other likely choices, but for the most part, they were caught with their guard down when Ford tabbed the Kansas senator. Both Associated Press and United Press International had to scramble to come up with biographical sketches of Dole once the secret was out.

But Ford did what he said for months he would do — select someone who agrees with him philosophically (i.e., a loyalist Republican, a fiscal conservative, an advocate of a strong national defense) and someone with whom he is compatible personally.

With speculation running at a fever pitch all through Kansas City, the President kept his secret so closely guarded even his family must not have known.



Gil Stuenkel

Daughter Susan Ford was convinced, and dropping hints around, that Tennessee's Sen. Howard Baker was going to be her dad's choice.

And looming in the background was the ever-present rumor, or hunch, or hope, that Ronald Reagan would, despite his repeated rejections, come into the fold once the nomination had gone to Ford.

But Reagan stuck to his word. It's still unclear whether, in his middle-of-the-night meeting with the former California governor, Ford offered the No. 2 spot. Some observers were saying Ford probably did make the offer, but couch it in such terms that Reagan could only infer his answer had to be no.

With Reagan out of it for sure, the "smart money" again turned to Baker, but the Tennessee had three strikes against him:

—He is regarded as less than a world-beater on the campaign trail.

—The New York Daily News' revelation, and Baker's confirmation, that his wife once had a severe drinking problem.

—He probably couldn't have swung the South into the GOP column in November against Jimmy Carter.

Carter's "born again" Christian image undoubtedly would have brought the drinking issue into the campaign — a moral issue, not a political one — and there Carter appears unbeatable, even by Ford with his "nice guy" image.

Second, the GOP probably has conceded the South to Carter despite Ford's vow in his acceptance speech that he isn't yielding a single state to the Democrats.

Former Texas Gov. and Treasury Secretary John Connally looked like a top prospect as the convention opened, but his chances paled after his speech to the delegates Tuesday night.

Connally, like Baker, had at least two strikes against him:

—A criminal indictment that he took a \$10,000 bribe to manipulate milk price supports during the Nixon administration.

—Four decades as a Democrat.

Although he was acquitted in the milk fund case, the accusation itself could have been enough to give Carter campaign fodder on a higher plane. It fell flat. Some analysts observed that Connally gave the convention statesman-like when it wanted a hatchet job on Carter and the Democrats. Still others speculated that Connally may have been putting himself in position to make a run at the presidency himself in 1980.

With Baker and Connally out of consideration, there was the school of political thought that said "balance the ticket" geographically and philosophically: Get a liberal from the industrial northeast, as Reagan had with Pennsylvania's Sen. Richard Schweiker.

The man who fit that mold best, traveling cabinet officer and Watergate victim Elliot Richardson, was among Ford's list of possibilities, but didn't generate much excitement in Kansas City. Ford may have decided that Schweiker, in many observers' eyes, did Reagan more harm than good. The President wasn't going to be caught with the same situation.

Treasury Secretary William Simon, another possibility, took careful pains

A news analysis

to appear in all the right places at all the right times in Kansas City — near the Ford family when the TV cameras were near the Ford family, available for TV interviews in the hallway when Wednesday night's demonstrations ground the convention to a standstill, etc. etc.

Simon's fiscal policy, of course, is 180 degrees away from the Carter-Mondale ticket's, but Ford may have ruled the treasury secretary out because he couldn't add anything to the ticket Ford doesn't already have himself.

A couple of other names were mentioned, including Ann Armstrong, U.S. ambassador to Great Britain. But the President may have reasoned that the country just isn't ready for a woman vice president yet, and his wife, Betty, probably will attract as much support (or maybe even more) than a woman running mate could have.

Mrs. Ford's advocacy of the Equal Rights Amendment, plus her striking good looks and her comeback from cancer, make her a proven vote-getter for her husband. She is a natural and effective campaigner.

But in the end, it wasn't Baker, nor was it Connally, Simon or Mrs. Armstrong — it was the junior senator from Kansas, a long shot in the vice presidential sweepstakes.

As McMillin, "Huck" Boyd, Kansas national committee man for the GOP, astutely observed early in the convention, "it only takes one vote" to get on the ticket — the President's. Boyd was right, but as Dole noted (before his selection), in this case it took one vote plus Reagan's consent, which Dole received.

Dole brings the GOP ticket some strengths the President, by himself, lacks:

—Dole is the hard-hitting campaigner Ford acknowledges he is not. He proved that in his opening speech to the

convention Monday night, when he came out swinging against Carter and the Democrats.

—Dole was the best choice from the field of possible candidates to mend fences with the nation's farmers, angered with Ford agricultural policies (particularly last year's embargo on grain exports) and disenchanted with Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz.

Dole escaped from the Watergate disaster without damage, and in fact was a victim of the Nixon administration himself, when he was abruptly pushed from the party's national chairmanship by Nixon's "German" majority staff.

—At 53, Dole brings comparative youth to the ticket — and no detail is too trivial to overlook in the presidential sweepstakes. Despite Ford's robust health, he is the oldest (63) of the four men on the GOP and Democratic tickets. Carter is 51 and his running mate, Sen. Walter Mondale of Minnesota, is 48.

—And Dole can more than match military records with Carter, the former Naval submarine officer. The Kansas senator is a disabled combat veteran who was decorated for heroism in World War II.

Ford probably won't say, but Dole's wife may have been a factor in the choice. As a high-ranking Washington official (she is a member of the Federal Trade Commission), Mrs. Dole has the background to be well-versed on the issues, and become another important cog in the campaign.

—Dole's service on three of the Senate's most important committees — agriculture, finance and budget — will be a big selling point for the ticket. Ironically, his counterpart, Mondale, serves the same committees, so the battle lines are clearly drawn on the economy, jobs and farm policy. Dole is the

only Republican senator who shares those committee assignments with Mondale.

—And should Ford opt for an "Ivory tower" campaign — where he stays in the White House projecting the image of a conscientious President doing his job aloof from partisan politics — Dole would be comfortable in the role of the traveling campaigner, taking on Carter and Mondale.

When the suspense was all over, the secret out, the first thing Ford did was parade a line of Republicans from both ends of the party spectrum before the TV cameras and press corps: The appeal for unity.

At the Crown Center press conference, the President called on Sen. Paul Laxalt of Nevada, Reagan's campaign manager, to say a few words of appreciation to the right wing. He followed Laxalt with Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, patriarch of the liberal GOP and the man who tried so hard for so long to be president but never made it.

And on the final night of the convention, the united party effort continued: Rockefeller delivered the nominating speech for Dole, seconded by Laxalt; and Sen. James Pearson of Kansas, from the geographic middle of the country and the ideological middle of the party, introduced his Senate colleague to accept the nomination.

Ford and Dole both made a pitch for a united GOP in their acceptance speeches, and Reagan himself came to the podium to deliver extemporaneously what many judged the best speech of the convention — and it, too, was a plea for Republicans to pull together.

Then, it was over. And as the Democrats had done in June in New York, the GOP, at least outwardly, closed ranks and prepared to crisscross the country in search of the White House.

Bob Dole 'turns out just fine' for Kansans

By Anne Keegan

Chicago Tribune Press Service

RUSSELL, Kan.—The politician stood on the platform and looked out at the crowd.

He saw no ties or fitted suits or big spenders with snazzy signs. He saw farmers' hats and farmers' pants—with the white skin sneaking down from beneath their short sleeves. He saw open faces and hand-made signs and pickup trucks parked behind.

And standing there beneath the courthouse trees and looking out at the people he used to be, the politician—who wants to be Vice President now—started to cry.

Bob Dole had come home.

IT WAS A MOMENT of triumph to return where he'd begun and face the people who started him off. For he brought the President of the United States with him. Right down the main street in Russell, Kan., right down to the cool shade of the courthouse lawn where the Republican women were

● Jon Margolis, a member of The Tribune's Washington bureau, sums up the Republican convention on page 4.

● Ronald Kotulak, science editor, explores the reasons why people choose to run for public office. In today's Perspective section.

roasting weiners. Right down to the old limestone building where his political career began.

Waiting for him were all his friends. Farmers who'd driven 50 miles. Old people in lawn chairs hugging their canes who came to see "Dole's son." Kids from Russell who may never have seen him before, because "Bob's been gone now goin' on 17 years."

And here he was coming to town. In a limousine with the Secret Service and the national press. Standing up there on the Chamber of Commerce's platform, holding hands with the President while the kids in the high school band played "It's a Grand Old Flag."

"THE PRESIDENT told me he wanted to begin this campaign in the heart-

land of America," Dole said, standing tall and smooth and gray-suited before the mike. "And I told him, I knew a little place that was qualified."

"I never believed I'd be in this position. I never believed it when I was in this county court house. I never believed it when I was in the legislature—or in Congress—or in the Senate."

Bob Dole looked at the people around him. "It just shows you can come from a small town . . . and succeed. If I've done anything at all it's the people up and down Main Street . . . I can recall when I needed help the people of Russell helped."

And then Bob Dole, who's never lost a political fight and never let an opponent off easy, broke down. He stopped talking.

When the oil boom hit Russell and there were more people walking down the street at three in the morning than there were at three in the afternoon.

Oil men, outfitters, and roustabouts brought money and booze into this little town of 5,000. Before that the place was dry. It still was legally, but there were plenty of bootleggers around.

"In those days," said a Dole classmate "when we were in school, anybody could buy a pint of whiskey if you had five dollars. We'd all go to the Gala Gardens—an open air dance hall outside of town—and dance and maybe get a sip or two. Bob hung around with three other guys, but none of them are here anymore. When they went away at war most of them never came back. One of them died and the other two moved away and Bob came back injured."

PERHAPS BOB DOLE was remembering what Chet Dawson and the rest of the town did for him when he came back from the war wounded and on a downhill slide.

"Chet Dawson started a drive and collected over \$2,000 to pay for Bob to have an operation in Chicago," said Dean Baker of the local department store. "Just about everybody chipped in. The doctor fixed Bob up again, but he still can't use that arm as you can see. But that experience did something to him."

Perhaps he was remembering the eight years he was county attorney in Russell, making \$50 a week and strolling across the very courthouse lawn 17 years ago—worrying about county debts and speeding tickets and how to get a start in the Republican Party.

"BECAUSE," said longtime friend, James Taylor, "that's when any young lawyer began—a county attorney. That's how you could end up setting up a practice."

ing. Humbled before them, he let out a sob.

FOR A MOMENT there was silence. And then the people of Russell began to cheer. The cheers grew louder and louder. And Bob Dole looked up, wiped away the tears, and added quietly, "It was a long time ago." Perhaps he was remembering the dust bowl days when nobody in Russell had much of anything.

"People were so poor," said one farmer, "that kids would eat mustard sandwiches for dinner. And the dust blew in and filled the creek and silted in the windows and nothing would grow."

"We'd wrap the babies' faces with wet towels because people were dying of dust pneumonia. The dust blew in so high it covered the tumble weed and you could trip on the top of fence posts as you were walking along. Nobody had any hay here and Bob Dole was a poor boy too."

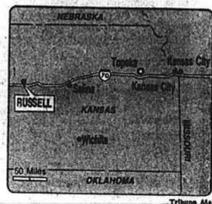
"Everybody in Russell's been broke at least once. It's something we all remember."

Perhaps he was seeing the faces of people who took him back a long time. Like George Baxter, his football coach, who was standing there in the crowd.

"Bob wasn't the star on the team, he was a worker. I'll never forget the game against Ellis High School when the field was too muddy to run with the ball. The score was zero to zero and the game was just about over and Bob caught a pass at the goal line. It was the last play of the game and we won it."

"The other coach was so mad he threw down his hat and jumped on it. But Bob just smiled. He was a quiet boy who always worked. He was an ordinary boy from ordinary people. But he turned out just fine."

RUSSELL HAS changed a bit since Bob Dole moved out of town. Interstate 70 passes by a mile or two out of town and businesses have grown up around it. Farmers are no longer poor. They've



His dad worked as a grain agent and bought and sold cream to bring in a little on the side. Those were the days Bob would do anything for work—dairy papers or work in a drugstore. Life wasn't easy like it is today.

PERHAPS BOB DOLE was remembering the good times in the late '30s

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James Reston

Dole dramatizes the GOP's desperation

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The political process has worked its way and produced two presidential candidates worthy of the respect of the nation.

Neither party is very satisfied with the result of the nominations, but on the question that has troubled the Republic for almost a generation—the character of the men of power—Ford and Carter measure up better than most.

Maybe this is the consolation of this election so far. Compared to Nixon-McGovern in 1972, the choice this time of Ford-Carter is almost reassuring. But the Republican convention here has raised some troubling questions at the end.

For his vice presidential nominee, President Ford has picked Sen. Robert Dole of Kansas, a leading apologist for Richard Nixon, and this convention's most vicious critic of Jimmy Carter. If you'll forgive the pun, it's a doleful news.

IN THE LAST few days in Kansas City, the President was put under severe pressure to select a running mate (1) with experience and conservative credentials (for example Reagan or Connally); (2) with appeal to the liberal urban areas of the northeast and the middle west (Richardson, Rockefeller,

Mathias, Percy, etc.); (3) with ties to the South and the border states (Baker of Tennessee); and, (4) with some of all of these qualities but particularly with the capacity to attack and provoke Carter into political blunders.

Ford, in the end, went with No. 4, and with Dole. It made no sense in sectional politics—both of them coming from the Middle West. It had no appeal to the liberal Republicans, but it was a power play to put Dole against Carter:

● Dole could attack Carter as an inexperienced hypocrite, but Ford, who had promised to run a "positive and responsible" campaign, could not.

● Dole could deal with the anti-Kissinger Republican foreign policy platform, but Ford had to look the other way.

● Dole could imply that Carter was a "liar" on busing, taxes, and abortion, whereas Ford could not.

MAYBE THE PRESIDENT was right in making this short-run gamble with Dole, but one wonders. His main political strength in this campaign is that he is the President of the United States. This is what got him through this convention against Reagan. This is also what has enabled him to hold his party

and even the opposition together in the last two difficult years. But his choice of Dole is almost a declaration of political war against the Democrats.

It was Dole who attacked Carter here as a "quick-change artist," and a "mass of contradictions," who misled the voters in the primaries about busing, abortion, taxes, and government reorganization.

Dole made this speech primarily when Vice President Rockefeller and others were urging the President to adopt a strategy of provocation against Carter and to pick a vice presidential nominee who could cut up Carter as a vague and inexperienced accident of national politics. Apparently it worked.

MAYBE PRESIDENT Ford had this in mind all along, but it seems doubtful. He has always said he would run a "positive and responsible" campaign, and pick a vice presidential nominee who was the best possible "potential President."

But what he picked under pressure was the most aggressive and combative anti-Carter speaker he could find, and this is bound to have its political consequences.

First, it minimizes Ford's reputation

as an objective, decent "presidential figure," and second, it dramatizes the desperation of the Republicans as they go into the campaign, with Ford running one to two against Carter.

Ford has had his worries here, but he won. He has many advantages facing Carter—the presidency, his long experience in Washington, his amiable personality and the fact that not many people are really mad at him.

But his choice of Dole has bothered even many of his most fervent supporters, particularly those on the abandoned liberal Republican Left. For his choice of Dole seems out of character, a desperation move to win by attacking and destroying the opposition rather than concentrating on his own strengths.

The President has not acted here as a confident man with a vision of the future but as a man of the opposition. He has opposed Reagan and had just barely squeaked through, and is now opposing and trying to destroy Carter indirectly through Dole.

It is a surprising strategy, especially since it hurts Ford's own major strengths as a presidential character who has in the last two years won the respect of even his political opponents.

New York Times News Service