

247.1987

Dole

Continued from Page 1

the full use of his arms, he turned to law and eventually to politics.

"I knew that when he started, he would go wherever he wanted,"

Kenny Dole says. Russell Townsley, the publisher of the Russell Daily News, also sees Dole's war injury as the catalyst to his political career.

"When he realized that he could not be the athlete or the whole person he was before, he started out to be the best he could be," Townsley said.

Dole's ex-wife, Phyllis Buzick of Topeka, has a different view of Dole's entry into politics.

"The thing that bothers him the most about his injury was that it left him unable to participate in competitive sports," Buzick said. "My thinking is he channeled this competitiveness into the political arena."

Regardless of the forces that led Dole into politics, the choice was well received by his hometown, which has never failed Dole in an election. The only election Dole has ever lost was for vice president as President Gerald Ford's running mate in 1976.

Dole routinely receives 70 percent or more of the vote in Russell County, some of which comes from Democrats.

Townsley, who is the town's political expert on Dole, says, in many ways, Kansas's senior senator is a reflection of the conservative political attitudes of his hometown.

"He comes from a conservative nature," Townsley says. "That's the

Dole claims lead role in '88 race

By Steve Gerstel

WASHINGTON — Senate Republican leader Robert Dole acknowledged Friday that George Bush remained the front runner for the GOP presidential nomination, but said he would be a stronger candidate than the vice president against Democrats in the 1988 election.

"Bush is still the clear front runner," Dole said. "I think we're catching up (but) obviously there's a long way to go to fill the gap."

But the Kansas Republican told a small group of reporters that in conversations with GOP leaders around the country, the question of who would have a better chance to win the elections was a dominant topic.

"Among Republican activists and people looking at 1988, electability is going to be an issue," Dole said.

He added, "I think there is some evidence that, at least now, I attract, elicit a better response among independents and Democrats than any of the other Republican candidates. I think that's going to be important in 1988."

Dole said he felt the pendulum had swung away from the anti-Washington era that led to the elections of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan and voters want to "turn to us who have experience."

He said competence, experience and toughness were going to be factors and added that, although he had no quarrel with Bush, "In my own case I've had experience and I've been tested and generally I've passed the test."

Sitting at the head of a long, oval table in his Capitol office, Dole said that the Iran-Contra scandal was not an issue and conceded that on many major topics — such as Contra aid and the peace plan for Nicaragua — he and Bush both backed President Reagan.

Asked whether he agreed with Bush's assertion that congressional hearings into the scandal vindicated the vice president, Dole said, "You have to be implicated before you can be vindicated."

He also called premature any discussion of pardons for Rear Adm. John Poindexter and Lt. Col. Oliver North, two key figures in the sale of arms to Iran and the diversion of profits to the Contras. Their role in the scandal is being investigated by special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh.

Dole announced that he would campaign in at least 28 states during the four week congressional recess, hitting about 60 cities. But Dole said he still had not set a date for a formal announcement of his candidacy, saying it would probably come in November.

He hedged when asked about a statement by a leader of his campaign in Iowa, former state GOP chairman Steve Roberts, who told the Des Moines Register, "If Dole doesn't do well in Iowa, he is through, and I would say the presidential race is through on the Republican side."

But Dole's campaign manager, Bill Lacy, stepped in to say that Roberts' views do not reflect the thinking at campaign headquarters nor among others involved in the Iowa caucuses.



Russell residents like to remind people that U.S. Senator Bob Dole is their native son. A large billboard on Interstate 70 proclaims the town's pride.

way Kansas is. That's the way people are raised. You'll find very few liberals in western Kansas."

With the exception of some added polish, Townsley says Dole is nearly the same person who left Russell to become a political leader in Washington.

Kenny Dole says his brother has managed to stay in touch with Russell despite returning only three or four times a year for brief family visits.

Dole's visits to Russell have become less frequent since his mother, Bina, died in 1983. Dole's father, Doran, died in 1975, two

days after Bob Dole married his second wife, Elizabeth Hanford Dole.

Dole, the oldest of four, also has two sisters, both living in Kansas. He still maintains a residence in Russell — the house in which his mother lived. However, the house in which Dole was born and reared was torn down in the late 1970s.

For the most part, the face of Russell has changed very little over the years.

The red-brick streets from which Dole has launched previous political bids are the same from which he is expected to formally declare his candidacy for the Republican

nomination for president later this fall.

Despite some popular belief in Russell that Dole will not run for president, most of the town is confident he will. The local chamber of commerce has set up a steering committee to handle preparations for the formal announcement.

Although Kenny Dole claims he doesn't know if or when his brother will formally enter the race, he is confident Bob Dole has what it takes to win.

"If everybody in the United States would sit down and talk with Bob Dole for five minutes, nobody else would get a vote," he says.

Chicago Tribune

Friday, August 21, 1987

Bob Dole unlocks Bob Dole

For the campaign, the long-closed senator lets down his guard

By Dorothy Collins

Chicago Tribune

W He has been in public life for 39 years, but Bob Dole always has been a very private man, protecting his personal core with the fastest wit in politics and the inborn reserve of his native Kansas plains.

Now, Dole, 64, Republican leader of the Senate and a master legislator known for toughness and pragmatism, wants to be president of the United States. So this insiders' insider has begun to talk about himself publicly as he campaigns, using his rather remarkable life as a way to explain what he wants for the Republican Party and for America.

Whether addressing a 4th of July crowd in New Hampshire, a group of affluent Republicans in suburban St. Louis or a convention hall half-filled with hungover cops in Mobile, Ala., Dole uses part of his speech to ask and answer: "Who is Bob Dole? What's he all about? Why should we put our faith in someone like that?"

He tells of boyhood in Depression-era Russell, Kan., when his family of six lived in a basement apartment and rented out the upstairs. He tells of being the first of his family to go to college. He tells of being in the "wrong place at the right time" — in Italy in 1945, when he suffered grievous wounds that would change his life.

"As a result of that, I got to spend the next 39 months in and out of hospitals," Dole says, adding that he went to war weighing 190 pounds and came home weighing 120.

Upon his return to Kansas, both political parties approached Dole about running for office. He chose to run as a Republican after one GOP leader remarked, "Now, Bob, I don't know what you're going to decide to do, but keep in mind, there are more Republicans in this county than Democrats."

Dole always had wanted to be a physician, but as he told his brother, Kenneth, after the war, "The only thing I've got left is my head, so I'd better use it."



CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

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