

352. 1988

Dole out, gives nod to Bush

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By Dorothy Collin

WASHINGTON—Sen. Bob Dole gave up his quest for the Republican presidential nomination Tuesday, ending a bitter political battle with George Bush and all but assuring that the vice president will be the GOP nominee.

Dole, who for a few sparkling days after the Iowa caucuses thought he would win the nomination and the presidency, only to see his candidacy collapse in the following weeks, appeared tanned and relaxed as he made his announcement on Capitol Hill.

"One thing you learn how to do pretty well in our business is to count," said Dole, the Senate minority leader. "You come to trust your instincts to tell you when it's over. In my heart, I know that that time is now."

"I congratulate George Bush and wish him well in November. The bottom line is keeping the White House Republican."

Campaigning in Wisconsin for next Tuesday's primary, Bush congratulated Dole on a "hard-fought race" and said of his chief opponent, "He's been a worthy warrior, a tough competitor."

Dole's withdrawal left Bush facing only former television evangelist Pat Robertson, a candidate who has not been a factor since his surprise second-place showing over Bush in the Iowa caucuses Feb. 8.

Robertson has indicated he would probably remain a candidate—though he acknowledged Bush was the likely nominee—so he can influence the party when it writes its platform at the Republican National Convention in New Orleans in August.

As he read his statement, Dole was flanked by his daughter, Robin, and his wife, Elizabeth, who gave up her job as secretary of transportation to campaign for her husband.

The Kansas senator was accompanied to the announcement by nearly all of his Republican colleagues, who cheered heartily for their leader, and by Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D., N.Y.), a

friend with whom Dole has worked on key legislation. Though he was smiling and upbeat, Dole's voice cracked occasionally as he admitted the

end was at hand for the drive he has nurtured for years. His friends and colleagues See Dole, pg

Dole

Continued from page 1

cheered the loudest and clapped the longest when he said: "I have been beaten before, and no doubt will be again. But I have never been defeated and never will be."

Also standing at the front of the ornate, historic caucus room in the Russell Office Building were several men who at one time or another ran or advised the Dole campaign. The fact that there were so many of those men was one reason the senator was withdrawing.

Though Dole was viewed by many as a fine and courageous candidate, the continuing chaos of his campaign organization undermined his victories and focused attention on his weaknesses rather than on those of Bush, who was able to wrap himself in President Reagan's aura.

Dole was never able to make clear to voters why he would be a better choice for president than Bush. And, as one of his top strategists acknowledged: "We made a fundamental miscalculation. We underestimated how much Bush merged with Reagan for Republican voters."

"I can beat George Bush, but I can't beat Ronald Reagan," Dole said over and over during the last days of his campaign. His friend and colleague Sen. Pete Domenici (R., N.M.), who campaigned for Dole, said: "I just found enormous conatils for Bush."

Dole, 64, a consummate legislator with the quickest of wits, tried to use his reputation for strength and toughness mixed with compassion to wrest the nomination from Bush, considered by many to be a weaker general election candidate than Dole.

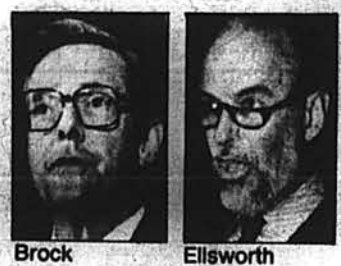
The senator won the Iowa caucuses Feb. 8, with Bush finishing behind Robertson. Dole swept into New Hampshire, where polls showed him catching and then passing Bush after being more than 20 points behind only a week before.

The weekend before the Feb. 16 New Hampshire primary, an ebullient Dole was told by his pollster, Richard Wirthlin, that he would win. He campaigned in snow-clad, picture-postcard town meeting halls as though all the world was within his grasp.

Two days later, after Bush television ads attacked Dole as "Senator Straddle" for his positions on taxes and arms control, the senator sat tight-lipped in his hotel suite as the returns came in showing him losing by nine percentage points to the vice president.

Unfortunately, Dole didn't keep his lips tight enough. In an interview with NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw, the disappointed candidate told Brokaw to tell Bush "to stop lying about my record."

The image left with voters revived stories about Dole's supposed dark



Brook Ellsworth

side. But one longtime associate said Tuesday that the inability of campaign officials to deal with the Bush ads sank Dole's candidacy, not just because the ads left the impression that the senator was for a tax increase, but because the episode showed the lack of a competent organization.

Despite the urging of several of his Senate colleagues, who were in New Hampshire campaigning for their leader, nothing was done to reply to the ads, mostly because there was no structure in place to come up with a decision, according to both a senator and a campaign official.

When the senator first began his campaign, most of the work was done by a small staff of loyalists, with political operatives Donald Devine and David Keene setting the strategy, such as it was. Then longtime Dole associate Robert Ellsworth, a former congressman and ambassador, took over. Finally, last fall, Bill Brock resigned as the secretary of labor to become chairman of the Dole campaign.

But one side, who has worked for Dole for years, argues that none of the layers of the campaign ever meshed. Not only were there bruised feelings, but there was no clear chain of command. Nor was there a clear vision for where the Dole candidacy wanted to go and what it wanted to accomplish.

After he lost in New Hampshire, Dole, described later by a top campaign official as "a hurt and confused candidate," headed off almost alone except for a couple of aides, a plenitude of reporters and a terrible cold.

By the time he got over the cold, the senator had won in Minnesota and South Dakota, but still had no strategy for the impending Super Tuesday contests, when 17 states would hold GOP primaries or caucuses. Then Dole suffered a media disaster as Brock fired Keene and Devine with the press looking on.

Bush swept Super Tuesday on March 8, and the candidates went to Illinois, which Dole said would be his recovery state, just as it was for him after World War II when he underwent several operations in Chicago that helped him overcome his grievous wounds.

But Bush also won Illinois on March 15, and for all practical purposes that was the end of Dole's candidacy.

Tribune correspondent Mitchell Locin contributed to this report from Wisconsin.

Chicago Tribune, Thursday, March 31, 1988 Section 1 23

Bob Dole and the way it is in politics

Two days after the 1976 presidential election, Sen. Bob Dole sat with his wife, Elizabeth, in their Watergate apartment and talked with a reporter about Dole's bitterness and disappointment as he and President Ford lost to Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale.

What rankled most as he replayed the rough campaign was his conviction that he was being blamed unfairly for the defeat. Not the Watergate scandal that brought down Richard Nixon and made Carter's sweet-spoken outsider approach appealing to many disenchanted voters. Not Ford's pardon of Nixon, his Rose Garden campaign strategy or his bungling assignment of free-nation status to Poland. To Bob Dole's resentment, the critics seemed to him to have overlooked the damage caused by all those politically troublesome matters and laid the responsibility on him for being too successful as the designated hatchman.

"They kept telling me to 'keep on doing what you're doing,'" he said of Ford and his political wise men. But every losing cause demands a rationale, especially by those who backed the losers. Nixon was a dead horse. Ford was too nice a guy to beat up. Dole was a certifiable mean-mouth on the stump. So he got the short straw. And it hurt.

Somewhat you knew right then that he wouldn't, couldn't, let it go. Not the kid who'd come back shattered from World War II and spent 39 months in grueling rehabilitation putting his body and his life back together. Bob Dole is a lot of things, not all of them pleasant, but he's not a quitter.

So in 1980, he was back. This time going for the top of the ticket. Not about to be called anybody else's hatchman again. Determined to prove wrong those who said he blew it four years before. But nobody paid much attention. So he wandered aimlessly around Iowa and New Hampshire, brooding and without effect, before some western Kansas pragmatism set in and he took himself out of a fool's game.

Then he went back to Washington and worked hard

at becoming a forceful leader in the Senate. Though a valued supporter of Ronald Reagan on the Hill, he was never a toady, preserving his reputation as his own man even while his wife was serving in high-ranking administration posts. And he polished his act as he went along. Keeping the quick humor that always has made him the equal of any other stand-up comic in politics, he softened the edges of his razorlike tongue. On the network talk shows he was forthright, articulate and obviously in command of the facts on an endless variety of legislative and political matters. No question, Bob Dole was growing.

He was ready for 1988. As ready as he would ever be. So he threw down the gauntlet to George Bush and went after the top job again. It looked pretty good for him for awhile, too, especially after he cakewalked through the Iowa caucuses and Pat Robertson dumped Bush into third place. But he lacked a coherent and decisive organization, the price he always has paid for needing to run everything himself. And he had difficulty setting out a vision for his presidency beyond promising to react to and solve problems.

Then Bob Dole's torment came full cycle. He lapsed into "meanness" after his New Hampshire primary loss when he accused Bush on network television of lying about the Dole record. Suddenly, it was 1976 revisited. Long after, he said he should have used the word "distorting." But it was too late.

Whether that was more than a straw too many on the camel's back going into Super Tuesday, we may never know. But after the Bush sweep on that day, and Dole's almost redundant defeat in Illinois, the rest is history. Or it was by Tuesday, when Bob Dole put the anguished dream to rest this one more time. Maybe that's the end of it. He still has important work to do. Perhaps the ache will stop. Probably not. Just because that's the way it is once you've made the run for the big brass ring. The glint is always there, and always bright in the eye of the smitten beholder.

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Dole bows out



Elizabeth and Bob Dole graciously accept defeat as Dole bows out of the presidential campaign.

Kansan ends bid for presidency

By WILLIAM M. WELCH
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Republican Bob Dole ended his campaign for president Tuesday, saying he was "bloodied but unbowed" by the series of bruising primary losses that finished his candidacy.

Dole bowed out before a supportive audience of Senate and House colleagues and offered congratulations to George Bush, the all-but-anointed Republican nominee.

With his wife, Elizabeth Hanford Dole, and daughter, Robin, flanking him, the Senate Republican leader spoke without a hint of rancor toward Bush, a candidate who aroused the Kansan's temper and anger in the campaign.

"My friends know that I am a fighter; I don't like to lose," Dole said. "I have been beaten before, and no doubt will be again. But I have never been defeated and never will be."

Dole had signaled for days that he was ready to bow to the inevitable.

"One thing you learn how to do pretty well in our business is to count," he said. "You come to trust your instincts to tell you when it's over, and in my heart I know the time is now."

"So I return to the Senate as the Republican leader ready to do all I can to elect Republicans in November and doing all I can for our nominee, George Bush."

His withdrawal left only Pat Robertson stubbornly hanging in as Bush's challenger for the Republican presidential nomination. But Robertson has signaled he is a candidate in name only and acknowledged Bush's victory.

Dole made his exit before an audience jammed into the Senate Caucus Room, a historic room where John F. Kennedy launched his presidential bid and site of

(See Dole, Page 9)

Dole

(Continued from Page 1)
the Senate Watergate hearings 15 years ago and the Iran-contra hearings a year ago.

Surveying the crowd and hearing an effusive introduction by Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., Dole began by saying: "Maybe I ought to change this."

His withdrawal came on the day of the primary in Connecticut, one of several home states for Bush where the vice president again rolled to victory.

Dole had for a time hoped to hang on until next week's primary in Wisconsin, but his outlook was hardly better there, and Bush's delegate lead appeared insurmountable.

Dole's candidacy took off in Iowa's caucuses, a farm state where he benefited from his rural roots in neighboring Kansas. He won the leadoff delegate event, leaving Bush stunned with a third-place finish behind Robertson.

For almost a week Dole looked like

a good bet for the Republican nomination. But his chances were frozen in New Hampshire.

Dole relied on a surge in popularity there built on his Iowa success. But in what he later conceded was a tactical mistake, he didn't counter tough Bush television ads suggesting Dole would raise taxes. New Hampshire dealt him a loss from which he could not recover.

Dole's campaign was beset by internal divisions and vacillation. Critics said it was a reflection of Dole himself, calling him a consummate legislator but lacking in executive experience and unable to delegate authority.

His campaign was in turmoil after his New Hampshire loss, and the division between campaign manager Bill Brock and two conservative campaign consultants broke into the open. Brock fired them in full view of reporters.

Dole's strategy for winning the White House was based primarily on winning the first two contests, and when he fell short in New Hampshire his candidacy collapsed.

1988