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Our Man Bob Dole

By RUSSELL T. TOWNSLEY

Bob Dole's return to his home town still sparks statewide and nationwide interest. For several weeks, Russell residents have faced TV cameras and spoke of Senator Dole's younger years while pencils, tape recorders and note pads were busy.

News hounds have nosed into nearly every nook, probing to find out more about Our Man Bob Dole, who wants to be president.

Throughout the rush of interviews, queries have centered around a phenomena, "What is there about Bob Dole that makes him different, and what part has his home town played in his political development?"

As many have said, there is no single answer. There are almost as many factors in the makeup of a national figure as there are those who believe they know the answer.

Our Man Bob Dole is as surely a product of the times as he is a reflection of Russell, Kan., his state, and the entire Midwest. He represents a people and way of life which was abandoned long ago by the pundits and sages, the ivory tower dwellers, and the world-wise writers and commentators who view their world through distorted, foggy mists of liberalism and political correctness.

While their world may seem real, it is crepe paper and tinsel, no indicator of the flatlands and heartlands of the nation. There is a real world, and it is here.

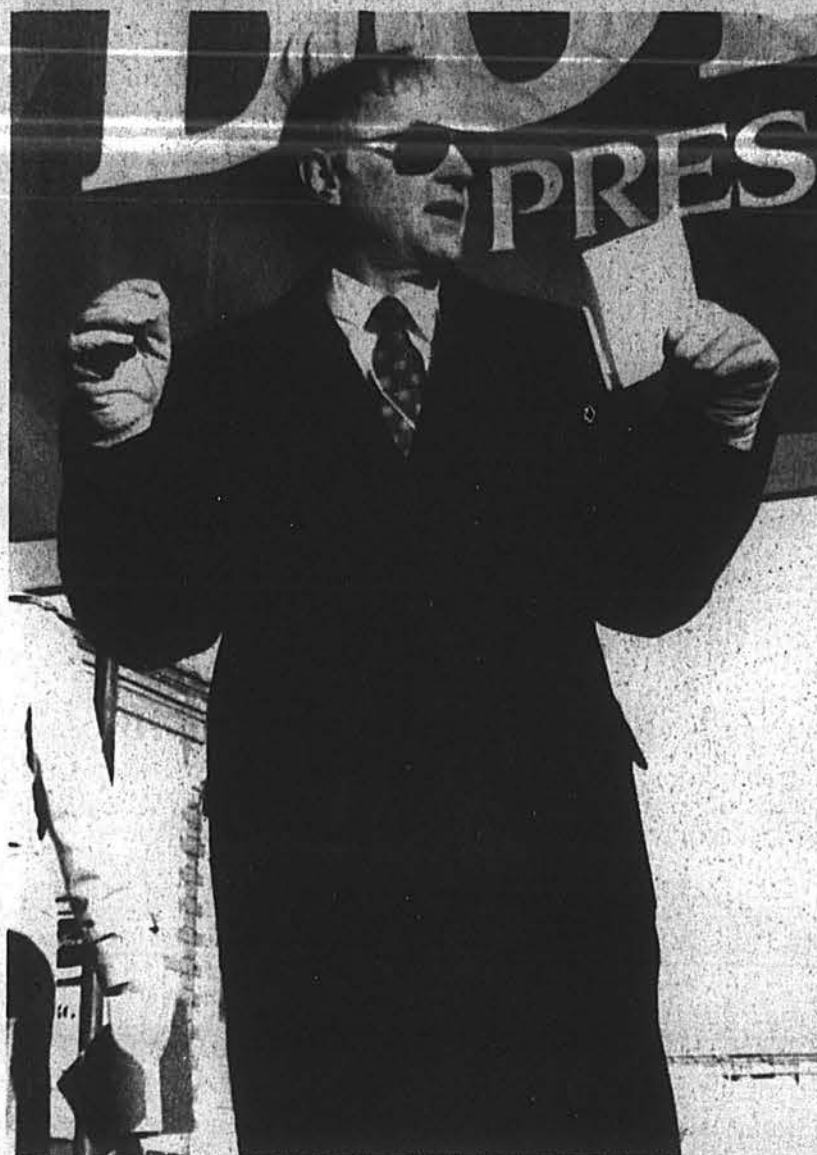
Bob Dole could no more desert his roots than could his generation — and those preceding it — deny the harsh heritage, the strong family values and the deep-seated senses of fairness and responsibility.

Bob Dole, like thousands of others, grew up in a crazy, twisted world. The boom and bust of the 20s and the Great Depression of the 30s saw the failure of a huge economic system, the reaching of government into every crack it could penetrate, saw years of drought, dust and hardship, and, after that, a terrible war which consumed values, customs and principles families had learned to trust.

Importantly, perilous times saw a strengthening of family life, an inward movement in sharp contrast to the destructive outward migrations related to booms and prosperity.

Through this maze of overwhelming conditions to which this nation had little control, a generation, maybe two or three, learned to be survivors. They did what they could with what they had.

A plus for Russell, where oil pro-



duction formed a floor for the economy, the school district made good use of funds available to provide good teachers. Bob Dole and others of his school years had an excellent education — above average for rural Kansas.

A hard life was nothing new to Midwesterners, many of whom arrived from overseas, leaving nothing and finding nothing when they arrived. They made do with what they had. There was no alternative. Those who couldn't stand the hard life moved or perished.

These are the people of the Plains. Sturdy, hard, yet forgiving, industrious, canny and self-sufficient. They were the survivors.

We met Bob Dole shortly after his operations in Chicago by neurosurgeon Hampar Kelikian, a refugee and a survivor in his own way. We saw the cigar box on the drug store counter, one of several in which Russell people placed \$1,800 — money to pay the hospital bill, which, unlike Dr. Kelikian's

fee, was not waived.

We saw Bob Dole venture downtown, his close calls with death plainly evident. We saw a young man who had determination and drive which far overshadowed physical handicaps. We saw a man who was going to survive. He couldn't meet his dream of becoming a doctor — but he could use his mind to become an attorney, and, in that way, help people.

Bob Dole attended The University of Arizona, attracted by warm sun, vital to his continuing rehabilitation. We knew the Russell man who went to classes working against tremendous odds.

Continuing his education a year later at Washburn University, Dole attended classes and represented Russell Countians as state representative, again in the face of failure. He graduated with top honors and returned to Russell to practice law with Eric E. "Doc" Smith.

It was Bob Dole, the man we knew for the next eight years as

Russell County attorney. In making news rounds and covering local stories for the still young Russell Daily News, we were probably in his office more often than we were in agreement with the office holder.

However, it was in courtroom battles between local legal giants, Bob Dole and Norbert Dreiling of Hays, that we found a man who gave his all for what he knew was right. He was the attorney who would go the extra step for a client and give his time for civic work.

It was Bob Dole, doing what he could with what he had.

In courtroom battles, for a green reporter who knew little about the law and less about procedures, Dole and Dreiling were a pair to watch, a sure way to brighten a day and find a few laughs as they clashed wits before the judge.

It was Bob Dole and Dreiling we saw in the hallway at the Courthouse during a court recess having a cup of coffee while talking about politics, the weather, price of wheat, and the topics good friends share. Like true professionals, they battled in court and shared friendship in the hall.

Think about it. Perhaps it was in the county Courthouse that Bob Dole honed his talent and skills in the art of compromise. I'm sure it was there he rediscovered from his high school days in football, basketball and track to respect an opponent, to prepare his case, do his homework, and be ready to win.

As seen often in political races, both in the early years and today, the Dole strategy is solid as a rock. He listens well, remembers far better than most, and bases arguments and conclusions on fact.

To have survived nearly a half-century in some of the roughest political arenas without a hint of misconduct or malfeasance is proof to me of a man's character.

In the years Dole has been in Washington, we've seen changes. We believe they are significant.

In Russell, we sometimes spent evenings together as our wives did the dishes and talked as women do. We didn't talk about his military service and war injuries. It wasn't the time. Years later, a time arrived when he, like many other veterans, felt free relating the horrors and privations of war. With the opening of an inner cabinet closed tightly for so many years, came another change.

Our Man Bob Dole put other things — important things — into perspective. As he shed the role of a Western Kansas politician to assume the role of a national leader, he sometimes found himself in opposition to favors and concessions demanded by others. Even in these matters, calling for heart-rendering decisions — Dole acted in behalf of a nation and not a man or his party.

Dedication and devotion to duty is another facet of doing what has to be done, long a measure of Midwesterners.

Dole admits to making mistakes, but, overall, there have been few. At no time have we seen him give way to self-serving excuses, no matter how tempting it might have been.

Accepting responsibility for what one does is basic in the Plains states. It is the way families met problems during those hard years.

Hardships are not unknown today. We still have wars, economic disasters, social and moral decay, and all the negatives which make life miserable and difficult. But, a major difference today is a diminishing of family values, devaluation of parental roles, the unwillingness to take an extra step to help others, or to do for one's self that which needs to be done. Whining about hardship and turning to the government are no more acceptable today than they have ever been.

In a nutshell, we believe there are schools almost as good as those in the Great Depression. There are brilliant young men and women who are self-reliant, capable, and inventive, and who stand willing to serve their home and their nation. They lack, however, an important ingredient to which Our Man Bob Dole had, simply because of the times.

Adversity was a way of life for those important decades in which Dole's generation was trained for places in today's world. Lessons learned during hard times are always bitter. But they were, in Dole's case, the making of a man and an asset for the future of his generation.

We have no illusion that Our Man Bob Dole is infallible, without fault, or gifted with powers not known by others. If he were, we should be suspicious and cautious in judgment. We remain confident that the senator is a man of the times, a product of what we have come to like and appreciate in today's world. We hope that in years to come others will find the same values, travel similar routes — and, with the blessings of all — be able to forego hardships and perils integral in the making of Our Man Bob Dole.



Are GOP Women Being Ignored?

Statements Made by Bob Dole Before the 1992 Elections

By BOB DOLE

As a proud resident of the only state in America with a woman United States senator, a woman U.S. representative and a former woman governor, I fully understand that neither gender has a monopoly on any political office.

Unfortunately, when it comes to U.S. Senate elections, it appears that one party's women candidates do have a monopoly on the media's attention, as we are seeing again this year in the wide national coverage of women candidates in Pennsylvania and Illinois.

Despite a long record of nominating qualified, dynamic and distinguished women to run for the Senate, the Republican Party's female candidates have never enjoyed the unremitting media and interest-group cheerleading we hear these days for women Democratic candidates. Apparently, the key to being taken seriously — to being declared a force for "change" — by the media and the so-called women's groups is a liberal agenda, not the female gender.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm all for more women in government, and I have no problem with the Democrats nominating women candidates. Throughout my career in public service, I've worked with highly talented women — in the House, in the Senate and on the highest levels of my staff, including my longtime chief of staff and her fellow staff experts on health care, disabilities, nutrition, arms control, budget and tax policy. I also happen to be married to someone who knows a lot about being a woman in public service.

Across the nation, Americans are being deluged with television and newspaper stories proclaiming that 1992 will be a "breakthrough" year for women candidates. A recent editorial in a major newspaper raved about Democratic women candidates, declaring that "the fallout from the (Clarence) Thomas hearings has produced viable female Senate candidates in a half dozen states. That's welcome evidence of progress."

Like nearly every story on women candidates, the editorial ignores the fact that well-qualified women were running for the Senate long before anyone ever heard of Anita Hill. And why should "welcome progress" be defined by the number of women candidates from the Democratic Party?

Where was all the media cheerleading in 1990, a banner year for women candidates, when a half-dozen Republican women — well-qualified women with serious messages — were running hard for the Senate? These topflight candidates included Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas; U.S. Representatives Lynn Martin of Illinois, Pat Saiki of Hawaii and Claudine Schneider of Rhode Island; a New Jersey state official, Christine Whitman; and a prosecutor from Delaware, Jane Brady — not exactly an unseasoned lot of public servants.

How many stories did you see in 1990 pointing out that these six outstanding women were running for the Senate as Republicans, while the Democrats were fielding only two women candidates? Instead of rave editorials and "breakthrough" stories, the media turned on its censorship machine, keeping America in the dark about this historic field of women candidates taking on the status quo. Kassebaum was re-elected, but when all

five women challengers were defeated by their male opponents there was no editorial outcry that the old boy network had prevailed again. (Let me say that two of these talented women later served in the Bush administration — Lynn Martin as secretary of labor and Pat Saiki as head of the Small Business Administration.)

And when Republicans, long before the Thomas-Hill hearings, introduced comprehensive women's rights legislation — including the first-ever monetary remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace, specific provisions to fight violence against women and the first proposal dealing with corporate discrimination against women — the media gave the plan nothing but the cold shoulder. Regrettably for America's working women, women's rights and Republicans simply don't mix in our nation's newsrooms.

Let's face the facts. Democratic U.S. Senate nominees Carol Moseley Braun and Lynn Yeakel are fast becoming household names. But when was the last time you saw a story on Charlene Haar, another so-called "outsider" who happens to be the Republican U.S. Senate candidate in South Dakota? Notwithstanding a fine opponent, did the Republican former mayor of Charlotte, Sue Myrick, get the same kind of free national hype before North Carolina's Senate primary that we saw in Pennsylvania on the Democratic side?

How many stories have you seen pointing out that since 1960, Republicans have nominated more women to run for the Senate than have the Democrats? Have you ever heard that women have been the Republican U.S. Senate nominee in New Jersey three out of the four most recent elections? Or that despite being outspent by nearly \$9 million, Christine Whitman came within three points of unseating an incumbent Garden State senator in 1990? If she had gotten half the media attention Lynn Yeakel did, Christine Whitman might very well be sitting in the Senate today.

Unfortunately, it seems that the media and a few special interest groups have decided that Republican women are not "politically correct." Whether they meet some groups' self-proclaimed litmus tests or not, qualified Republican women — whether they are pro-choice or whatever — never seem to merit the support of the groups that say they are so dedicated to electing more women to office, women who could have been already on the job, making a difference on Capitol Hill.

In fact, time and time again, the so-called liberal women's organizations such as the National Women's Political Caucus have done everything possible to defeat talented Republican candidates. There are many fine women's organizations in America, some of which supported these candidates, but it seems obvious that most of the self-styled women's groups are more interested in agendas than gender.

So the next time you hear criticism of the "98 percent male" Senate, or statements that we need "more women" in the Senate, ask yourself whose fault that really is. The female candidates have been there. Regrettably, the votes, the attention and the political will have not.

How can you trust a weatherman who carries an umbrella on a day he says will be sunny?



TIM STEINNECKER, Dodge City, is being recognized for his work with The Dole Foundation. Others, from left, are Judson

Green, Elizabeth Dole, Bob Dole, Dennis Byrd and Paul Hearne, foundation president.



SENATOR BOB DOLE and wife Elizabeth are presenting the Media Awareness Award to Dennis Byrd. The other man in

this picture, on the left, is Paul Hearne. The award was presented at a meeting of members of The Dole Foundation.