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# The Doles: A Family in Every Sense

By IRENE H. JEPSEN  
Doran and Bina Dole gave their children the basics essential for living each day throughout their futures — an inherent sense of duty and respect, hardworking, honest and strong. They were a unit, pulling together.

Their early life may have known hard times, yet the father was enterprising and industrious; the mother, ingenious and talented, directing herself effortlessly to the home life of her children; and the children helping through numerous odd jobs.

They also were a family who played together, taking impromptu Sunday afternoon drives into the country, stopping to eat watermelon by the side of the road.

Their church was important. By age 3 all of the children were on the Cradle Roll at Trinity United Methodist Church.

Doran Dole operated a creamery-produce store and a grain company to support his wife and four children, Gloria, Bob, Kenny and Norma Jean. In all his years he was known to have missed only one day of work because of sickness. He believed in self-discipline, and stressed discipline within his family.

He was a generous and kind man, often sitting with the ill, and a man proud of his 50 years both as a volunteer fireman and member of The American Legion.

Bina Dole helped her family of modest means by using her talent as an exceptional seamstress to make clothes for her children, and, at one time, sold sewing machines to others like herself.

"Mom was a beautiful seamstress. She wanted us to look nice every day for school, and we did," Gloria said.

"She could make or re-make, and never spared the ruffles or lace, which, of course, always had to be ironed."

As she cared for her family, she also cared about her neighbors and friends.

"Mom was always sewing or cooking. Often we girls would help with the household chores so Mom could sew," Norma Jean said.

"But, when a death occurred in the neighborhood, everything would stop so Mom could quickly cook and then take the food immediately to the family. Then she would organize a neighborhood collection for flowers to be sent."

The sisters also are proud not only of how their mother would decorate the home for Christmas, but how, one year, she went a step further.

"When the war (World War II) began, she went to each neighbor asking if they would put a lighted tree in their yards — as a reminder and tribute to every one of the boys serving in the war."

All of the neighbors did, and the project was dubbed "The Northern Lights." (The Dole home is on the north side of Russell).

Gloria and Norma Jean speak almost reverently of their parents. They had a respect for them in their youth which, apparently, persists today.

"Oh, (I) guess we thought they were strict when we were kids, but they were good parents. Great parents," Gloria said.

Norma Jean agrees. "Mom taught us (Gloria and herself) about housekeeping and cooking. You know, the inside work. Dad had the boys help him at the produce store, and to do outside work."

At times the patience of the parents was tried, with four children, within five years of each other. Gloria is two years older than Bob, with only one year almost to the month between Bob, Kenny and Norma Jean.



GLORIA DOLE NELSON

"I'm so very proud of Bob. He has worked hard and never let his handicap get in the way, ever. He is compassionate and deserving. And, it's time. He would make a fine president."

Gloria describes herself and Kenny as the "ornery" ones, Bob the more serious — "he was always the one to try to keep us in line," — and Norma Jean, as the youngest, — "having to tag along."

"We would be given chores to be done by a certain time," Gloria said, "but Kenny and I would always procrastinate."

"Meanwhile Bob would get things done — now! He always took things to heart and did as he was told. He would say back then 'let's keep this thing moving,' and he says the same today."

And the four were not without childhood pranks:

"We had a white Spitz. One day all four of us decided to shear him and use his 'wool' to make gloves," Gloria said. "It looked so bad that we felt bad."

"That poor dog was practically skinned," Norma Jean said. "It was not supposed to be in the house and this was in the wintertime so Bob and Kenny would sneak it into the basement where it could get warm."

They got in trouble for that. "When we got in real trouble we'd be sent outside to get a switch, and I'd always get the tiniest one I could find," Gloria said.

"Or, dad would tell us to get his belt and, somehow, we just could never find it," Norma Jean said. "We sure thought we were fooling them, but we weren't."

A good talking-to at bedtime usually was the harsh treatment.

Another time, Norma Jean was the target for her sister's and brothers' mischief:

"They chased me with a mouse. It was a dead mouse, but I didn't

know it at the time."

With Norma Jean hightailing it in the lead, and Gloria, Bob and Kenny dangling the mouse, the chase was on, round-trip all the way from the house, downtown to Holthofer's Confectionery, ending only when Norma Jean raced back into the house, red faced and puffing.

"When Mom saw me, she knew they'd been up to something," Norma Jean said.

"We got an extra, real good talking-to about that," Gloria said.

There was neighborhood fun for Bob and Kenny — the yard often full with their friends — Eugene Ruff, Don Roberts, Dean Krug, Bill Ruppenthal ... playing with wood "rubber band" guns and other neighborhood games of the times.

Once they all got together and built a fort. "Little by little, mom's foods began to disappear," Gloria said.

Among the wares at Doran Dole's creamery were eggs, fresh country eggs. Holthofer's traditionally gave the kids in the community a free ice cream cone for Easter, in exchange for an egg. Gloria, Bob, Kenny and Norma Jean took advantage of their ample access to free eggs, for themselves and their friends.

"When Dad realized we seemed to have more than our share of free ice cream, we knew he'd caught on. That ended that."

Gloria and Kenny, reinforcing each other's sense for the daring, would peek around the doorways to make funny faces at their parents' guests. "And at Christmas time, the presents under the bed weren't safe, and any candy would always disappear," Gloria said.

"At those times, Bob, who could be a part of the fun, but, as the more serious of the clan, would tell us 'better behave.'"

"I," Norma Jean said, "would hang in there with Bob. Mom and Dad might get mad at those two, but if I hung around Bob, I thought I wouldn't get in trouble."

Gloria and Norma Jean spoke nostalgically of great family picnics and dinners:

"The 4th of July was always big. We'd go out to the city lake with family and friends. Dad would put pop in a big tub with ice, or float watermelons."

"When it got dark we'd shoot fireworks. We loved it," they said. Thanksgiving was a holiday when the house was filled with relatives:

"Dad would have to put up makeshift tables that were doors on top of sawhorses. Oh, we had a huge family. On both sides."

R. G. and Margaret Dole were Doran's parents. There were six children, two boys and four girls.

Bina Dole's parents were Joseph and Elva Talbott. The Talbotts raised 11 children, eight daughters and three sons. A fourth son died at birth.

For Bina Dole, the birthdays of each of her children were a special time for each of her children. She would tell them "it's your day, you get to choose the menu."



NORMA JEAN DOLE STEELE

"I idolize him. Bob was a go-getter before and after, he was wounded. I can't be anything but proud. He is great."

Then she would bake their cake — "The Special Cake" — Gloria's, chocolate; Bob's, angel food; Kenny's, banana; and Norma Jean's, marble.

The Dole children have an ongoing pride in each other that began in their childhood.

All pulled together when Kenny had osteomyelitis at about age 7. Kenny was to have nine operations over the next few years, the first would keep him in St. Anthony Hospital at Hays for six months.

"We (Bob and Gloria), would sit with him, take him fruit or go for

milkshakes," Gloria said. "And, I can still see Bob holding Kenny's hand as they walked to school."

Kenny was a firm supporter of his brother, Bob, his lifelong "best friend."

Kenny died March 5, 1993. The sisters were proud of him, believing he could have been up there with Bob if he had wanted to be.

Of their brother Bob, the United States senator and aspirant for the presidency, they said:

Gloria: "I'm so very proud of him. He has worked hard and never let his handicap get in the way,

ever. He is compassionate and deserving. And, it's time. He would make a fine president."

Norma Jean: "I idolize him. He was a go-getter before, and after, he was wounded. I can't be anything but proud. He is great."

And, amongst the hustle and bustle of media, phone and in-person interviews, preparations to be with their brother in Topeka for his official announcement on April 10 to run for the presidency, and his forthcoming visit to Russell this weekend, the sisters found time to make homemade goodies for him and Elizabeth — among them, Bob's favorite, peanut butter cookies.

It was their care package to them for on-the-road.

## Gloria Dole Nelson

Gloria and Larry Nelson will have been married 53 years on April 19. They have five children, Larry, a traffic controller in Salina, Jeffrey, a partner with Melvin Mobile Homes at Salina, Linda Belau of Greeley, Colo., Susan Silz of Fort Morgan, Colo., and Robert "Bob" of Greeley, Colo. They also have 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Gloria was a certified cosmetologist and for many years owned and operated "The Hair Den" in Russell.

Larry was a B-29 pilot in the United States Army Air Force serving in World War II.

He was employed with Kaw Pipe Line in Russell for 15 years. For 25 years he was with Arapahoe Pipe Line at Fort Morgan, Colo. The couple returned to Russell in 1979 when he retired.

## Norma Jean Dole Steele

Norma Jean Steele and the late Alan T. "Tommy" Steele were married for 30 years. He died April 15, 1978. They had four sons, Dr. Alan T. "Tom" Steele of Branson, Mo., Michael Dole Steele who is with Boeing and lives in Derby, Kenneth Robert of Bedville, N.C., and Joseph Doran who is in sales with Gordon Platt Manufacturing in Ark City. There also are seven grandchildren. Kenneth Robert, 36, has a form of brain cancer and is in an experimental program in North Carolina.

Norma Jean attended Kansas State University, a Western Union school and studied real estate.

Her husband was a radioman for the United States Navy, having served during World War II and in Vietnam.

He had been a management analyst with the Veteran's hospital in Wichita at the time of his death.

## Kenny Dole Believed in Bob

By IRENE H. JEPSEN

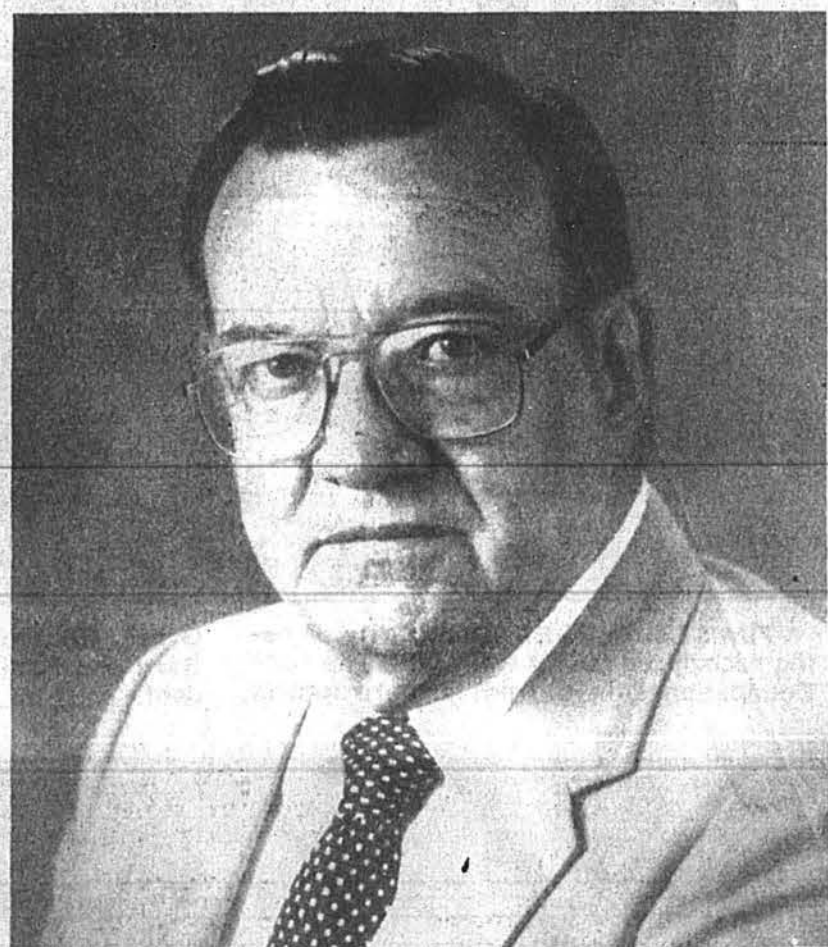
Kenneth Dole always strongly supported his brother Bob. When he was interviewed by this reporter in 1987, at the time Bob Dole announced he was a candidate for the presidency, Kenny said:

"If there's one little thing that I can do to help Bob, then that's what I'm here for."

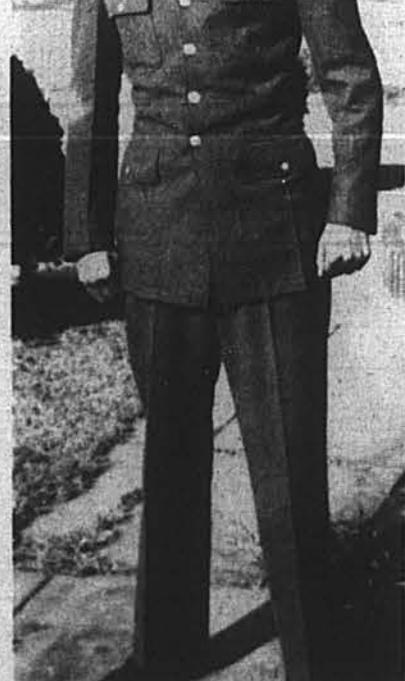
"If everybody could sit down and talk to Bob Dole for five minutes — just five minutes — on any of their favorite subjects, whether they liked him or disliked him at the time, whether they were Democrats, Republicans, Independents or whatever — I don't think anyone else would have a prayer (to win the presidency)."

"Bob cares about everybody, and

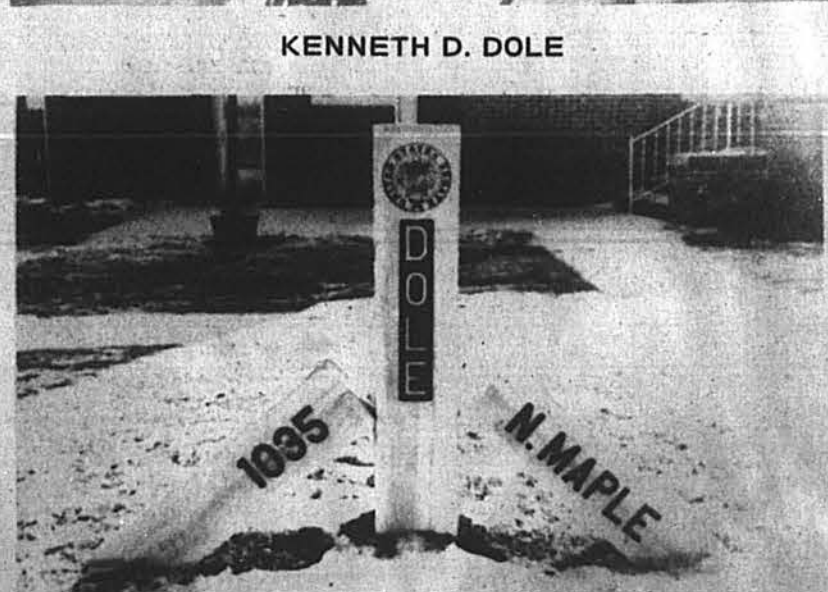
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KENNETH D. DOLE



KENNETH D. DOLE in his Army uniform — in 1943.



NEW STONE POST MARKER — This new marker was commissioned by Anita Dole for the Dole home at 1035 N. Maple St. to replace the damaged stonepost that had been placed there years before by her husband, Kenneth D. Dole. (Staff Photo)



SISTER AND BROTHER share a moment. At left, Gloria (Dole) Nelson and Senator Robert Dole.



ANOTHER MOMENT SHARED by brother and sister. At left, Norma Jean (Dole) Steele and Senator Robert Dole.