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Kansas Senator Bob Dole, who during most of his high school years in Russell, Kansas, worked part-time in a family drug store, says that his "soda jerk" experience made a lasting impression on him and provided a useful, comprehensive education in "people-dealing." Senator Dole's record of public service, beginning with his election to the Kansas Legislature at age 26 (while still a law student,) demonstrates that he has made good use of the insight he gained while working in a small town drug store.

Dole served in the Kansas Legislature from 1951 to 1953; was elected to four terms as Russell County Attorney, 1954 to 1961; served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1960 to 1968, and in November 1968, was elected to the U.S. Senate. In January of this year, the Kansan was named Chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Reminiscing about his days working in the Dawson Drug Store, Senator Dole says his experiences there had a profound impact on his life: "It was there where I got a firm grasp as to how best to get along with all kinds of people. Certainly the people who come in a drug store in an average week represent a real cross-section of Americans."

Senator Dole worked in what was then and still is the epitome of a family drug store. Dawson Drug has been in the Dawson family name since Fred Dawson bought it in 1902. Upon his death, his brother,

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Ernest Dawson Sr., took it over in 1924. He owned and operated it until his death in 1948, when one of the present owners, Chester R. Dawson, a son, bought it. Now the store is owned in partnership by Chester R. Dawson and his cousin Donald A. Dawson, a recent graduate from the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy.

Also working in the store, is another Dawson and a second registered pharmacist, Ernest Dawson Jr., also a son of late Fred Dawson. Dawson Drug is truly a family drug store. The store has had three different locations, in those nearly 70 years, but has been at 808 Main Street in Russell since 1932.

Chester Dawson well recalls the days when Senator Dole, then an active high school student, worked in his father's store. The present co-owner remembers that Bob Dole was "a tremendous help in the store," "with a lot of initiative." "Of course he was busy with athletics," he said, "but those were the days when the store was open 7 days a week, 14 hours a day." "Bob worked between games, at nights and on Saturdays and Sundays."

Dawson Drug Store, Inc. has recently been remodeled, and now employs seven people in addition to the two owners, Chester and Donald Dawson.