

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE BEGINS "BICENTENNIAL MINUTES" FOR 100TH CONGRESS

WASHINGTON -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole (R-KS) today marked the opening of the historic 100th Congress with the first of a series of "Bicentennial Minutes", brief statements on the people, traditions, and events that have a significant place in the history of the United States Senate.

Senator Dole's first statement marks the Republican Leader's move to the aisle desk at the beginning of the 75th Congress:

REPUBLICAN LEADER OCCUPIES FRONT-ROW DESK JANUARY 6, (1937)

AS WE MEET IN THE 100TH CONGRESS, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE SENATE'S BICENTENNIAL, WE ARE MORE THAN EVER MINDFUL OF THE LONG HISTORY OF THIS GREAT INSTITUTION. MOST SENATORS ARE AWARE THAT THEY ARE MEMBERS OF A CONTINUOUS BODY THAT BEGAN IN 1789, THAT THEY SIT IN THIS CHAMBER AT DESKS ONCE USED BY HENRY CLAY, DANIEL WEBSTER AND JOHN C. CALHOUN, THAT THEY OCCUPY OFFICES IN THE SENATE OFFICE BUILDING ONCE USED BY ROBERT TAFT, HARRY TRUMAN, AND EVERETT DIRKSEN, AND THAT THEY SERVE ON COMMITTEES WHICH WERE CREATED IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY. FOR MY PART IN THE SENATE BICENTENNIAL, I PLAN TO DELIVER A SERIES OF REGULAR "BICENTENNIAL MINUTES," SHORT STATEMENTS ON SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE, UNUSUAL CUSTOMS, AND MEMORABLE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE SENATE'S LIFE ON THAT PARTICULAR DAY.

FOR INSTANCE, I AM STANDING AT A DESK THAT TRADITIONALLY IS ASSIGNED TO THE REPUBLICAN FLOOR LEADER. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO THINK THAT REPUBLICAN LEADERS HAVE ALWAYS SAT HERE, BUT THIS TRADITION IS NOW FIFTY YEARS OLD. ON JANUARY 5, 1937, CHARLES McNARY OF OREGON BECAME THE FIRST REPUBLICAN LEADER TO SIT AT THIS DESK. PREVIOUSLY IT WAS OCCUPIED BY A SENIOR REPUBLICAN, ARTHUR CAPPER OF KANSAS, WHILE REPUBLICAN LEADER McNARY SAT SEVERAL SEATS DOWN ON THE FRONT ROW. BY CONTRAST, DEMOCRATIC LEADERS HAD BEEN SEATED FRONT AND CENTER ON THEIR SIDE OF THE AISLE SINCE 1924. OUT OF A SENSE OF SYMMETRY, AND IN RECOGNITION OF THE GROWING ROLE OF THE FLOOR LEADER, THE REPUBLICAN LEADER MOVED TO THE AISLE DESK AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 75TH CONGRESS. SENATOR CAPPER TOOK THE DESK AT HIS SIDE. HERE OVER THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS HAVE SAT EACH OF THE REPUBLICAN FLOOR LEADERS: WALLACE WHITE, KENNETH WHERRY, ROBERT TAFT, WILLIAM KNOWLAND, EVERETT DIRKSEN, HUGH SCOTT, HOWARD BAKER, AND MYSELF. I AM PROUD TO STAND IN THAT COMPANY, AND TO CONTINUE THAT TRADITION.

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