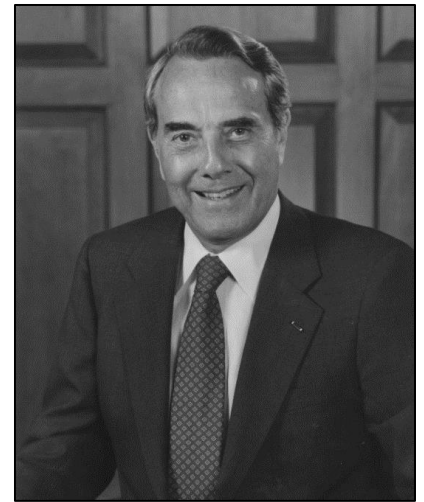


# Senator Robert “Bob” J. Dole

(July 22, 1923 - )

Senator Bob Dole represented Kansas in the U.S. Congress for over 35 years. He served as Republican Leader for 11 years, was the 1996 Republican Nominee for President, and President Ford’s Vice-Presidential running mate in 1976. Dole’s leadership in U.S. politics covers the latter half part of the 20th century from 1960-1996, and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His archives are a key resource across subjects and academic disciplines, including history, government, politics, leadership, democracy, and the American experience.



A handwritten signature of Bob Dole in black ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Bob Dole".

## Early Life

Robert Joseph Dole was born on July 22, 1923, in Russell, Kansas, to Doran and Bina Dole. He grew up during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. He held an assortment of jobs from a young age, including paper boy and soda jerk at the local drug store. Throughout his childhood in Russell, Dole was known as hard-working and witty. Dole attended the University of Kansas from 1941-1942. He played on the KU basketball, football, and track teams, and was a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, where he served as Vice President.

## Military Career

In 1942, following the events of Pearl Harbor, he voluntarily enlisted in the military to serve his country. Second Lieutenant Dole served in the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division of the U.S. Army and was stationed in Italy during World War II. In 1945, while fighting overseas in Italy, German machine gun fire and shrapnel seriously injured Dole on his right shoulder and back. He could not move his arms or legs due to his injuries and laid facing up at the sky on the battlefield for over seven hours before anyone could come and retrieve him. After being rescued to the field hospital, he returned back to the United States where he was confined to his bed in order to heal. Bob Dole was honored with two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Star Medals with V for valor.

## **Recovery and Education**

Bob Dole underwent multiple surgeries with Chicago surgeon Dr. Hampar Kelikian, an Armenian immigrant, to repair his injuries affecting the right side of his body. Dole was hospitalized for over three years after his major injury. The right side of his body never fully recovered from the gunfire, and he lost most of the mobility in his right arm. After recuperating, Dole moved to Arizona in 1948 and attended the University of Arizona for one semester before transferring to Washburn University in Topeka, KS. He graduated with both an undergraduate and law degree in 1952.

## **Political Career**

In 1950, Dole ran as a Republican for the Kansas House of Representatives, winning a two-year term while he was attending Washburn University. After that, in 1952, Dole became the Russell County Attorney in his hometown. In 1960, he was elected to Kansas' sixth seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1968, Dole ran for a recently vacated Senate seat in Kansas. He would be re-elected to this same seat every six years until his retirement in 1996. He also served as Chairman of the Republican National Committee from 1971–1973.

While in the Senate, Dole had many different positions. He was also the ranking Republican on the Agriculture Committee from 1975–1978 and Chairman of the Finance Committee from 1981–1985. Senator Bob Dole served as the Senate Majority Leader from 1985-1987, again from 1994-1996, and Senate Minority Leader from 1987-1994.

In 1976, President Gerald Ford selected Dole to be his running mate in his campaign for the presidency against Democrats Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. However, Carter and Mondale won the election. Later on, in 1980, 1988, and 1996, Dole launched his own campaigns for the presidency. In 1996, Senator Bob Dole received the Republican Party's nomination for President against incumbent President Bill Clinton. Senator Bob Dole officially retired from the Senate before the election to effectively campaign for President. Dole selected Representative Jack Kemp from New York as his running mate. However, their campaign was unsuccessful, but Senator Dole did not retire entirely from public service.

In total, Senator Bob Dole spent over 45 years serving in various public office positions. Until 2018, he was the longest-serving Republican Leader having served ten years, eleven months and nine days.

## **Key Pieces of Legislation**

While in Congress, Senator Bob Dole worked heavily on the passing of numerous pieces of legislation. This included crossing party lines to work with Democrats on various

pieces of legislation such as the Federal Food Stamp Program (1977), which he worked on with Democratic Senator George McGovern. As Senate Finance Committee Chair, Senator Bob Dole also worked across party lines in 1983 to save Social Security with Democratic Senator Patrick Moynihan. President Ronald Reagan signed their bill into law on April 20, 1983.

Due to his experiences with disability after his injury, Senator Bob Dole was an active advocate for the rights of people with disabilities across the country. He was a crucial player in the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President George H.W. Bush.

### **Family Life**

In 1948, Bob Dole married Phyllis Holden, and in 1954, they welcomed a daughter named Robin. However, the two divorced in 1972. In 1975, Senator Bob Dole married Elizabeth Hanford, herself a prominent leader in politics and public service. Senator Elizabeth Dole has served on the Federal Trade Commission, as Secretary of Transportation, Secretary of Labor, President of the American Red Cross, and was the first woman U.S. Senator from North Carolina. Senator Elizabeth Dole also ran for President in 2000. In 1985, the couple adopted a miniature schnauzer dog in celebration of Dole's promotion to Senate Majority Leader; they named him Leader. The Senators currently reside in Washington, D.C. with their three miniature schnauzer dogs.

### **Present Day Life**

Senator Bob Dole was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton. He also served as National Chairman of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. When the memorial was under construction, Dole helped raise more than \$170 million for project. Today, he visits the Memorial every Saturday he can to welcome Honor Flight veterans. Senator Bob Dole continues to work as special counsel for the Alston & Bird Law Firm in Washington, D.C.

In 2012, Senator Elizabeth Dole founded and continues to lead the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, which supports military caregivers and their families. In 2018, Senator Bob Dole received the Congressional Gold Medal for his efforts and committed public service to the nation, and in 2019, Senator Bob Dole received a promotion in his military rank from Captain to Colonel.