

Correspondence between Phog Allen and high schooler Bob Dole, 1938-1939.

Photograph of the 1943 KU basketball team. Bob Dole is third from the left, in the top row.

January 5, 1938.

Mr. Bobby Dole,
Lawson's Drug Store,
Russell, Kansas.

Dear Bobby:

My son, Milton Allen, spoke to me about what a fine boy you are and how industrious and how energetic you seem to be. When he was home Christmas he talked quite a bit about you and how much he liked you.

I told him I was going to write you a letter to encourage you to go on to school, thus amounting to a great deal. Some day you will get your name in Who's Who, I am sure. Just living every day and doing the best you can is the best advice that I can give to any young fellow. Be sure that you pick out some fine man in Russell to copy after, and be as much like him as you possibly can.

Some time I expect to visit Russell, and I am going to have Milton take me around to the drug store where I will buy you and him a coke. He told me that you gave him a coke for your Christmas present to him. He seemed to think a lot of you because he talked about you quite a bit when he was home.

I am sending you a few of our basketball stickers so you will know when we are playing.

With every good wish to you for a very successful New Year, I am

Sincerely yours,

Director of Physical Education,
Varsity Basketball Coach.

FCA:AH

Dear Mr. Allen:

It made me very happy to receive your letter, Milton had told me some time before that I would receive one from you but I thought he was only joking.

Milton "Mit" is in about every evening and he talks a lot about basketball. He told me how he held his little brother Bob down to four points in the Freshman and the undefeated team of 1936 game. Mit is now playing with Shopper's Market they have not lost a game so far this season Mit generally averages from 10 to 15 points a game. Kappelman and Bub Shopper are also playing on the Shopper's Market Quintet. Mit and I are looking forward to your visit to Russell and also the cokes you spoke about in the letter. Mit bets me fifty cents on every Russell High basketball game so far I am the loser but I expect him to be the loser before the season ends.

I suppose you have heard of the new addition to the Allen family. Mit was giving 20 to 1 odds that it would be a boy born with a basketball in his hand. but instead it was a girl. I know he is just as proud as he would have been if

it had been a boy.

I am working at Dawson's Drug Store and have been for the past two years. I work after supper and on Saturdays and Sundays.

Russell's new high school building was completed about a month ago and is now in use. I am a freshman 14 years old and take the following subjects: English, General Science, Latin and Algebra. I like school and I study hard, we had Semester examinations last Thursday and Friday I think I passed all of them but I am not sure because the things I reviewed they did not ask and the things I did not review they did ask. I am saving my money so that some day I may go to college.

I thank a lot for the advice and the K U schedules. I am keeping up with the games. And I hope that you will have a winning season.

Yours for another championship

Bab Dale

January 28, 1938.

Mr. Bob Dale,
Dawson's Drug Store,
Russell, Kansas.

Dear Bob:

I received your very nicely constructed letter full of interesting information, and I took the letter home and read it to the family. Bob Allen, his mother and sister all agreed that you wrote a very fine letter for a boy 14 years of age. We all agreed that you definitely had an apparent purpose in life, and that purpose was to make something out of yourself and to serve the public in the best way possible. We all hope that you will continue to go forward, and from what Mit says we are very sure that you will.

You and Mit must be real buddies. You tell him that the way you wrote I believe he has an office in Dawson's Drug Store every evening. Or is that just the basketball players' rendezvous? Or should I say the oil men's, because Mit is supposed to be an oil man instead of a basketball player.

I tell all my boys before they graduate from college that the fun in basketball playing should be in high school and in college. After that a fellow should give up basketball playing as a main attraction and center all his energies and enthusiasm on his life's work. I know that the boss who is paying a fellow's salary for the main work that he is expected to do would much rather see him put his energies in his bread and butter job.

Yes, Bob, we had heard of the addition to the Allen household, of course. Mit called his mother right away, and of course we were all happy. Not one of us thought anything about it because the arrival was a girl. In fact, we were pleased. You know, that is the old Biblical idea that every man should have a son, and that has been handed down through generation after generation - that a man would be more proud of his son than he would of his daughter because the first son inherited all of his wealth.

You know until a century or so ago they even did that in this country because the English have done it, and many of them are still doing it. The second son in England doesn't amount to much, but the first son is, should we say, the "king pin". So you see we are getting away from the foolish idea. There is nothing like a daughter to really weld and knit the home. Of course, people do not want the girls to be old maids, but the boy soon leaves the parental roof, either going to college or going out to work, while the girl stays at home for a while longer and is more of a homemaker than the boy.

You know, Bob, where that old saying came from - "Bring home the bacon". That was because in primitive life the man went out with his strong right arm and a club and he brought in the food for the family who stayed at home and waited. A fellow still has to have a good strong brain and lots of nerve to bring home the bacon under the scheme of things that we are living under now. So you keep on planning and some day you will bring home the bacon.

We have just finished our examinations and the boys feel pretty groggy. Maybe we can snap out of it by next Wednesday. At any rate, we are hoping so. Nebraska is going to be double tough.

Please do not feel that you have to answer this letter. You are busy, and so am I, and I just wanted to let you know how well pleased we were with your ambitions in life. All of us will stop in and say "hello" to you when we come to Russell.

In closing, just a bit of advice to you and Mit. Keep your money in your pocket and don't bet on the ball games, and buy bacon with it so you won't have to bring home so much bacon. I have always found that it is a bad idea to bet very much money because I heard a fellow say once "If you can't afford to lose, don't play". In all the time I was raising my family I never had enough money free to just toss it out and bet on it. It is a very uncertain way to accumulate much cash.

Don't consider this preaching, but it is just one of those habits that a fellow gets into, that he holds money lightly rather than a very definite exchange for his intelligence and his labor. When a man works as many hours as the ordinary individual does for money then he can feel that he is just betting that many hours of hard work against something he is not sure of. Won't you agree with this? There are so many certain will-nots that a fellow has to talk on to his habits to insure his success. And from all Mit has told me, you are definitely planning on going some where.

With all good wishes, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Director of Physical Education,
Varsity Basketball Coach.

FCA:AH

Russell High School

Russell, Kansas

IRVIN L. LUTHI
PRINCIPAL

November 7, 1939

Mr. F. C. Allen
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Dr. Allen:

I am a student here at Russell high school and since I have written to you perhaps you remember me. I am a member of our basketball team and I am taking a course in speech. In this course we are required to prepare an original oration and I have selected to prepare an eulogy of you and your work.

I would appreciate information you might think valuable concerning your life's work. Also could you send me the names and addresses of some of the better known boys who have participated in athletics under your coaching?

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Respectfully

Bob Dole

Bob Dole

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November 15, 1939.

Mr. Bob Dole,
Russell High School,
Russell, Kansas.

Dear Bob:

Pardon me for not answering your good letter of November 7th sooner. Yes, indeed, I remember you. You are a dandy young chap and I am counting on you to go a long ways in your preparation for life.

I am glad to know that you are a member of the basketball team and that you are interested in doing the best you can in your job of public speaking. I am afraid that you chose a very poor subject to deliver a eulogy on, but anyhow we will help you all we can.

Some of the boys that I have had who graduated here are: John Bunn, who came from Humboldt, Kansas, a member of the football and basketball teams, assistant varsity coach here, and later varsity basketball coach at Stanford University. He is now dean of men there.. Arthur W. "Dutch" Lonborg, who came from Horton, Kansas, also played football and basketball, and is now head coach of basketball at Northwestern University and assistant to Lynn Waldorf in football at Northwestern. Forrest C. "Frosty" Cox, came from Newton, and was captain and forward on the basketball team. He is now head basketball coach at Colorado University.

Adolph Rupp, of Halstead, Kansas, played on my 1923 championship basketball team, and he is now head basketball coach at the University of Kentucky. Paul Endacott, of Lawrence, was captain of the 1923 ever-victorious basketball team, and is now executive vice president of the Phillips Petroleum Company at Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Waldo Bowman, of Lawrence, is now associate editor of the Engineering News Record for McGraw-Hill Company, New York, and he also played on the 1923 team.

Dr. Paul Harrington, of Kansas City, Kansas, played on three championship teams, graduated from the University of Kansas Medical School, and is now practicing in Birmingham, Alabama. Tusten "Tus" Ackerman, a Lawrence boy, played on three championship teams, and is now statistician and actuarist for the Equitable Life of New York. He is located in Chicago and has a wonderful job.

I can name hundreds of other boys who have proven as highly successful as these boys. My main aim in coaching a basketball team is to develop in them a high quality of initiative, resourcefulness, confidence, aggressiveness and determination to

make the most out of the activity that they are indulging in. They must train, and learn to say no a thousand times to temptation before they can say yes once to victory. This is my 23rd year as coach of the Kansas varsity basketball teams. I am sending you a biographical sketch from "Who's Who in American Sports", so that you can take what you want out of it. I trust this will give you the desired information.

With best wishes for your continued success, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Director of Physical Education and Recreation,
Varsity Basketball Coach.

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