

August 22, 2005

Contact: Bill Lacy, Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, (785) 864-4900.

## **Nobel Peace Prize winner Lech Walesa to receive Dole Leadership Prize at KU**

LAWRENCE -- Nobel Peace Prize winner and first democratically elected president of Poland Lech Walesa will receive the Dole Leadership Prize on Thursday, Sept. 22 at the University of Kansas, the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics announced today.



“Along with Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, Lech Walesa is responsible for the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Iron Curtain,” said Dole Institute Director Bill Lacy. “It is an honor to welcome him to the University of Kansas to accept the Dole Leadership Prize.”

“President Walesa’s story illustrates how one person can change the direction of history,” Lacy said. “He began as a dockyard worker and responded to government abuse by organizing fellow workers against the Communist government under the Solidarity banner.”

Walesa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 though he did not attend the ceremony in Norway for fear the Polish government would not let him return home. In 1990, Walesa won the nation’s first direct presidential election in a landslide. During his presidency, Poland had its first free parliamentary elections in 1991 and the country changed completely from Soviet-controlled Communist country with a state-run economy to an independent democracy with a fast-growing free-market economy.

Prior to his election as president, Walesa visited Senate Majority Leader Dole in 1989 seeking assistance for the new Polish government. At a luncheon before Walesa’s address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress, Dole said “Poland is getting another chance – another chance at freedom...we salute you, Mr. Walesa, for all you have done.”

Walesa’s lecture, parts of which will be in Polish and translated, and the award presentation will take place at 8 p.m. in the Lied Center Tickets are free and available beginning today either by visiting the Lied Center box office or calling (785) 864-2787. The box office is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays; also two hours prior to Lied Series performances and one hour prior to other performances. The Student Union Activities office in the Kansas Union and the Murphy Hall ticket office will also issue tickets.

Walesa is the third recipient of the Dole Leadership Prize. Former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was honored in 2003 and former Democratic presidential nominee and Sen. George McGovern was honored last year.

The Dole Institute, established at KU in 1997 to honor the former Senate majority leader and 1996 Republican presidential nominee, is designed to encourage student participation and citizen involvement in public service. The institute houses Dole's papers, one of the largest archives associated with a congressional leader. It also features a 3,300-square-foot public forum, a 120-seat seminar room/media center, KU's first satellite uplink and extensive exhibits, including Dole's World War II uniform, a 29-by-12-foot stained-glass American flag, and two 10-foot columns from the World Trade Center.

- The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at KU has been teaching Polish at all levels for over thirty years and is one of only a handful of departments in the U.S. that offer a PhD degree in Polish language and literature