

Ex-Reagan White House, Dole political adviser to lead KU's Dole Institute

LAWRENCE -- A former White House political director for President Ronald Reagan who also was Sen. Bob Dole's political strategist for 10 years will head the Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas.

KU Chancellor Robert E. Hemenway today named national political strategist William B. Lacy as the institute's director, succeeding Richard Norton Smith, who departed last year to oversee the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

"Bill Lacy has a wealth of experience in American politics and a clear vision of the possibilities for the Dole Institute," Hemenway said.

Lacy's appointment is effective Sept. 7. Stephen McAllister, who has served as the interim institute director for 10 months, will return full time to his position as dean of the KU School of Law.

Dole applauded Lacy's appointment.

"Bill is the right person at the right time to lead the Dole Institute of Politics and continue to make it the premier forum for public discourse it was intended to be," Dole said. "He has extensive experience in the real-world side of politics. He will bring that knowledge and his ability to make it real to the advantage of the students at KU, the state of Kansas, and the rest of the country."

Lacy, 50, has known Dole for 18 years and worked with him on two presidential campaigns and one Senate campaign. He served in senior roles in the five presidential campaigns from 1980 to 1996, including as GOP national political director in 1984 and California senior consultant for then Vice President George H.W. Bush's 1988 presidential campaign, the last time a Republican carried California.

Lacy served in the White House Political Office in 1982-83 and was director during 1985-86. As a private consultant he was principal strategist for a number of campaigns including Fred Thompson's 1994 record-setting election to the Senate that achieved the highest vote total of any Republican in Tennessee history.

"I am so delighted to have an opportunity to work with Sen. Dole again and to serve the University of Kansas," Lacy said. "This will be a labor of love and not a job to me. It is an opportunity I cannot turn down."

In 1991, Lacy was a resident fellow at the Institute of Politics for the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

"The months I spent in Cambridge were outstanding. The interaction with students, faculty and the community was incredibly fulfilling," Lacy said. "I look forward to a similar opportunity at the Dole Institute."

Lacy said he would bring a high level of activity to the institute and place a significant emphasis on fund-raising needs.

He praised the institute's outreach to veterans and other Kansans and its emphasis on public service, high-profile speakers and bipartisan programming. He plans an aggressive outreach effort targeted to get students more involved in the institute's activities.

"Chancellor Hemenway, Sen. Dole and former Director Richard Norton Smith have laid an impressive foundation," Lacy said. "I want to build onto that new programming, aggressive outreach to students, and solid fund-raising as I carry forward Sen. Dole's vision."

Lacy resigned as chief campaign strategist for Dole's 1996 presidential campaign shortly after Dole lost the New Hampshire and Delaware primaries. He moved to Olathe, where he runs a family business, the [Sophie Mae Candy Company](#).

The Dole Institute, established at KU in 1997 to honor the former Kansas senator and KU alumnus, is designed to foster new thinking on major policy issues and to encourage student participation and citizen involvement in public service.

The institute houses Dole's Congressional and personal papers. Among its many distinctive exhibits is a 29-by -2 foot stained glass American flag, believed to be the largest in stained glass.

BIOGRAPHY: William B. Lacy

Education: Vanderbilt University graduate, 1975, in political science and history
Political career: Worked for national Republican Congressional Committee, four campaigns, and a direct mail fund-raising company, 1975-1982; Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director, Office of Political Affairs, The White House, 1982-83;

Senior account executive for President Reagan's polling firm, Decision Making Information, 1983; Political Director of the Republican National Committee, 1984-85;

Deputy Assistant to the President and Director, Office of Political Affairs, The White House, 1985-86; deputy director for Campaign America, 1986-87; vice chairman for strategy and planning of the Dole for President Committee, 1987-88;

Fellow, Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1991; President, The Lacy Company, a political consultation and strategy firm, 1988-1996.

