

"I am pleased to know that the League of Wives exhibit is traveling to the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, after successful runs at the Dole Institute of Politics at KU and the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

This powerful exhibit simply would not be possible without the generosity and vision of Harlan and Alice Ann Ochs of Colorado Springs, dear friends of mine for many decades. I thank them for their tremendous support in making this endeavor a reality, particularly in light of the key role of Harlan's late brother Larry in furthering the cause of the League of Wives.

In the midst of the turbulent years of the Vietnam era, the League was a remarkable and fearless group of women with a fundamental and very important purpose – demanding action by the U.S. government and raising awareness among the American people about their prisoner-of-war and missing-in-action husbands, ultimately seeking the return of, and accounting for, these brave men -- one of whom, POW Paul Galanti, is in attendance today. Having worked with these determined wives while I was in Congress, I know first-hand that their sincerity was real, and their struggles were deeply personal. I am proud to have been associated with them during a very tense and uncertain period in American history when their plight was often overlooked.

To me, these wives really embodied the American spirit – they truly believed in their cause, they remained undaunted by the uphill battle they faced, and most importantly, they never gave up hope. They became international leaders in diplomacy, taking their cause from their own living rooms to the world stage. They were mavericks of their era, and I am pleased that their story is being shared so effectively through this exhibit.

I also want to recognize several other hard-working, determined women who have brought this League of Wives exhibit to life. Curator and author Heath Hardage Lee and Senior Archivist and Assistant Director of the Dole Institute of Politics Audrey Coleman. These two women have put tremendous effort into this project from its inception. Special thanks also to Sheri Hamilton of the Dole Institute, who took the initiative to develop this extraordinary opportunity for Harlan and Alice Ann. I want to also thank Andy Talkov, Vice President of the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, and his team for doing such a wonderful job of developing their version of this exhibit.

Finally, I believe it's important to acknowledge the real heroes of this project – those who WERE the League of Wives: the late Sybil Stockdale, founder of the National League of Families, the late Phyllis Galanti, the late Jane Denton, and several wives here today -- Andrea Rander and Marty Halyburton. Today we honor them all -- women of firm resolve who never, never gave up. It is my hope that younger generations of Americans will learn from this exhibit – and from Heath's inspiring book – that through courage, perseverance, and a shared belief in the value of each human life, great things can be accomplished.

Thank you to everyone gathered today, and I hope you enjoy the discussion and exhibit."

-- Bob Dole