

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **White Glove Tour of the Dole Archive Saturday, July 26, 2008 11:00 a.m.**

*A 40-minute behind-the-scenes tour into the environmentally-controlled archive and the processing rooms. For information and reservations call 785-864-1420.*

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*The Dole Institute of Politics is dedicated to promoting public service, civic engagement and politics.*

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To join our email list to receive updates about upcoming events, email us at [doleinstitute@ku.edu](mailto:doleinstitute@ku.edu).

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*All events are free and open to the public.*

*Thank you for your continued support.*



*The Dole Institute of Politics  
is pleased to present*

## **Words to the Wise from Harry S. Truman**



*with Niel Johnson*

*Historian and historical interpreter*

7:30 p.m.  
Wednesday, July 16, 2008  
Dole Institute of Politics



About....

## *Niel Johnson*

Niel Johnson was born in Galesburg, Illinois in 1931 and grew up on a farm in the 1930s. In 1949, he graduated from Moline High School, and in 1953 he received a bachelor's degree from Augustana College in Rock Island, IL. Between 1954 and 1963, he taught in a public school and served as historian of the Army Weapons Command, with headquarters at the Rock Island Arsenal. In 1971, Johnson received a Ph.D. in history from the University of Iowa in Iowa City. From 1967 to 1976, he taught college courses at Augustana College (IL), Dana College (NE) and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

In 1977, Johnson began work as an archivist and oral historian at the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, and retired from that position in 1992.

Since April 1993, Niel Johnson has been an active Harry S. Truman impersonator. This involves dressing in the same manner as Harry Truman and relating the highlights of his life and career as the former U.S. President. In 1993, he portrayed Truman at a brunch in Independence for the award-winning author David McCullough. In 1994, he participated in a re-enactment of the 1944 Democratic Convention in Chicago, which also involved a grandson of Harry Truman and sons of the chairman of the Democratic National Committee and the mayor of Chicago in 1944. A granddaughter of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt attended a reception that evening at the Blackstone Hotel. In 1995, Johnson portrayed Truman at an international peace forum of the Rotary Club in Independence, Missouri.

In 1996, he appeared as Truman at the commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People to People program and at a banquet that preceded the christening of the aircraft carrier *USS Harry S. Truman* at the Newport News shipyard in Virginia. Also that year, he impersonated Truman in the Rose Festival Starlight parade in Portland, OR, and in a Chautauqua in the suburb of Gladstone.

In 1997, Johnson's performances included an impersonation of Harry S. Truman in Hot Springs at the convention of the Arkansas Bar Association; in Rock Island, IL for the Rock Island Women's Club; in Aledo, IL, at a meeting of the Mercer County Historical Society; and, in Dayton, OH, at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Museum to re-enact President Truman's signing of the National Security Act of 1947 that established the United States Air Force as a separate department within the new Defense Department. In 1998, he portrayed Truman for the Cardozo Society of Kansas City, the Order of DeMolay, and for the Navy in ceremonies following the commissioning of the aircraft carrier, *USS Harry S. Truman*.

In January 1999, it was Johnson's privilege to portray President Truman in a commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Inaugural Address in 1949.

Fifty to sixty times a year, Niel Johnson presents programs for service organizations, veterans, church, school and social groups. Niel Johnson is the author of *Power, Money and Women: Words to the Wise From Harry S. Truman*.