

ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE

Cabinet members are customarily called either “secretaries” or “ministers:” etymologically, those who are entrusted with secrets or those who serve. Virtually the entire career of Elizabeth Hanford Dole has been spent in public service; the secret she has kept most closely is how she has managed to accomplish so much of it in so few years.

Early attracted by Northern institutions, she went from her native Salisbury to Duke University, where she graduated with honors in political science and was president of the student body. After taking an M.A. in Education at Harvard she decided on a legal career, and secured a J.D. degree here in 1965. The subsequent years have all been spent in Washington. Her first job was as a staff assistant in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, specializing in the educational problems of the handicapped. Next, she spent three years as associate director and then director of the President’s Commission for Consumer Interests and two as deputy director of the White House Office of Consumer Affairs; and finally for nearly seven years she was one of the five commissioners of the Federal Trade Commission. After leaving government service briefly to act as chairman of Voters for Reagan-Bush in 1980, she became assistant to the president for public liaison at the White House, and early in 1983, secretary of transportation—the first woman named to a Reagan administration cabinet post. Not unmindful of home ties, she has been a member of the North Carolina Consumer Council and, since 1978, a trustee of Duke University.

Two decades in Washington, much of the time at the highest governmental and political levels, have not dimmed either her zeal for or effectiveness in public service: a zeal, an effectiveness, indeed an achievement of which we recognize with this degree of Doctor of Laws.

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