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Feb. 6, 2006

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Presidential campaign managers for Kerry, Elizabeth Dole to speak at institute Feb. 22

LAWRENCE — The presidential campaign managers for Sens. John Kerry and Elizabeth Dole will discuss how America will elect its first female commander-in-chief to close the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics' 2006 Presidential Lecture Series on "The First Woman President," the institute announced today.

Kerry campaign manager Mary Beth Cahill, who is acting executive director of the Emily's List organization, and Tom Daffron, who led Elizabeth Dole's brief campaign in 1999 and is chief of staff to Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, will present a panel discussion, "The Path to the Presidency: How She Will Win," at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22, at the institute on the University of Kansas campus.

"This program fulfills an important role in our series about the first woman president," said Jonathan Earle, associate professor of history and the institute's associate director for programming. "We have two national political figures with expertise on high-profile women's campaigns talking about the nuts and bolts of how this will happen — not if it will happen or when."

The lecture series kicks off at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, with a program featuring former Democratic presidential candidate Carol Moseley-Braun. The series also features journalist and author Eleanor Clift at 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 12; national pollsters Celinda Lake and Kellyanne Conway at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14; and former governors Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., and Jane Swift, R- Mass., at 7.30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28. Women's political activist Barbara Lee will moderate the governors' discussion. All the lectures, which are free and open to the public, will be at the institute. No reservation or ticket is required.

An expert on women and politics, Cahill was chief of staff for Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., before signing on to run Kerry's campaign in November 2003. She was an assistant to the president and director of public liaison in Bill Clinton's White House and spent five years as executive director of Emily's List, a political organization that trains women from around the world on how to run for political office and contributes funds to pro-choice Democratic women candidates.

Daffron became national campaign manager for Dole's presidential campaign in 1999 when national polling suggested Dole, then the president of American Red Cross and a former presidential cabinet member, would be a competitive candidate against the Democratic nominee, Vice President Al Gore. However, a lack of adequate funding forced her to abandon the primary campaign after eight months. Dole was elected senator from North Carolina in 2002. Daffron has also worked for Maine Sens. Susan Collins and William Cohen and Tennessee Sen. Fred Thompson, all Republicans.