

It has been my pleasure to know Major Herbert Clayton "Sparky" Bollinger, Jr, USMC(Ret) both professionally and as a friend for over 20 years. It is my distinct honor to endorse him for Mayor of Ridgetop, Tennessee. Throughout my life as a United States Marine Officer and Airline Pilot I have rarely come across an individual as well rounded and suited to leadership as he is. During 27 years in uniform, surrounded by the finest young men and women our country has to offer, rarely did I encounter a peer, subordinate or leader that embodied the Marine Officers' motto of Ductus Exemplo (Leadership by Example) as well and fully as Clayton.

In the Marine Light Attack Helicopter community Clayton was not only technically and tactically a master of his weapon system, the AH-1W Super Cobra, he was a teacher and mentor to the junior aviators in the Squadron. As a new aviator in the Fleet Marine Forces, I knew that I could approach him with a question and he would take the time to not only give me the answer but teach me why it was. His time, caring and instruction were instrumental to building the warriors that provided close air support to Marines and Soldiers in contact with the enemy for the next decade.

When I served with a Marine Tank Battalion as the Forward Air Controller it was comforting to hear Clayton's distinct Tennessee twang on the radio. I knew that with him leading the section of Attack Helicopters I could expect ordnance on time, on target every time. That kind of reliability is what keeps American Infantrymen alive and brings them home safely.

Perhaps the greatest example of Clayton's leadership excellence was his appointment to the Marine Officer Basic School. It is a highly competitive race to be one of the few aviators assigned to that Infantry centric course. Excelling in the aircraft, with small arms and hand to hand combat as well his above average grasp of strategic, doctrinal thinking and military history uniquely positioned him to be the natural choice to represent our community to every new Marine Officer assessed into the Corps during a time of war.

As Ridgetop looks towards the future and the dynamic unknowns on the horizon, I can tell you from decades of experience that Clayton Bollinger is the leader you want. He is a proven manager and decision maker who understands both deliberate long-term planning as well as immediate action crisis response. I can think of no better man to take the reigns and blaze a path into the future with safety, growth and prosperity than Major Herbert Clayton "Sparky" Bollinger, Jr, USMC(Ret). He is the right man for the job, at the right time with the right experience.



Peter O Reitmeyer  
LtCol USMC(Ret)