

## COMMENTARY

# Are there political professionals here?

**M**.D., Ph.D, M.O.U.S.E. or the mercury at 103°; they're all just degrees and not one of them defines professionalism. Ivy League or bush league, being a "pro" is neither guaranteed by letters on parchment, the pedigree of its pulp or hanging chads.

After a nasty winter, spring sprung taking my wallet greenery with it as the ol' homestead got a brand new coat and a heaping helping of botanical beauties. Simultaneously, other issues gave me occasion to work with and watch the shakers and movers in our little burgh. In terms of professionalism, the blue collar boys laboring over my little cottage would have left many of the "pro's" green with envy.

Falling prey to rank amateurs is like trading in counterfeit currency. Treasury agents spend enormous time using deductive reasoning to ferret out a fraud by studying what it is not. Similarly then, let's take a close look at professionalism.

Some equate it with intellectualism. However, those of meek and humble minds are often consummate professionals in their honest endeavors and transparent forthright dealings and motives. Some say intensive training, certification and expertise are singular discriminators, yet all can certify the professionalism of those schooled by nature and nurture in how to treat each other rightly, wisely and humbly.



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Professionals are founts of enormous knowledge with a theoretical base, but so are multi-tasking moms and over-worked retail folks who still seem to find time to remember our name, our needs and when they were in our shoes. Furthermore, Boys and Girls Scouts, patriots in uniform, healers in white coats or collars and a score of other avo-

cations have a code of ethics, competency requirements, and a dedication to respect the best interests of clients and a willingness to be subjected to tests of competency.

**S**arcastically, some say certain jobs are incapable of harboring professionals. Certainly, politics comes to mind. Here's a short list to ask of those who would lead us.

Can they master difficult theoretical knowledge, practically apply it and solve complex problems, like crime? Can they create knowledge as well as possess it? Are they committed to learning, bridge-building and camaraderie? Is their favorite exercise looking over their shoulder or patting themselves on the back rather than forging ahead? When they shake hands, are they really taking your pulse, always polling and pandering another opportunity for self-promotion? Do they condescendingly wag their tongue, wiggle their editorial pen or point fingers rather than move hearts, author communal history and exhort the accomplishments of colleagues. Do they foster a culture

of fear?

Do they know that maturity and manners matter and do they give more than they get? Do they understand it is about how you do your job, not the job you do? Do they behave, in private, in a manner worthy of being the person their dog thinks they are?

**P**rofessionals know when it is time to step aside for the greater good and as a singular test of character; professionals confess their public sins publicly and make amends. Self-absorption is for sea sponges, not the professional.

Professionals do not harangue and embarrass from the dais or the printed page. They neither curry media favor nor assemble troikas to control their community's future. Professionals never pose as heroes nor harbor a corral of white steeds ready to race to the rescue or get out of Dodge at the first sign of trouble.

Considering that pre-election posturing and auditions to ascend the throne have begun, I think we had best answer our question. Yes, in the noblest sense, there are professional politicians. They have special degrees written on the finest fabric of human character, a triple Ph.D-politician in perpetual pursuit of humane development. The question is: can we confer such honors in our corner of the world?

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