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Brotherly Love

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University of Dayton law professor Tom Hagel believes his brother, Chuck, has exactly the right qualities to be the next U.S. Secretary of Defense.

"He will bring a perspective that is unusual and too often missing. He will be able to approach the job from the viewpoint of enlisted soldiers, and we know most of the people he will oversee are enlisted," Tom Hagel said. "As a former enlisted person, I'd feel more comfortable having a secretary of defense who knows what I'd be facing."

Chuck Hagel would be the fifth defense secretary to have enlisted in the military and first since William Perry, who served under President Bill Clinton from 1994 to 1997.

In addition to his military service, Tom feels Chuck's 12 years in the Senate will serve him well as secretary of defense.

"He has an inside understanding of the budget process. The secretary of defense has to go before Congress to testify on the defense budget. He knows the process and he has relationships with the people," Tom Hagel said.

Besides professional experience, Chuck has the personality traits to succeed in this high-level position, according to Tom.

"He has an absolute commitment to what he engages in. It isn't a job, it's a mission," Tom said. "He places an extremely high value on loyalty. He will speak his mind, but he wouldn't back-door anyone, especially the president."

Tom said he talked to his brother during Thanksgiving about some of the landmines that could pop up during the process, but hasn't offered his big brother any advice. He says he will be there for him if he wants to talk.

"This isn't his first rodeo," Tom said.

The Hagels served together during the Vietnam War. A documentary chronicling their service became part of the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project of the American Folklife Center in 2011. The piece was among the first acquisitions of the Vietnam Veterans Collections Campaign.

Tom Hagel came to the University of Dayton School of Law in 1982. He also serves as an acting judge for the Dayton municipal court and is a commissioner on the Montgomery County Veterans’ Service Commission representing Disabled American Veterans. Tom also works with the American Bar Association committee to train trial advocates. A popular faculty member, Tom has received the University of Dayton School of Law Alumni Association President's Award and has been voted professor of the year by the students.

For interview requests for Tom Hagel, contact Shawn Robinson at 937-229-3391.