

Alex Bealer



Alex Bealer received his Bachelors Degree in Education with a history major from Texas State University in 1959. After returning from the Army he worked in public welfare before entering Our Lady of the Lake University School of Social Work in San Antonio. His second year field placement was in the Mental Hygiene clinic of the VA Outpatient Clinic in San Antonio. After graduation in 1963 he began his VA career as a clinical social worker at the VA in Kerrville, TX. He then worked at Temple TX and the Washington DC VA Medical center before being accepted in the Social Work Administrative Leadership Training program. His first Chief's job was at the Domiciliary in White City, OR in 1971. He transferred to Fort Howard, Togus, and then the VA Outpatient Clinic, San Antonio. In 1976 he became the Chief of Social Work at the Audie Murphy Memorial Veteran's Hospital where he remained until his retirement in 1999.

During his VA career, Alex maintained a keen interest in education and history. One of the lasting marks Alex made in VA Social Work was his years as a SWALT Preceptor, several as the Senior Preceptor. During those years he had 24 trainees many of whom became Chiefs and or leaders in the VA. One trainee became a Network Director. Also several hundred students had internships at Audie Murphy during his years there. Not surprisingly Interns, new staff and SWALT trainees received an in depth orientation to the VA mission, history, and what it means to serve veterans. In 1997, Alex was named the Department of Veterans Affairs National Social Worker of the year.

In 1994, Alex surprised everyone when he changed his name for historic family reasons from H.R. Alexsanian to Alex Bealer and married Gretchen Buran, who was Chief of Social Work service in Minneapolis.

Alex was known as an honorable and ethical chief who expected the same behavior from others. His love and respect for veterans could be seen in his work and the work of his staff. He credits any success to prudent leaders above him and his skilled staff. Alex continues to volunteer every Wednesday with the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery Honor Guard and is a member of the Professional Tour guide Association of San Antonio. He retired from the Army Reserve in 1997 with the rank of Colonel.