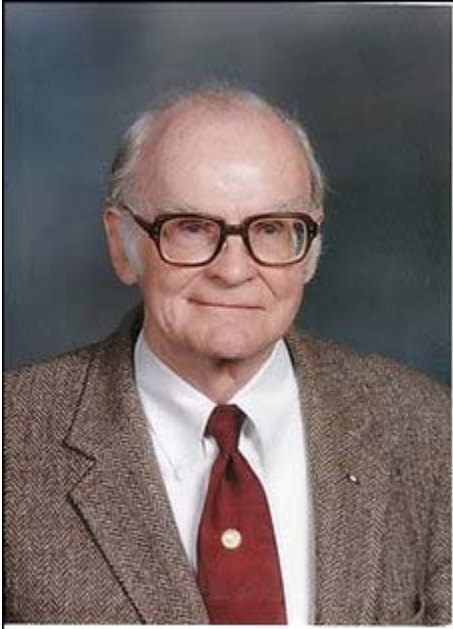


**STEWART L. BAKER, 88**

## **Psychiatrist Directed Army, VA Programs for Substance Abuse**



Dr. Baker supported programs to help returning prisoners of war and soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress. (Family Photo)

By [Patricia Sullivan](#)

Washington Post Staff Writer

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Stewart L. Baker, 88, a psychiatrist who developed comprehensive drug abuse and alcoholism treatment programs for the Army in 1971 and later directed similar programs for the Veterans Administration, died Jan. 13 at the Riderwood Village retirement community in Silver Spring after a stroke.

Responding to congressional and presidential concern about drug abuse among soldiers during the Vietnam War, Dr. Baker created the first Army program of education, prevention and treatment for drug abuse and a standardized medical evaluation.

His decentralized approach to rehabilitation served as a model for other services, his superiors said in an award nomination letter.

He started the first military-sponsored preschool nursery for severely disabled children in 1969, taking advantage of an unused wing at the U.S. Army hospital in Frankfurt, Germany. In 1971, he organized the first conference sponsored by the military to address the social ramifications of the all-volunteer Army.

He strongly advocated confidentiality for military medical records, along with patients' rights. Dr. Baker also supported programs to help returning prisoners of war and their families, families

of those missing in action and soldiers suffering from what is now called post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as assistance for homeless people and abused children.

"Everyone has potentials that you never notice," he told his family a year ago. "We need to make room for them."

Dr. Baker spent much of his career as chief of psychiatry and neurology at Army hospitals worldwide. He retired at the rank of colonel in 1974 and was the Army Department's chief of psychiatry and neurology.

Five days after retiring, he resumed work at the Veterans Administration, serving as chief of alcohol and drug dependence treatment and associate director of mental health and behavioral sciences. Dr. Baker directed the VA's 102 alcoholism programs and its 53 drug abuse programs, and advocated for recognizing those addictions as diseases. He retired a second time in 1987.

At the start of the Persian Gulf War in 1990, Dr. Baker was asked to return to active duty and was reassigned to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he worked for five months until illness forced him to retire a final time.

A native Washingtonian, Dr. Baker graduated from the old Central High School and the University of Maryland. He received a medical degree in 1945 from George Washington University's medical school.

He completed specialized training in psychiatry at the University of Vienna and Walter Reed, in child psychiatry at Children's Hospital in the District, and in group process at the Tavistock Training Institute in Mount Holyoke, Mass., and the Brookings Institution in Aspen, Colo.

Diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer's disease in 2000, Dr. Baker continued to work as long as possible, teaching ethics to medical students at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, a job he held until four years ago.

Dr. Baker received numerous awards, including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal and three awards of the Army Commendation Medal. He also received the VA's Distinguished Career Award in 1987 and was honored by the American Psychiatric Association as a Distinguished Life Fellow in 2003.

He was a member of the board at Calvary Baptist Church in Washington.

A daughter, Margaret Baker, died in 1988.

Survivors include his wife of 62 years, Lois C. Baker of Silver Spring; three children, Charlotte Baker-Shenk of Sharpsburg, Md., Elizabeth Schmucker of Washington and John Baker of Germantown; and 10 grandchildren.