

Barbara J. Fretwell



Barbara holds a Bachelor's Degree in secondary education and sociology from Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. and a Master's Degree in clinical social work from Smith College, Northampton, Mass. She began her VA career in Ann Arbor, Michigan as a clinical social worker. She moved to Kansas City, Missouri as a clinical social worker and then Supervisor. After completing the Social Work Leadership Training (SWALT) Program, she became the Chief of Social Work Service, Wichita Kansas VAMC.

Before her retirement in 2000, Barbara was part of the original leadership team that opened the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. She helped recruit the 1500 personnel from throughout the country to support this newly organized, highly technical, and paperless medical center. She developed and was the Director of the Social Work and Chaplain Department. She organized a leadership team to create the Customer Relations Program for the Medical Center. The Program became operational when she assumed the leadership and performance improvement oversight and, in addition to her other duties, became the Medical Center Customer Relations Coordinator.

Throughout her career, Barbara served on several national social work committees and was the first Chair of the Social Work Public Relations Committee. She also served as a SWALT Preceptor and faculty for the Allied Clinical Health program. It was during this time she became interested in developing and facilitating human relations, administrative and leadership training programs. After retiring from the VA she began her own business and is presently President of CERES Innovations, Inc., a company dedicated to facilitating growth in individual and groups, using empowerment strategies to cultivate personal and interpersonal leadership effectiveness skills.

Barbara is very active in her community serving on several Boards and Partnerships. She is a qualified Myers-Brigs Type Indicator facilitator registered with the Center for Applications of Psychological Type (C.A.P.T.) and is a certified Franklin-Covey facilitator.

Barbara has not lost touch with her VA roots. She has presented workshops on leadership development for EES and most recently was the keynote speaker at the EPII Social Work Preconference. She has also recently become the Webmaster for the Association of VA Social Workers (AVASW) and is responsible for their wonderfully creative home page.

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that AVASW inducts Barbara J Fretwell, MSW, ACSW into the VA Social Work Hall of Fame.