



William F. Tuerk

Department of Veterans Affairs

Washington, D.C

William F. Tuerk was nominated by President George W. Bush to serve as Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on July 29, 2005. He was confirmed by the Senate on October 28, 2005.

As Under Secretary, Mr. Tuerk directs the National Cemetery Administration, a system of 125 national cemeteries that provides dignified burial services for military veterans and eligible family members. He is responsible for operating existing national cemeteries and for maintaining them as national shrines, and for land acquisition, design and construction, and other activities relating to the establishment of new national cemeteries. Mr. Tuerk also oversees other memorial programs for veterans, including the provision of headstones, markers and Presidential Memorial Certificates to honor the service of deceased veterans, and for administering federal grants to help states establish state veterans' cemeteries.

Prior to his nomination, Mr. Tuerk served on the staff of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. From 1991 to 2005, he held a variety of positions on the committee, including General Counsel, Chief Counsel and Staff Director and was responsible to the committee's Chairman and members for managing a full range of legal, legislative and policy activities.

Before joining the Senate, Mr. Tuerk served on the legal staff of the VA Office of General Counsel. In that position, he was responsible for, among other things, national VA policies on informed consent, withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining medical therapies, and protecting human research subjects. He also served as consulting counsel to the Solicitor General of the United States in the landmark Supreme Court case on patient self-determination rights, *Cruzan v. Harman*.

Before entering the public sector in 1985, Mr. Tuerk was an equity partner at a Washington, D.C., law firm. His private legal practice focused on petroleum regulation, environmental law and aviation law.

Mr. Tuerk is a member of the Ethics Committee at INOVA Fairfax Hospital and is the author of several articles on health care policy and bioethics issues. He received his law degree from George Washington University in 1978, and his bachelor's degree in government from the University of Notre Dame in 1971. An Army veteran, Mr. Tuerk served as a military policeman from 1971 to 1973.

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**Under Secretary for
Memorial Affairs**