



Texas Department of Public Safety

Information for the News Media

Media Relations Office

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Texas Ranger Chief Retires

Texas Ranger Chief Antonio “Tony” Leal announced his retirement effective March 31. Leal was the youngest Ranger and first Hispanic to hold the Chief’s position. During his tenure, Leal was charged with overseeing the state's most complex and major investigations, Border Security Operations, Public Corruption cases and Special Tactical resources, creating the Department’s first full-time SWAT team.

Leal retires after 27 years of dedicated service to accept a job in the private sector, and he and his family look forward to returning to their home, family and friends in Houston.

The Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, Steven C. McCraw, said, “Chief Leal was instrumental in bringing the highest degree of professionalism and leadership to the Ranger Division and he will be sorely missed by all members of the Department.”

Governor Rick Perry congratulated Chief Leal on his distinguished career: “The Texas Rangers are a distinguished law enforcement group that have played an instrumental role in Texas’ history. Under Tony’s leadership, the Rangers have continued their vital duties and legendary service to the people of Texas, making public safety their top priority, defending our border and protecting our communities.”

Chief Leal, 47, became a Highway Patrol trooper in 1984, stationed in Fort Bend County. While there, he received many letters and awards of recognition, led his area in criminal apprehensions and was awarded the Houston Area 100 Club Officer of the Year Award. He promoted to Highway Patrol Sergeant in 1991 and served in San Antonio.

Leal was promoted to Texas Ranger in 1994 with Company A in Houston, and then Company D in San Antonio. During his time as a Ranger, Leal led many multi-agency task forces and major investigations that included serial killers, murder investigations and public corruption cases.

In 2000, Leal was named one of the members of the new Unsolved Crimes Investigation Unit and successfully solved the unit's first murder, involving a teenage girl whose case had gone cold after 11 years. In 2002, Leal promoted to lieutenant and then commander of the Ranger's Cold Case Squad. In 2005, Leal promoted to Company Commander in Houston. In 2008, he promoted to the highest rank of the Rangers, Chief.

Leal serves as a Director of the prestigious Texas Lyceum, Board Member of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Board Member of the Texas Ranger Foundation and is a member of many professional associations.

Assistant Ranger Chief Hank Whitman has been appointed as the interim Chief of the Texas Rangers.

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