**M. Leroy “Shafe” Shafer**Biography

Leroy “Shafe” Shafer, Chief Operating Officer retired, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (HLSR), began his employment with HLSR in 1973 as assistant manager for marketing and public relations and served in six different leadership positions before being named COO Emeritus after his retirement in 2014.

He is a fair, festival and entertainment industries consultant and he holds leadership positions on civic boards, improvement districts and redevelopment authorities in the Houston area. He serves on task forces, advisory committees and advancement boards at Texas A&M University and the Texas A&M University Press.

Shafe was instrumental in developing HLSR into an internationally recognized entertainment, sports and educational extravaganza. With an annual attendance of 2.5 million spectators, HLSR is the largest fair, event or festival in North America. It has committed more than $475 million to the youth of Texas through scholarships, assistantships, and junior livestock show awards and premiums. This year the Show will award 644 four-year scholarships totaling over $14 million and its total educational commitment to Texas youth in 2019 will exceed $27 million.

He excelled at keeping the Show on the cutting edge of market and demographic research, state of the art presentation technology and customer satisfaction. He introduced the first video sports replay system in North America in 1981 (a light valve projection system in the Astrodome) and the first website in the fair/festival industry in 1995.

Under his direction, the Show developed a complete in-house advertising and marketing agency, a radio and television production facility, and a sponsorship program considered among the best in the sports and entertainment industries. HLSR today excels in “new media” and conventional media marketing because of his past leadership and expertise.

Shafe is proud of the Show’s news media, audio-visual presentation, broadcast and agriculture student intern programs he developed. Beginning in 1975, these programs have benefitted hundreds of Texas A&M University students.

He has served on numerous committees and task forces supporting sports stadium referendums and convention and trade show facility construction in Houston. He was actively involved in the design of NRG Stadium and NRG Center and he represented HLSR in negotiations with Harris County and the National Football League.

He is an Outstanding Alumnus of the Texas A&M University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, a member of the Texas A&M University Former Journalism Student Association Hall of Honor, a member of the Texas Association of Fairs and Events Hall of Fame, and a distinguished Alumnus of the Texas 4-H.

Shafe has a bachelor’s degree in agricultural journalism from Texas A&M University and a master’s degree in technical journalism (with an emphasis on research and audience analysis) from Iowa State University.

He served as a U.S. Army infantry officer and aviator, active and reserve, from 1967 to 1988. While on active duty (1969-1973) he served as a helicopter pilot and public information officer with the 12th Combat Aviation Group, Republic of Vietnam. After returning from Vietnam, he served for two years as deputy editor of Infantry Magazine, a publication that was distributed worldwide, and as a headquarters helicopter pilot at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Shafer and his wife, Nancy, have been married for 52 years.