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Tributes pour in for leading light in the battle against drink

A leading light in Swansea's fight against alcoholism has died aged 78. Former soldier Alan Douglas who was a founding father of the West Glamorgan Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse spent most of his active service in Germany guarding prisoners of war.

After being de-mobbed, he joined Customs and Excise, embarking on a career searching bags, ships and aeroplanes between Swansea Docks and Swansea Airport.

He married Barbara Brent in St Gabriel's Church, Brynmill in 1949. In 1962 he moved to Twickenham to work in London (now Heathrow) Airport. After moving back to Swansea – the stress of the job had proved too much – it became clear that Mr Douglas needed help with his drinking problem.

He joined Alcoholics Anonymous, successfully beating his addiction. His son Jeremy Douglas said "he never drank another drop in his entire life."

"There are various degrees of generosity – society tends to measure it in the amount of wealth or money given to people or charities, but the greatest gift of all is the gift of time. My father was very, very generous."

When he eventually retired from Customs, Mr Douglas of Ffordd Bryngwyn, Garden Village helped set up the West Glamorgan Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse becoming its first director.

An office was set up in the Uplands and he remained in post until he retired at the age of 59. Jeremy Douglas added "it wasn't really retirement though, as he was still very active in Alcoholics Anonymous and regularly undertook counseling sessions with rehabilitating drug and alcohol addicts. The number of people he helped over the years must be measured in the hundreds many of whom would not be alive today were it not for my father."

He leaves a widow, Barbara, four children Susan, Jeremy, Timothy and Alison, ten grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

The funeral will be at 10am on Monday in the church of the Blessed Sacrament, Gorseinon, followed by a short service at 11.30am in Llaneli Crematorium.

Norman Preddy, Chief Executive of West Glamorgan Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse said Mr Douglas was instrumental in setting up the body.

"The vision he had was for it to be an out-patient treatment centre but he never would have thought it would end up with more than 100 staff right across Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot and Bridgend. We are the first out-patient treatment centre in Wales. Mr Douglas continued in his retirement to help and support people in his own private time."