

October 29, 1952

November 1, 1952

Walker Given State School

The second invalid walker was presented to the Willowbrook State School yesterday by the Richmond County Committee, American Legion Auxiliary.

Mrs. Mary B. Topp, child welfare chairman of the auxiliary made the presentation.

In a brief talk Mrs. Topp said that the members were very happy to present the walker to the school as they were well aware of the aid it affords in the rehabilitation of the handicapped children.

C. Ernest Smith, president of the Board of Visitors, accepted the walker on behalf of the children. He spoke on the community spirit and lauded the work of the various auxiliaries to the school's rehabilitation program.

Dr. Harold H. Berman, director, welcomed the group. The guests were John H. Ray, member of the Board of Visitors; Miss Florence Goodfield, chief supervising nurse; Mrs. Margaret Yater and Mrs. Elsa Ahlin, past county presidents.

November 1, 1952

500 Workers Are Feted in State School

Approximately 500 workers of Willowbrook State School and their friends were feted there last night at a Hallowe'en party sponsored by the school's Benevolent Society.

The affair was given as a "token of thanks to these workers for their devotion and care for the children in their charge," Louis Hults, president, said as he welcomed the guests.

Dr. Harold Berman, director of the school, speaking in behalf of the employes, thanked the society for "its thoughtfulness and generosity."

Serving on the committee were Mrs. Cele Giltmore, Mr. and Mrs. Irving Redler and George Resnick, under the direction of Irving Lesnick. Music was provided by the Blue Notes Band. Joe LaRue entertained.

SUSPENDED TERM GIVEN EX-CONVICT AFTER PLEA

Tuccillo, Who Used False Name at Willowbrook, Gets Break from Court

Ralph J. Tuccillo, 48, of 298 Bay street, Tompkinsville, who obtained employment in the Willowbrook State School despite his record as an ex-convict and inmate of a mental institution, was given a suspended sentence yesterday and placed on probation by Judge Thomas J. Walsh in County Court.

Sentence was imposed on a misdemeanor Civil Service Law violation of which Tuccillo had pleaded guilty Oct. 6. He had been indicted on a charge of perjury which now is dismissed.

Judge Walsh granted the defense request for probation even though Assistant Frank S. Gannon, appearing for the prosecution, felt that some punishment should be imposed. This, he said, would deter similar acts by others.

Gannon argued that Tuccillo had admitted acts which were the very things which the Legislature had sought to prevent through the Civil Service Law. The defendant, according to the assistant district attorney, had committed acts which the law forbids in order to protect the inmates of such institutions as Willowbrook.

Judge Walsh went along, however, with a half-hour plea presented in Tuccillo's behalf by his attorney, Louis Baron.

Baron admitted that his client had been guilty of violating the law by concealing his true name and his past record, but had done so, the attorney said, without criminal intent. Instead, according to Baron, his client had been forced to take this step when he was unable to obtain employment in any other way.

Baron also pointed out that Tuccillo, although applying for the Willowbrook job under a false name, had furnished his correct fingerprints. This should have revealed the deception, the attorney said.

Tuccillo's counsel then outlined the efforts which his client had made after having served time in prison and in a mental hospital. Tuccillo had sought work in shipyards, along the piers and in other places, Baron told Judge Walsh, but because of his past had been unsuccessful.

'Desperate for Work'

Tuccillo was desperate for work in order to support his wife and family, Baron said, when he applied for an attendant's job at Willowbrook State School. He knew that if his record were known he would not be employed and therefore sought to conceal it, the attorney said.

Tuccillo got the Willowbrook job last January and worked there until Aug. 20. He was arrested that day on an assault charge, bringing the facts of his employment to light.

Baron noted yesterday that the assault charge against his client had been thrown out in Magistrate's Court. He had been accused of striking two boy patients at the school.

The Tuccillo case caused an investigation by District Attorney Sidney O. Simonson into the manner of examining and hiring employes at the state institution. That investigation is still open, Simonson said yesterday.