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## Willowbrook Parents Prod State on Retardate Care

By JACK MALLON

Parents of retarded children at Willowbrook School are renewing demands for a new state department to insure mandatory education of retardates in state institutions.

The parents' Benevolent Society, which was in the forefront of last year's revelations of overcrowding and



(NEWS photo by Frank Russo)  
Mrs. Shirley Epstein receives gavel as president of the Benevolent Society from Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook State School, as LeRoy McMorris and William Heisler, vice presidents of the society, look on.

brutality in the state institutions, first exposed in THE NEWS, wants the new department to be separate from the Department of Mental Hygiene.

Mrs. Shirley Epstein, recently reelected president of the society, said, "It is gratifying to us, of course, to have this public attention paid to the needs of the retarded. However, after all the smoke and noise have cleared, we are interested in having the well-meaning words translated into action."

### Bobby Pitched In

"Intolerable" conditions at Willowbrook made national headlines last September when they were criticized at a legislative hearing by Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

At a meeting to install Mrs. Epstein and the society's other officers at the Churaton-Atlantic Hotel in Manhattan, Joseph T. Weingold, executive director of the State Association for Retarded Children, also called for a

crash program in the treatment of noninstitutionalized retardates. Mrs. Epstein strongly endorsed the proposed \$11.6 million budget increase to strengthen the state's program for the retarded and called upon society members to communicate this endorsement to their legislators.

"We will also do all that we can to reach the general public so that maximum support will form behind this program to improve the substandard conditions which prevail in our institutions," she said.

### "We Can't Close Our Eyes"

"We can't close our eyes to the educational needs of these children. We can't sit by while retarded children wait to get into the schools," she continued.

Weingold said that 1966 could be the year of a real breakthrough in the area of institutional care.

"But the institutional problems are not isolated. They are an integral part of the community problem," he said.

There are an estimated 500,000 retardates in New York State, with only 26,000 residing in seven state schools. Willowbrook, which is located at 2760 Victory Blvd., is the largest such school in the state, with over 6,000 residents.

### Officers Installed

Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook, installed the new officers of the society.

He told the parents and guests that the school has been making some progress in recruiting new personnel.

In addition to Mrs. Epstein, the following were elected: William Heisler of the Bronx, first vice president; LeRoy McMorris of Brooklyn, second vice president; Burton Hartman of Westchester, recording secretary; Richard Friedenber of Brooklyn, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Irving Miaskoff of Forest Hills, Queens, financial secretary, and Mrs. Emanuel Barsky of Brooklyn, treasurer.