

Mental Researcher Sees Dream Come True at Last

By MAXINE SITTS

Forty years ago, he saw his first mentally retarded patient. Thirty years ago, he dreamed of a large-scale research center, where scientists from dozens of fields could probe the basic causes and cures for retardation.

World War II delayed that dream for a while, but today, Dr. George A. Jervis has his dream—a \$12-million building called the Staten Island Institute for Basic Research in Mental Retardation.

The state institution, on the grounds of Willowbrook State School, will house five floors of extensive laboratories and research facilities, where scores of scientists will work.

Dr. Jervis, 64, internationally known in the field of mental retardation research, seems delighted with the Island building.

"It's the decision of Albany that we will study the basics of retardation—we are not in the education field," he said. "We can study the basic molecular theories of memory and the brain. And our research will have a wide range of effects."

In studying chromosomes and abnormal cell growth, for example, scientists may learn something about cancer.

His eyes lit up as he talked of moving his headquarters permanently to the institution around the first of the year.

"I'm really a working neurologist, you know," he said. "I plan to spend some of my time working on pathology of the brain, which has been my interest for many years."

There are indications that Dr. Jervis may not spend as much time in the lab as he would like. Fluent in four languages, he is called on frequently by Washington to offer advice on research in foreign countries.

Two weeks after the Arab-Israeli war ended this summer, he was in Israel meeting with mental retardation experts. Other recent stops included Poland and Yugoslavia.

Some of Dr. Jervis' language proficiency comes from his educational background. After he received his doctorate in psychology from the University of Milan, Italy, he took postgraduate training in neurology and psychiatry in Paris, France.

Presently, he is director of research in Letchworth Village Hospital, Thiells, N.Y. In addition to many professional affiliations and duties, he is director of research for the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation in Washington, D.C., which has spent over \$15 million on research.

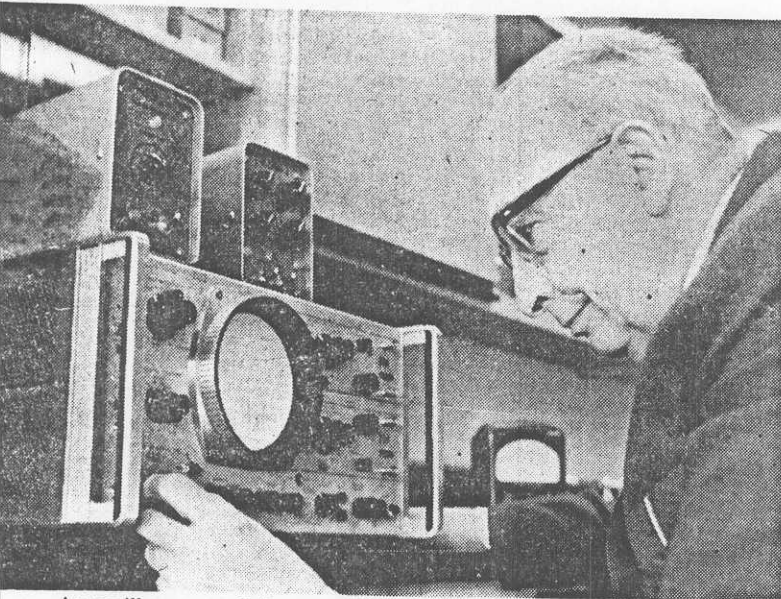


Dr. Jervis, who can be found in the lab as frequently as in his director's office, checks a polygraph chart.

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In a moment of quiet, Dr. George E. Jervis, pauses outside the Institute for Basic Research in Mental Retardation, Willowbrook.



An oscilloscope and timer occupy his attention for a few moments.