

Adrienne was placed in Willowbrook at the age of 10, when doctors told her parents that she could not receive appropriate treatment at home and that a higher degree of care was needed.

Adrienne was treated as a "lost cause" ever since the school's screening committee found she needed "help in all areas," and ordered her placed in "custodial care only" in September 1960, the judge said. Thereafter, she was never tested or evaluated until the present litigation was commenced, he added.

Care of Adrienne was left almost completely to "overworked and undertrained ward attendants" and "individual care, for all practical purposes,

was non-existent," Titone said.

"It seems clear that someone in the Willowbrook bureaucracy decided 12 years ago that Adrienne was, in effect, a hopeless case, and no meaningful attempt was ever made to improve her condition," Titone wrote. "She was 'warehoused' and ignored."

Titone pointed out the difference in testimony between the late Dr. Jack Hammond, Willowbrook's former director, and experts called by Mr. and Mrs. Renelli. Dr. Hammond had said that relatively little could be done for Adrienne. The experts, on the other hand, believed that with applied training she could be taught to be toilet trained, feed herself and perform other elementary functions.

"The point here is (and this is where the state has failed to meet its obligations) Adrienne has yet to be given a first chance," Titone said. "She was entitled to this, and had any realistic effort been made; she would have improved."

Titone ordered Mr. and Mrs. Renelli's attorneys and the state attorney general's office to submit orders to him within the next 30 days containing a specific program for the treatment and care of Adrienne.

"It is a sorry state of affairs when those charged with the care of people like Adrienne must be forced by a court of law to fulfill their obligations, but apparently nothing less will produce results." Titone said.

In commenting on the general conditions at Willowbrook, Titone called upon the Legislature to conduct additional hearings on the state's mental institutions to determine how to bring them up to "ac-

ceptable standards," in addition to determining manpower and monetary needs.

"The court is aware that this would be quite costly, but if the State of New York is going to undertake the responsibility for the care and treatment of these patients, then the job must be done right. Nothing less can be acceptable . . . The Legislature did enact a new Mental Hygiene Law and many laudatory provisions were put on the books, but without money and personnel conditions will not improve."

'ADMISSION OF ERROR'

Titone called the Renelli case an "initial admission error" that "went unchanged for years." In view of this, the judge said he also would recommend the establishment of an independent care evaluation system at mental institutions to insure that the care afforded patients like Adrienne meet the quality requirements of the Mental Hygiene Law.

"Had such a review system been in existence, it is doubtful that Adrienne would have merely vegetated all these years," Titone said. "The state's stewardship of these unfortunate human beings should be subject to a periodic accounting."

In other comments on general conditions at Willowbrook, Titone said it was conceded at the hearing that the school is understaffed, overcrowded and sanitary conditions leave, "a lot to be desired." Matters reached a head at the height of a state job freeze and disclosures of conditions at the institution, the judge said.

During the hearing, Titone said he inspected Willowbrook and found "no change of substance," even though rooms had been repainted and signs put up—"cosmetic, a sop for the press," the judge said. He said he still found evidence of overcrowding and understaffing, and sanitary conditions and feeding systems in need of improvement.

When informed of Titone's decision, Mrs. Renelli said: "I can't tell you how happy we both are." She also said, "I prayed for so long . . . They live just like animals . . . I couldn't think of her (Adrienne) life being wasted."

Biaggi, who volunteered his services to Mr. and Mrs. Renelli, said through a spokesman: "This landmark decision should pave the way for all retardees to receive meaningful programs in our state schools. The law clearly spells out the right of the retarded to proper care, treatment and training. It is the moral obligation of the state to implement the law."