



Les Trautmann, right, managing editor of the Advance, accepts an award presented by Murray Schneps, vice president of the Willowbrook Chapter, Benevolent Society for Retarded Children, in honor of the Advance's coverage of Willowbrook State School. The award was presented yesterday in the New York Hilton Hotel.

S.I. Advance Photo by Hans Jung

# Willowbrook parents honor Advance, editor

By HANS JUNG

The Advance and its managing editor, Les Trautmann, were honored yesterday for continuing news and editorial coverage of Willowbrook State School.

The awards were presented at a luncheon sponsored by Willowbrook Chapter, Benevolent Society for Retarded Children in the grand ballroom of the New York Hilton, Manhattan. Approximately 1500 guests attended.

Murray Schneps, society vice-president, in presenting the awards, noted that the Advance "was the first of all the media to do the job at Willowbrook... They broke down the walls of Willowbrook."

"The Advance went in when others refused," he said, "even when they had to force their way in. No other media picked up the story until it could not be avoided."

In responding to the awards, Trautmann told of the barrage of pleas and demands he had received from those who tried to stop "what was an obvious campaign."

"Today's program is particularly gratifying to me. We have long since been vindicated. The Staten Island Advance doesn't claim all the credit, but our persistence started the bandwagon rolling."

He said that the story can't Willowbrook residents could equipment.

be dropped now however, "The help see that the court rulings changing Willowbrook will have to be watched. Dispersal makes the story less obvious."

The awards to the Advance and Trautmann contained these words: "... for perceptive and continuing coverage of conditions at Willowbrook State School, not only as a news story, but also as an important public service which has already contributed positively to changes in the attitude of the general public and in the delivery of services to the mentally retarded in New York State."

## LAWYER SPEAKS

Bruce Ennis, an attorney with the New York Civil Liberties Union, spoke to the society about the Federal Court case a month ago on conditions at Willowbrook.

Ennis said the results of the case were a partial success in that the court ordered Willowbrook to improve its conditions and set specific standards and dates to be met. He said it was also a defeat because the court did not agree that the retarded had a constitutional right to therapy.

The state's resistance and lack of cooperation were blamed by Ennis for the court's limited decision. Ennis said C.L.U. had gone back to court to introduce additional evidence.

He suggested the parents of Willowbrook residents could equipment.

Susan Holland, a singer who participated in last year's "One to one" activities and later wrote a song about it, sang it at the luncheon.

Other music was later provided by the Willowbrook school band and choral group.

Other speakers included State Supreme Court Judge Moses Weinstein of Queens, who swore everyone at the luncheon to an oath to continue the Willowbrook fight, Congressman Mario Biaggi and State Senator William T. Conklin of Brooklyn.

Clara Hays received the outstanding employee of the year award.

Last year's luncheon raised more than \$40,000 for the Society, they hope to have raised even more yesterday. Proceeds will be used to buy much needed equipment, such as wheelchairs and recreational equipment.