

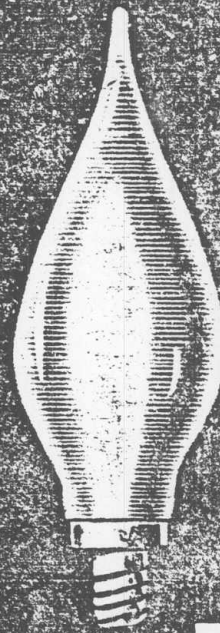
organized the Mental Health Law Project, with the goal of developing a cadre of lawyers to specialize in the field, bring test cases and educate the public, state legislatures and Congressional committees.

Back in Alabama, in February, 1972, the Partlow State School and Hospital came under special scrutiny, and the lawyers' attention turned to the mentally retarded. Dr. Phillip Roos, executive director of the National Association for Retarded Children, paid a visit to Partlow and told the court what he found there. Roos proved to be less troubled by the cockroaches, the broken toilet seats, the "training" that involved cattle prods and the girl who spent her waking hours in a wooden cage than he was by the pervasive belief among the ill-trained attendants that their charges were totally incapable of learning or developing: "The conditions at Partlow today are generally dehumanizing, fostering deviancy, generating self-fulfilling prophecies of parasitism and helplessness. The conditions, I would say, are hazardous to psychological integrity, to health, and in some cases even to life."

In March, Judge Johnson issued an emergency order that the state hire 300 more attendants at Partlow within 30 days, repair the fire hazards, begin a disease immunization program, change the methods of preparing food to avoid "massive contamination," and return as many inmates as possible to their parents and guardians as part of a process of "normalization." In April, he handed down detailed minimum standards for all three institutions, which had been worked out by a group of assembled experts. There proved to be few differences between experts for the state and experts for the plaintiffs as to what constituted minimum adequate treatment—and no one claimed that this existed in any state institution.

The Alabama Mental Health

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