

Willowbrook group would 'honor' Rocky

A resolution to change the name of Willowbrook Developmental Center to the Nelson A. Rockefeller Developmental Center has been passed by the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children.

However, according to the society's president, Anthony Pinto, the name change would not be in honor of the former governor, but rather symbolize the "albatross around his neck."

Pinto claims that during his three and one-half terms as governor, Rockefeller "remained aloof to the problems of Willowbrook."

"Dozens of letters and telegrams were sent to him (Rockefeller) after a Board of Visitors report in 1971 criticized the state for disgusting conditions at the institution," Pinto said.

"He was invited numerous times to visit Willowbrook, but he never came and he never even answered the letters."

Asserting that the name change would not be complimentary, Pinto charged the former state head and his administration with neglect.

"To this day, we've had no recognition from the governor's office. Rockefeller has gone off to greener pastures and left Willowbrook the way it always was to him, just another piece of business.

"The billion-dollar Albany Mall is his legacy to himself. The Nelson A. Rockefeller Developmental Center is our legacy of neglect for him," Pinto said.

The Benevolent Society will present the resolution for approval at the statewide convention of the New York State Association for Retarded Children next month.

If passed, it will be forwarded to the State Legislature for consideration, Pinto said.

There was no comment yesterday from the former governor's Manhattan press office.