

Willowbrook becomes an issue

Willowbrook Developmental Center was interjected into the race for state attorney general yesterday when Democratic candidate Robert Abrams charged that incumbent Louis J. Lefkowitz had "defended the indefensible" by representing the state in court against parent attempts to force the closing of the Staten Island institution.

Instead, Lefkowitz "could have refused to defend the state Mental Hygiene Department and joined the parents in a "friend of the court brief," Abrams said.

The Bronx borough president described Lefkowitz as "a silent accomplice" in the creation of the state's mental health system, termed by Abrams among the worst in the nation.

A Lefkowitz spokesman replied that "If Abrams had any background or experience in the law he would know that the attorney general has a legal obligation to represent state agencies in court when they are sued. The attorney general is not free to pick and choose among the state departments he wants to represent."
