

Willowbrook, if any at all, belong in the institution. "Philosophically," he says, "all residents could be out."

He feels the placements in nursing homes and health related facilities and the development of at least five halfway houses on Staten Island will have to take place if Willowbrook is to continue to reduce its population.

•Third, Robidoux's dedication has not allowed him just to deal with community services because, he feels, that is only part of the plight of the retarded. You must deal with life in the institution, he feels, you must fight that, too.

Robidoux feels that his job within the institution has got to deal with "fighting for the rights of the retarded." He cites the attempted blockage of a halfway house for the retarded at 200 Tysen St., New Brighton, as a denial of the rights of the retarded.

Within the mental health field, Robidoux explains, there are conservatives who feel that the institution is the best place for the retarded, a closed, strict, tight institution, Robidoux says he is on the opposite pole.

"Call me a humanist," he says, calling for the least restrictive environment possible for the retarded. Big institutions are restrictive and oppressive, he says. And that is why Wilton appeals to him.

It will afford him the chance to deal with quality placement of the retarded, in the best possible foster care atmosphere. It will allow him to work on the details that the quantity of Willowbrook denies.

For Robidoux it will probably still be a 24-hour job. His wife says that at Willowbrook, people were always able to find him, probably because he didn't want to avoid anyone... the press, the public, the residents, the employees.

"Any problem has to be dealt with immediately," he says, "not tomorrow, but today, right now."

"The view has always been that they (the retarded) are sub-human. But if we can teach our kids," he says, "that you can't single out the retarded and let humanness be equated with intelligence..."

"We must get out of that..."

Robidoux's voice trails off, and you sense that at Wilton Developmental Center he will be fighting for the rights of the retarded 24 hours a day.

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