



Harold C. Piepenbrink finds paperwork awaiting him as he takes over as director of Willowbrook Developmental Center.

S.I. Advance Photo by Irving Silverstein

New Willowbrook chief gets first look at the job

By ROBERT MIRALDI

Gray skies, rainy weather, darkened buildings and the death of a resident greeted Harold C. Piepenbrink, the new director of Willowbrook Developmental Center, yesterday morning.

Through it, Piepenbrink managed to exude optimism and confidence, declaring on his first day on the job that Willowbrook is indeed a manageable institution.

"I don't buy it," Piepenbrink said, when asked if he agreed that the nationally spotlighted, long-troubled institution for the retarded was

unmanageable and impossible to tame.

Piepenbrink, a long-time mental health administrator in Illinois, made clear his intention yesterday to reorganize the management structure of Willowbrook. He said that the Department of Mental Hygiene had given him complete freedom to reorganize as he sees fit.

"I wouldn't have taken the job without that freedom," he said.

Piepenbrink said that he hoped to decentralize the chain of command that now exists at Willowbrook. Presently there are two deputy

directors, one for clinical matters, the other for administration.

Piepenbrink said that he hoped eventually to have six or seven program directors who would be responsible for given areas. "I don't want to have to see decisions made all the way up to the top all the time," Piepenbrink said.

In the future, he said, there might be anywhere from six to 10 persons who would report directly to the director.

Acting Mental Hygiene Commissioner Lawrence C. Kolb reportedly coaxed Piepenbrink from his director's

Page 1
of
2 page