

Willowbrook death probed

D.A. demands autopsy

By WALTER COLEMAN

The district attorney's and medical examiner's offices today will seek an order to exhume the body of a 9-year-old Willowbrook Developmental Center resident, who died last week, after an investigation by detectives uncovered "indication of foul play."

The offices will petition the Supreme Court to sign an order allowing them to exhume the body of Kyle Smith, who died last Tuesday at the center after swimming in a pool.

Police and a spokesman at Willowbrook both said that the child, who was suffering from Down's Syndrome and had been a resident at the center for eight years, had a history of heart trouble.

Police said Kyle had been swimming in a small pool in Building 26 of the center about

5:15 p.m. Tuesday and that after he got out, he began to feel faint and slumped unconscious.

He was given oxygen and other first aid treatment, but died despite the efforts, detectives said.

Dr. L. Boros, detectives continued, urged the child's parents to allow an autopsy to be performed, but that they refused, believing the death to be natural.

The death certificate, signed by Dr. Boros, gives the cause of death as cerebral embolism.

A spokesman for the center, Joyce Libra, said that in the case of a sudden death, the po-

lice and the medical examiner's office are notified and an autopsy is requested.

She said that the center conducted its own questioning of employes, as did the police, and that at the time the death appeared to be natural and the medical examiner waived his right to perform an autopsy.

Miss Libra said Kyle was being given a shower after he got out of the pool Tuesday when he "turned cyanotic—turned blue" and was taken to the medical treatment room, where he was given oxygen but died.

She noted that Kyle became cyanotic frequently — "two to three times a week" — and that his condition was being treated.

Later in the week, officials said, an employe of the center went to the district attorney's office and told Chief Assistant District Attorney Thomas Sullivan that the child might have been beaten to death by another employe.

Sullivan contacted Lt. William Juliano and Detectives Robert Dianora and William Knight, who began investigating the incident with members of the D.A.'s squad.

"The employe did not come forward immediately when we conducted the initial examination," Miss Libra said.

As detectives questioned

persons present at the time of the death, Juliano said, they "discovered inaccurate and conflicting stories" of what had occurred.

Though detectives would not say when they went to Sullivan and the medical examiner with enough information to seek the autopsy, officials at Willowbrook indicated that the police felt they had enough information to seek the order after questioning some employes Saturday.

Kyle was buried Saturday in Mount Hope Cemetery in Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y., officials said.

Harold C. Piepenbrink, director of the center, said in a statement last night: "If the police feel they have information to warrant further investigation, we will certainly cooperate in any way possible."

The medical examiner and Sullivan will request the exhumation so that the cause of death may be determined.

After the cause of death is determined," Juliano said, "we'll see where that leads our investigation."

Miss Libra said that the autopsy "will get the matter cleared up" and will determine whether the boy died of natural causes.