ACLU attorney

Probably more than any other person, Bruce J. Ennis, 36, has been responsible for the changes that have been taking place at Willowbrook Developmental Center since parent groups went into a federal court five years ago.

Ennis, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union's Mental Health Law Project, is the architect of the Willowbrook Consent Decree which maps out mandated humanizing changes at the state center for the retarded.

In the Willowbrook case Ennis established the right of retarded persons to receive treatment. He won a similar case in 1975 that established that mentally ill persons cannot be confined in institutions against their will and without treatment.

Ennis has now moved from the Willowbrook case to become national legal director for the ACLU. He will guide strategies for 4,500 attorneys with current dockets numbering more than 5,000 cases.

The continued struggle at Willowbrook will be maintained by attorneys Chris A. Hansen and Jack Bernstein.