

Last year, Dehler took all the money he had saved during the last five years and spent \$4,000 for a trip around the world.

He visited Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia, and has photo albums of himself and "the natives" to prove it.

He liked Hawaii so much that he plans to retire there in, say, another 20 years.

Now, every day at 3:15 p.m., Dehler walks to Building 4 and begins working to keep it clean.

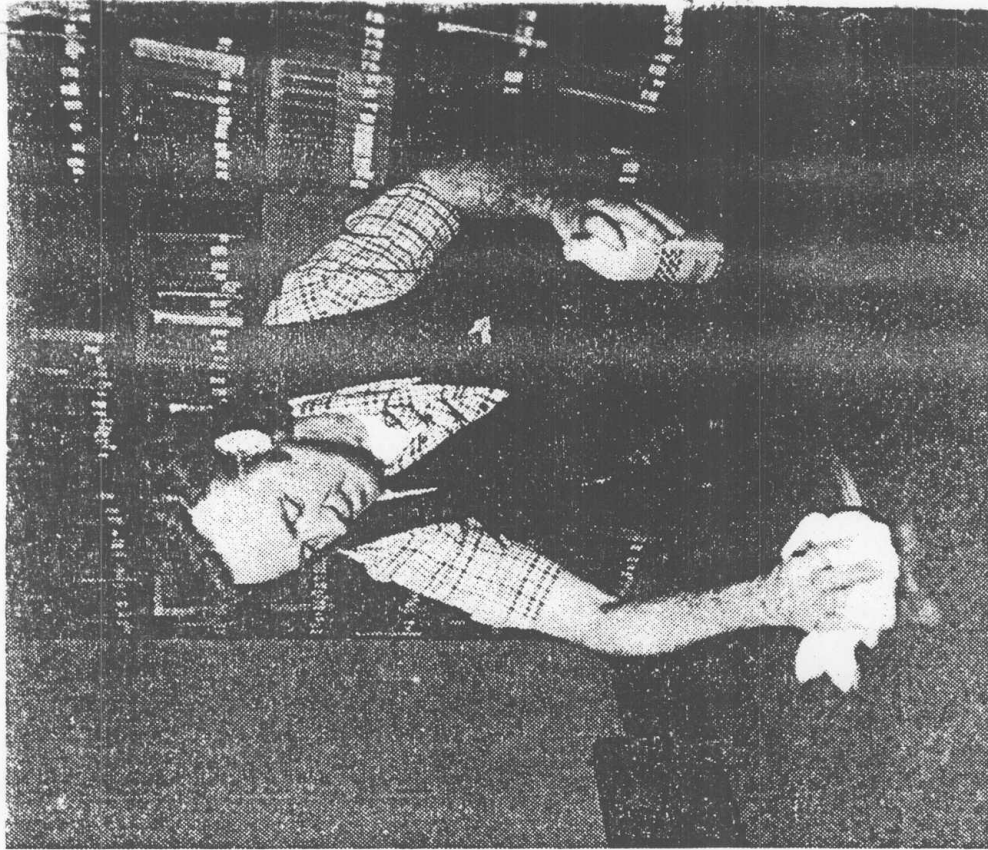
He shines. He scrubs. He mops the floors. And he walks tall and proud through the corridors with building keys dangling at his side.

"I'm happy the way I am," said Dehler, a big smile crossing his face as he polished a table in the library. "I like the shift. There are no hounds on my back, and I get my work done good."

"After 4:30, I've got the building to myself. I'm the cleaner over there, and am responsible for keeping the building locked up, clean and supplied."

Ron Byrne, an employee at the center and friend of Dehler's, adds that there's a bigger lesson in Dehler's story than just a wrong made right after too many years. Had there been community placements in Arthur Dehler's day, rather than the practice of shipping off residents to places like Willowbrook, there would be more people like Dehler functioning in society.

"In 1960, we were the state of the art," Byrne said. "When Arthur came



Arthur Dehler puts the shine to a table in the Building 4 library at the Staten Island Developmental Center.

S.I. Advance Photo by Barry Schwartz

in, it was really the only option. But it makes no sense at all for people like Arthur to be institutionalized. You find there are more people like him out there than there are people who are different.

"My feeling is evolution just sort of caught up with the Arthurs of the world.

We finally found out how to help people like him.

"He's living proof of how the retarded can fit into society and lead enjoyable, enriching lives. There's a place in the world for all Arthur Dehlers, and it's their right to have that opportunity."

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