

through litigation determines the allocation of social resources."

Finally, the metaphor of their title is out of sync with a reader's reaction to the book. One doesn't come away filled with revulsion and sorrow. Certainly the recalcitrance of bureaucracy is deplorable, but that isn't exactly news. What's news — and inspiring news at that — is that institutions such as Willowbrook may indeed not be necessary. The experiment in normalization really worked when it was conscientiously implemented. Once houses were found, community resistance overcome, the right mix of therapists and patients set up, and a truly responsive environment created, even severely retarded people thrived beyond the expectations of normalization theory. Which is exactly what common sense would indicate, but what public program ever responded to common sense?

More encouraging still are the implications seen by the Rothmans for other fields of human services. "If responsible caretakers can be found to serve the profoundly retarded," their book concludes, "they can be found for the aged — if we look for them and compensate them." And: "What holds true for the elderly holds true as well for the homeless. They may make greater demands upon services, and on public space, but after Willowbrook we have a better sense of the feasibility of alternatives to neglect on park benches or indiscriminate confinement in state armories."

These are not the kind of conclusions one brings home from a battlefield. So don't think of this book as an account of warfare. It doesn't even need its melodramatic title; it's exciting enough to read as a legal drama. Think of the book as just plain "Willowbrook," and read it not to see who won or lost, but to learn how a profoundly important social-policy game was played.



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