

"I thought that was the only way to care for the mentally retarded," Goldmark said. But there were details to hammer out and Goldmark's time and energy were sapped by the budget crisis unfolding in New York City.

"Goldmark was in the midst of the fiscal crisis and we weren't," Hansen recalled. "We were holding meetings with him at 8 o'clock at night. It wasn't so bad for us — we would go home and rest and be fresh for the negotiations, but he wasn't."

As a result, Hansen said, Goldmark was "extremely willing to listen" to the NYCLU's suggestions for the consent decree, and the NYCLU was able to achieve many of its objectives in the final document.

"If Rockefeller had stayed in office, I don't think we would have had a settlement," Hansen said.

The final document was 29

pages and very specific in terms of improvements to be implemented at Willowbrook. Training and recreational programs, medical care, client-staff ratios, the amount of clothing, the length of meal times were all spelled out in minute detail.

The document noted that the state would continue to move residents out of Willowbrook, and that the institution's population would drop to 250 residents, all native Staten Islanders, by 1981. The others would move into community residences of 15 beds or less.

The document was approved

by the NYCLU and the state in the spring of 1975, and put before Judd, who signed his name on April 30, putting the consent judgment into effect.

"I was basically satisfied," Goldmark said. "The consent judgment was a good compromise. It was worth all the grief, all the friction."

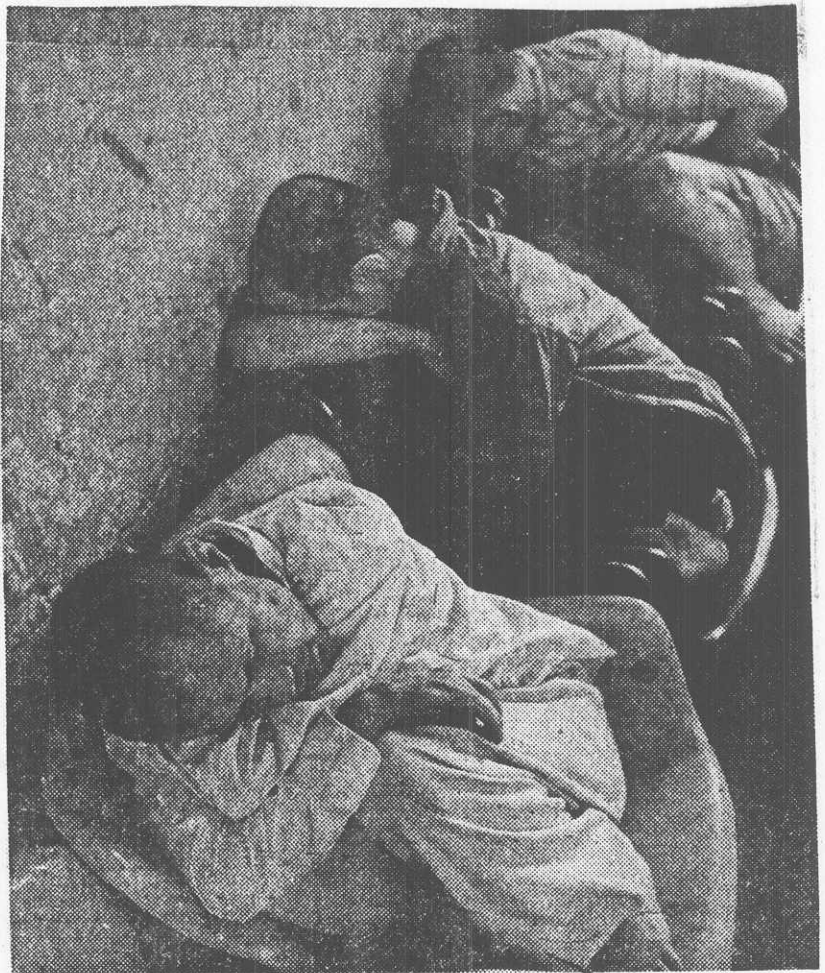
The NYCLU was also pleased with the consent judgment, Hansen said, although in retrospect its enthusiasm proved to overly optimistic.

"We really thought all the improvements could be implemented within 13 months, as the

state promised. We really thought that the institution's population could drop to 250 by 1981," Hansen said. "We anticipated difficulties, but didn't come close to anticipating how serious those difficulties would be."

As Hansen would find out, the consent decree did not settle the Willowbrook case. It merely started a new chapter.

(This is the third in a six-part series on the Staten Island Development Center and what has happened to it since the consent decree was issued 10 years ago.)



Men with shaved heads curl up in chairs and hide their faces in this ward in Willowbrook in 1972.