

# Gov. Cuomo, Carey join in closing

BY ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Gov. Mario Cuomo will be joined by former Gov. Hugh Carey, Sen. John Marchi and Borough President Ralph Lamberti to preside over the official closing of Staten Island Developmental Center Wednesday.

The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) is sponsoring three days of closing ceremonies this week. The centerpiece of the series of events will be the closing ceremony, to begin at 1:15 p.m. Thursday. This ceremony is open to the public.

The developmental center, formerly known

as Willowbrook State School, once held 6,200 residents and was the largest institution of its kind.

Officials from the City University of New York (CUNY) also will participate in the ceremonies. The College of Staten Island, which is part of the CUNY system, plans to take over the majority of the 380-acre grounds for use as a campus.

A new OMRDD community resource center will be dedicated to state Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly at the ceremony, although construction is not set to begin until next year. It will be located on a small part of

the grounds that the state will maintain for its programs. A model of the new center will be on display.

A Willowbrook Museum also will be available for public inspection in the center's administration building. The exhibit will give an historical perspective to the significance of Willowbrook's closing.

The public will be invited to tour the new group homes built for some of the former institutional residents.

Visitors should go to SIDC's main entrance at 2760 Victory Blvd., where parking will be provided.