

Looking for a place for Mickey

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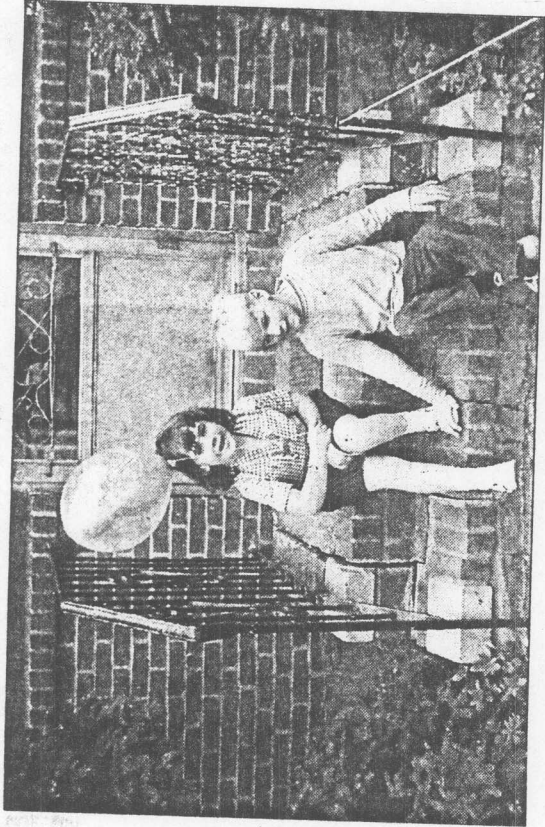


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Business writer A.J. Connelly with her brother, Mickey, on Memorial Day, 1970.

Personal reflections on my mentally retarded brother moving from Mom and Dad's

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If the state really is committed to getting rid of the lists of developmentally disabled awaiting community residences, it means Michael will finally be moving out soon.

My brother, who will turn an unbelievable 35 years old in a few weeks, still lives with my parents, both of whom will hit 65 this summer.

Although his developmental abilities place Mickey, as we usually call him, somewhere between 2 and 8 years old, depending on which skill you're examining, he is physically 35. He's a big guy, a handful to handle. And as my parents age, I can see the strain it places on them to care for him: Bathing, dressing, even just trying to convince His Stubbornness that he has to get up out of bed some days.

In many ways, they've been caring for an infant all these years.

Had my folks listened to the advice of the experts back in the late 1960s, when the diagnosis of severe-profound brain damage was finally determined, Mickey would have been moved to a community residence years ago, that is, assuming he lived through the first level of horror that the state offered.

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