

Ford executive takes over as state ACLU chief

By Carol Anahid Azizian
staff writer

For more than a decade, Walter Johnson worked behind-the-scenes as a civil rights advocate.

Now the veteran Southfield school board member has a leading role in an organization known for defending civil liberties.

As the newly elected state chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union,

Johnson will oversee policies made by the organization, appoint committees and formulate agendas.

Johnson believes the challenge he faces now is greater than it was in previous years. He joined the ACLU 15 years ago, and has served on its board of directors since 1971.

"The challenge for all defenders of civil liberties is greater now than at any time in the past," he said.

"The defeat of the ERA requires an increased effort to protect and expand

the rights of women. The rights of gay men and lesbian women should be expanded, but are, instead, in grave danger of being drastically crippled.

"Our school children must be protected from state-imposed religion in the form of official prayers, Bible 'science,' and book-banning."

Defending the rights of school children is a top priority for Johnson, who said his volunteer work with the ACLU has helped him formulate school board policy.

JOHNSON served on ACLU committees that drafted state policies on sex education and corporal punishment in the public schools, First Amendment rights in the private sector and the use of public facilities by religious organizations.

"One of the first actions I took as a school board member was to establish a policy banning corporal punishment," he said.

"It was brought to my attention that some teachers used that method and I thought something should be done about it."

Johnson said his knowledge about civil rights issues helped him and other school board members establish a code of student conduct.

"Much of the changes in the code

came about because of my input," he said. "Students (who are suspended or subject to other punitive measures) now have a right to due process. They can confront their accusers and tell their side of story."

Johnson said civil rights issues play an important part in setting yet another board policy — establishing guidelines for public use of school facilities.

"We can't stop churches from holding religious services in school buildings or bar groups like the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis just because we don't like them," he said.

A member of the Southfield Board of Education for the past nine years, Johnson resides in Southfield with his wife, Sally, and three children. He is a systems supervisor in Ford Motor Co.'s Computer Graphics Department.



Walter Johnson

Mental patient aid increased at Clinton Valley facility

By Jackie Klein
staff writer

The on-again, off-again closing of Clinton Valley Center will be avoided. But patients in the state mental health facility still need higher-quality, private care.

So said Dr. Thomas M. Malueg, director of the Community Mental Health Department, at a legislative breakfast with city officials in Southfield on Monday.

The House and Senate budget conference committee agreed this month to a \$9.7 million funding increase to prevent closing of Clinton Valley and four other mental health facilities, Malueg said. But appropriations are still inadequate, he said.

"The quality of care in Clinton Valley isn't good," Malueg said. "But it's better than closing the doors overnight and dumping patients on the streets with no alternative plan."

The 12-member community mental

health board recommends "phasing down" Clinton Valley and placing patients in psychiatric units of private hospitals as an alternative to long-term care.

Clinton Valley isn't an accredited hospital and doesn't qualify for Medicaid and other health insurance plans, Malueg said.

"PRIVATE HOSPITALS are more effective clinically and fiscally," he said. "With better care, patients would have shorter stays and costs would be reduced. The State Department of Mental Health could reimburse hospitals at Medicaid rates."

Private hospital officials say they're uneasy about accepting involuntary patients, Malueg said. They're also concerned about the possibility of having to make capital improvements to accommodate persons with acute mental illness, he said.

Community Mental Health Department's outpatient program is also in trouble, Malueg said. The outpatient clinic on Southfield north of 12 Mile has been forced to close after six years of operation along with a clinic in west Oakland County, he said.

The facilities will be consolidated in a facility on Orchard Lake Road north of 12 Mile, which is a heavily populated area, Malueg said.

Southfield City Council last month passed a resolution opposing the closing of Clinton Valley. One of the concerns was that patients may be placed in small group homes in residential areas in the community.

2 from Hills enter Northwestern

Jennifer E. Buss and Suzanne M. Chapman have enrolled as freshmen at Northwestern University for the 1982-83 school year.

Buss is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Wilkins of Farmington Hills. She is a graduate of Farmington High School. Her high-school activities included drama, choral groups, ETC Club, forensics club and German club. She was recognized for maintaining a 4.0 grade-point average throughout high school, was a member of the National Honor Society and was the highest achiever in forensics during her senior year.

Chapman is the daughter of Mr. and

Mrs. Conrad Chapman of Farmington Hills. She is a graduate of Our Lady of Mercy High School. Her high-school activities included running a math tutoring program for three years, staffing junior/senior Christian retreats and participating in Hope. She won the Phi Beta Kappa award, was an honorary member of the National French Honor Society and was recognized in the state competitive scholarship program.

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