

# AH RCChronicle

Association for the Help of Retarded Children New York City Chapter Newsletter

Special Memorial Issue for Joseph T. Weingold, Esq.

Fall 1987



It is our sad duty to inform you of the passing on September 15th of a giant, Joseph T. Weingold, or "Jerry" as we all knew him.

Jerry was a brilliant, vital and effective advocate on behalf of retarded people and their families. His loss will be deeply felt by all of us. Below is a copy of the notice which we placed in the New York Times on Thursday and Friday, September 17th and 18th:

**WEINGOLD, Joseph T.** The Board of Directors, membership, clients and staff of the Association for

the Help of Retarded Children, New York City Chapter, mourns with deep personal sorrow the passing of Joseph T. Weingold. "Jerry" Weingold exercised more influence over the development of services, legislation, and rights for the retarded than any other individual in the history of this field.

As President and then Executive Director of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, New York City Chapter as well as the first Executive Director of the New York State Association for Retarded Children, Inc. until his retirement, Jerry designed and implemented a system of community-based care for retarded people in New York State which has served as a blueprint for all such developments both in this state and across the country.

As one of the founders of the National Association of Retarded Citizens, his influence has extended well beyond the boundaries of New York State. Jerry not only built a community based system of care, which has been used to replace inhumane and insensitive institutional services, but also labored in the areas of legislation and the courts to ensure that a humane and protected life be made available to all retarded people.

A principal architect of the Willowbrook Consent Judgment, he led the fight to return people improperly served in institutions to community facilities. As a drafter of the New York State Guardianship Law, he paved the way for the development of a protective system of guardianship for retarded people. Jerry, who was Chief Counsel of the Joint Legislative Committee on Mental and Physical Handicaps, exercised great influence over all legislation focusing on the disabled in general and the retarded in particular. Without Jerry Weingold's vigorous, incisive, and effective advocacy, the lives of retarded people in New York State would be far less humane than they are today. His commitment, his energy, his brilliant if acerbic style was known throughout the country, the State of New York, and, particularly in the legislature of the State of New York. Always an advocate of change even as he grew older, Jerry's voice was singular, acute, incisive, aggressive and effective. Many thousands of people who do not know his name and many other thousands of people who do not have the capacity to speak it were touched by his efforts. Jerry is survived by his wife Barbara, and his son Jonathan, to whom we offer our heartfelt condolences.

Charles G. King, Jr., President  
Michael Goldfarb, Executive Dir.



**Proud Parents:**  
Barbara and Jerry Weingold share the glory when their son Jonathan was presented the Nassau County Chapter's annual award. Jonathan was cited as "the symbol of all young people" who inspired the establishment of AHRC and its varied New York service programs.

From The New York Times  
Friday, September 18, 1987

## Joseph Weingold, 83, Advocate for Retarded

Joseph T. Weingold, a leader in providing humane conditions and community care for retarded and disabled children in New York, died of heart failure Tuesday at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center. He was 83 years old and lived in Manhattan.

He was an architect of the Federal consent decree that led to the closing of the State Developmental Center at Willowbrook on Staten Island.

As executive director of the New York State Association for Retarded Children, he was widely recognized as one of the leading advocates for retarded and disabled children and worked to improve their legal rights, living conditions and services. He helped design a system of community care and neighborhood residences that have served as a model adopted by many states.

As the parent of a retarded son who lives in a community residence and as the association's director, Mr. Weingold led demonstrations in front of the Governor's New York City office in 1973 and lobbied extensively in the State Legislature for improved conditions for the retarded.

As patients began to be moved out of Willowbrook in 1975, he fought to make sure the community residences where they were sent provided humane care.

Mr. Weingold, who was born in New York City, received a bachelor's degree in literature from Oxford University and a law degree from Columbia University. He practiced law from 1929 until 1950, when he became director of the association that he and other parents of retarded children helped start.

## Governor's Condolences: NY's Cuomo Extolls Weingold's Career, Gifted Leadership

Dear Mrs. Weingold:

Mrs. Cuomo and I were deeply saddened to learn of your husband's death. Please accept our heartfelt sympathy.

Reflecting on Jerry's achievements over his lifetime, I cannot fathom where we would be today in our State in the field of mental retardation and developmental disabilities had it not been for Jerry Weingold. Think of the impact he had! When he started out, the standard clinical advice of the day to the parents of handicapped newborns was, in effect, to turn their backs on their infants, to automatically institutionalize them, to "forget" they had ever been born. Through

continued on page 7

# Joseph T. Weingold 1904–1987

## Some Private Moments from a Dedicated Public Life

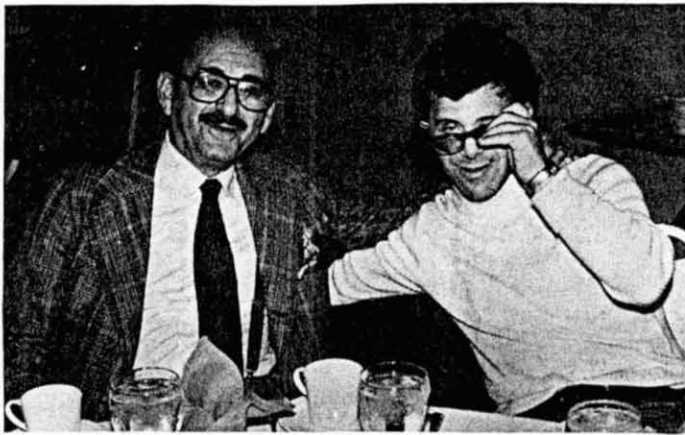
Let no insular or selfish view of the problem of retardation hinder or cloud our objectives. Too frequently do our personal problems or what seems to be a personal solution color our thinking and blind us to the overall aims, the encompassing philosophy that should guide us. Let us remember that we, as parents, are dedicated to all retarded children, whether in public schools, at home, or in institutions, whether mongoloid, brain injured, or whatever. Let us dedicate ourselves to this proposition: that every retarded child in every situation deserves and must get the opportunity to achieve his or her maximum development within his or her capacity. This is their birthright as Americans. This is not the most, but the least, they should expect from us.

Joseph T. Weingold, 1950

Above, official photograph when the first president of the New York City Chapter in 1949, became its first executive director, in 1950, forsaking a promising legal career. Later, in 1952, Mr. Weingold visits with Doris Toepel and a client at the first diagnostic clinic that he had helped establish.







The motivation and wellspring of Mr. Weingold's extraordinary achievements and dedicated activism was his much loved only son, Jonathan. As much as AHRC's founder Ann Greenberg's Jerry, Jonathan Weingold inspired close to 40 years of indefatigable activities on behalf of all retarded individuals. Here father and son are shown attending a State Association Convention (above), sharing a pleasant moment in the country (right) and (below) hugging as they do on the memorable cover of the AHRC City Chapter Annual Report for 1986.



Photo: Arvind Garg

A rare view of Mr. Weingold away from a lecture rostrum or lobbying politicians: Here, he and Met opera star Mimi Benzell, and N.Y. politician Carmine de Sapio stand in front of AHRC's expressive slogan, this time used on the first fundraiser billboard, this one outside of the offices of the General Outdoor Advertising Company in Queens. The year was 1953.



# CAPITOL STUFF

By FRANK JACKMAN

Washington, June 25 (NEWS Bureau) — When President Nixon signed Senate bill S-557 into law at the White House this week, there was no special ceremony and certainly no fanfare. But his stroke of the pen represented a major victory for more than 80,000 severely handicapped people across the nation—and for a New Yorker named Jerry Weingold.

Jerry, who is more formally known as Joseph T. Weingold, is head of the New York State Association for Retarded Children and the father of a 27-year-old retarded son who is employed at a special workshop on W. 13th St. in Manhattan.

**Handicapped Will** That's really what S-557 is all about—providing more opportunity for people like Jerry's boy.

## Get Chance for Gainful Work

The process began two years ago when Weingold asked Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.) why other handicapped people were not included in a 40-year-old law that gives priority in government supply contracts to products made by blind workers in sheltered workshops. As Jerry put it, "I've worked a lot with the retarded and with other handicapped, and one of the big problems we have is obtaining contracts. Yet, in terms of what's offered, there's great possibilities there for the government. First, they get value for the money they spend on these contracts, and second, they help get people off the welfare rolls."

Javits introduced a bill drawn up by Weingold and Roy Millenson, minority staff director of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee; the senator is ranking Republican on the committee. The measure extended the government preference arrangement to workshops of the mentally retarded, spastics and other severely handicapped persons. In addition, the preference arrangement covered services as well as products; in other words, a sheltered workshop could be hired to assemble certain items or to provide other services.

The Senate Labor Committee held hearings on the bill and it was passed unanimously by the full Senate, only to die in the House. Back to the drawing board, and back to the sometimes tortuous process of give-and-take that is essential to getting even the most noncontroversial bill enacted into law. This year, after a lot of missionary work by Weingold, the bill breezed through both chambers. On Wednesday, with President Nixon's signature, it became Public Law 92-28.

One influential fact that helped the bill was that 80% of the blind people covered by the original law had been on welfare before its provisions allowed them to find employment in sheltered workshops. After a few years of operation, most of these people became self-supporting, and 15,000 of them were able to leave the workshops and find jobs in private industry.

"This means an absolutely new world for the handicapped," Weingold said. "Instead of getting by on \$10 or \$15 a week, they can make \$50 or \$60 a week doing something meaningful." Millenson agreed. "It's going to get people off welfare," he said. "You might say that it's a hard-nosed bill as well as a bleeding-heart bill."



Joseph T. Weingold  
Signing of S-557 caps fight

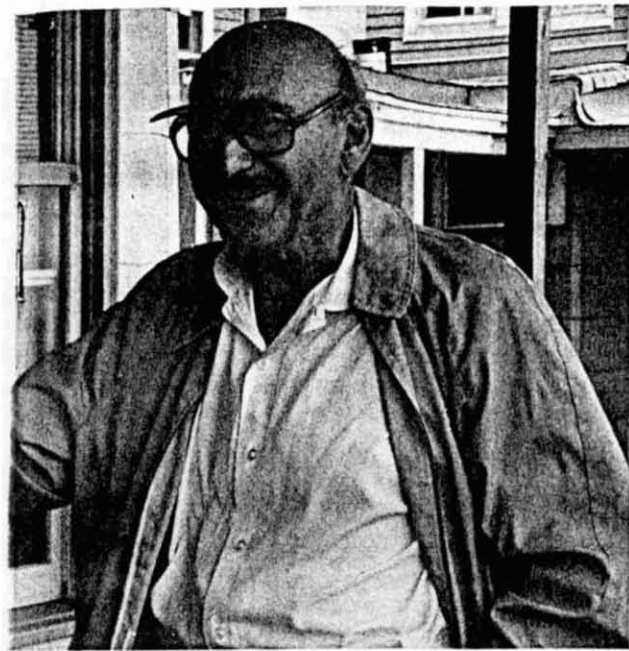


photo: Arvind Garg

BE HELPED!

LS - CLINICS  
RETARDED CHILDREN  
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Jonathan Weingold with his late father, Jerry Weingold, during the summer of 1986

# Weingold as Activist: Plans Must Turn into Action

Excerpts from an address to the Florida Association for Retarded Children, Inc., given May 6, 1966

## Governor Extolls

Continued from page 2

his great love for his son, Jerry challenged the establishment, joining with other parents, energizing them, inspiring them, leading them in the great struggle to carve out the rightful place in society for their children.

But Jerry was more than loving and compassionate. He was firm and bright and pragmatic. His devotion to his son was expanded to embrace all retarded children; he recognized that they had to have free, appropriate public education, job training, social interaction, decent places to live as adults. He was a feisty and indefatigable advocate and lobbyist, instrumental in Albany and Washington in the inception and passage of landmark legislation affecting all aspects of the lives of retarded persons.

Jerry demonstrated his gifted leadership in helping to establish and then lead that great organization, the New York State Association for Retarded Children. He was widely respected and admired in State government as a man of dauntless determination and integrity. He was a delightful and loyal friend, enjoyed for his charm and wit. He was a brilliant writer and speaker, sought after for his unique perspective, his wisdom and his counsel.

You can take deep satisfaction and, I hope comfort, in knowing that Jerry's legacy has affected not only the generations he spanned, but all the generations to come. And you can take great pride in the role you played in his accomplishments, a role that was not without personal sacrifice as you gave up your husband so much of the time to his crusade and vision.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your son Jonathan.

Sincerely,  
Mario M. Cuomo

All the planning in the world... will be of no value unless we put it to work.

I have always had considerable doubts as to the value of the planning that has been going on, whether the money that has been spent on this is even worthwhile, but surely if... that does not result in action, then every nickel of it has been badly spent.

Do we, indeed, need this elaborate process we have gone through in order to understand what we need for our children and to get it done? Aren't these plans but a reflection of what we... have been doing?...

When a parent of a child who is not developing as he should asks "What is wrong with my child?," is he not asking for diagnostic clinics?

When a parent says, "Why did this have to happen to me, and will it happen to my children's chil-

says, "Why can't my child have a job, why can't he be trained to work at some simple task, why can't he be employed as the physically handicapped are in sheltered employment?," is he not asking for vocational rehabilitation and sheltered workshops?

When a parent says, "I have made so much of an investment in my child during his life, and now he is able to live in some modicum of normality in the community, why, when I am dead, will he have to go into an institution?," is he not asking for community residences for his child?

When the parent of a mentally retarded young man who has committed a minor crime is sentenced to an indeterminate sentence in an institution for defective delinquents, when he asks, "Why must my child be sent away to what amounts almost to a life sentence

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"While there may be some doubt as to how much we may be able to change our children for the world's sake, there can be no doubt about how much we must change the world for our children's sake."

Jerry Weingold 1950

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dren?," is he not asking for research?

When a parent of a young child says, "Where can my child play with other children and learn?," is he not asking for pre-school experiences?

When a parent says, "What is wrong with my school-age child, why cannot I, as a taxpayer, get schooling for him?," is he not asking for special education in the public schools for his child?

When a parent says, "Why is my child not able to learn how to swim, to go to camp, to have after-school activities?," is he not asking for recreation and leisure time activities for his child?

When a parent of a young adult

for this small crime?," is he not asking, "What about the civil rights of my child?"

When a parent in a time of stress any time during the life of the child says, "To whom can I turn for advice, who has some responsibility for helping me with this terrible problem and burden?," is he not asking for the fixed point of referral in the community to which he can turn for help?

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I, for one, like "cook-book" planning, the kind of planning that results in a repast rather than a philosophical discussion of gustatory delights we are not told how to prepare or where to get. I would not,



however, want to appear completely negative about planning. There are a number of positives that we can cull from this process. One of these is public education. If properly used, the very process of planning and the plan itself can be an instrument for educating the public as to the needs of the mentally retarded...

What may be good for me and my child may not necessarily be good for you and yours. What may be feasible in my state may not be feasible in yours. But I hope I have indicated some general principles which are good everywhere for everyone. As I hear the echo of my

words and as I re-read my speech after it was typewritten, I experienced that psychological phenomenon known as "deja vu," liberally translated, "I have been there before." As I read the reports which speak of projection of needs and services for five years, 10 years, 20 years, terms dear to the hearts of the sociologists, I am reminded of the French saying, "The more it changes, the more it remains the same."

"God has scattered among us, rare as the possessors of genius, the idiots, the blind, the deaf-mute in order to bind the rich to the needy, the talented to the incapable, all men to each other by ties of indissoluble solidarity. The old binds are

dissolving. Man is already unwilling to contribute to the support of the indolent nobility, but he is every day more ready to build palaces and give annuities to the indigent and infirm, the chosen friend of our Lord," Seguin wrote that in 1854.

"I am sure the public would be quick to act if it was more generally known what needs to be done." "Our alarm now is that we are aware that the problem is with us and we are not meeting it." Lloyd N. Yepson, 1949.

"As part of the task of education, parents groups must evolve an overall plan." Joseph T. Weingold, 1950.

"In any case, whatever the respective departmental responsibility, continuity of treatment through the life of the subnormal child is a paramount importance; this principle should guide all provisions." World Health Organization, Copenhagen, 1960.

"In our society such children—like those more fortunate—have full right to the pursuit of happiness, to a chance to develop their capabilities and to the blessings of kindness and care." President Eisenhower, 1956.

The first statement was made more than 100 years ago. Shall we be repeating it as we call for more planning in the future—or will it be obsolete because we have acted instead of talked?

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