

Representative John E. Fogarty--
Dedication ceremony of the John
E. Fogarty Medical and Rehabilitation
Unit, Ladd School, Exeter, Rhode
Island, Sunday, April 29, 1962,
at 2:30 p.m.

OUR ALLIANCE TO CONQUER MENTAL RETARDATION

Thank you for honoring me by naming this building the John E. Fogarty Medical and Rehabilitation Unit.

There comes a time in the history of a community, a state, a country, when a problem which has shadowed the hearts and lives of its citizens is discovered anew. Viewed in this new perspective, in the stronger light furnished by man's increased capacity to master his environment--and to minister unto it--the problem which had seemed unknown and unmanageable becomes known and manageable.

At such a time, the moment for the casting away of the problem has passed, and it has become, in the words of the Preacher, "a time to gather together...a time to build up...a time to heal."

We are at such a moment now, as we dedicate this building to the use and service of the mentally retarded here at the Ladd School.

But despite the significance of this occasion, it is only one concrete example of the fact that, for the mentally retarded, their "season under the sun" has arrived. This circular building, with windows which let in the light to each patient's room, is but one example of what can result from the alliance to conquer mental retardation that has been constructed in recent years.

As proud as I am that you have chosen to name this building the John E. Fogarty Medical and Rehabilitation Unit, I am prouder still

of this alliance, and of the share I have had in building it. As a bricklayer and as a legislator, I believe it is soundly constructed, that it will endure, and that it will bring sunlight and health to hundreds of thousands of the mentally retarded.

For more than a decade, many persons, many groups, and many social forces within our country have been working together to form this alliance. As citizens working to "promote the general Welfare," they have approached the problems of the mentally retarded--and other health problems--with the same zeal that characterized those citizens who fought--and won--the economic battles of the 1930's, the battles in Europe and in Korea during the decade of the 1940's.

As soon as our economic and national survival was insured--at least for the time being--the push to solve our nation's health problems--including those of mental retardation--began.

To those of us who were in Congress at the time, this emerging demand for better health services for all our citizens--including the mentally ill and the mentally retarded--was unmistakable. The demands came from everywhere, and with relentless fervor. They came from dedicated professionals, educators, civic and religious leaders. The people spoke.

We listened, questioned, investigated--and passed the National Mental Health Act in 1946. Two years later the National Institute of Mental Health was established. Two years after that, forty parents of retarded children gathered together and formed the National Association for Retarded Children. One year after that--in 1951--the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness was established.

The alliance to combat mental retardation had been formed. Yet not all of those responsible for its formation appeared in the halls and hearing rooms of Congress at that time. And while what I hope to do today is to give you some idea of the present status of this alliance--and my pledge that I, for one, shall continue to work for its increased effectiveness--I would like, too, to remind you of some of the true pioneers in this field.

I am thinking now of the work of the American Psychiatric Association and of the American Association for Mental Deficiency, both founded in the mid-nineteenth century. I am thinking of Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe of Boston, who, a century before the National Institute of Mental Health was formed, said of the mentally retarded he had examined,

"There is not one of any age who may not be made more of a man and less of a brute by patience and kindness directed by skill and energy."

I am thinking, too, of Dr. Henry H. Goddard of the Training School at Vineland, New Jersey, who introduced the Binet-Simon mental tests to this country in 1910.

There were other early pioneers in this field: The National Committee for Mental Hygiene, which established a Division on Mental Deficiency in 1917; the Rockefeller Foundation, which, around that time, supported surveys of conditions in the schools and hospitals for the mentally retarded; the Commonwealth Fund which, in 1920, began the movement toward community care for the mentally retarded by supporting the first child guidance clinics.

With the establishment of the two health Institutes which have since served at the focal point for Federally sponsored and supported medical research and training programs in mental retardation, those of us in Congress who were interested in these matters had a temporary sense of achievement.

This was not to last long. For as we reviewed the various programs of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and heard more testimony from interested citizens, it seemed obvious that more needed to be done--and could be done--for the mentally retarded.

Seven years ago, in its 1956 Report, the Appropriations Subcommittee of which I am Chairman called for a Federal program designed specifically to meet the needs of retarded children. It backed up this directive by increasing the budget requests for various programs in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The report that year said:

"So little attention has been paid to the problem [of mental retardation] that we have only the haziest notion of what percentage of the unfortunate children, of at least as unfortunate parents, could be helped medically and through educational techniques fitting their needs, so that they could lead useful and satisfying lives. We have an equally hazy notion of the causes of the problem--how much is due to brain injury, how much is due to the effect of environment, to heredity, and so forth."

For each succeeding year since then the Committee and Congress have seen to it that increased support was given these programs. Currently we are spending approximately \$24 million at the Federal level in the field of mental retardation--excluding \$52 million in

disability and survivors benefits paid by the Social Security Administration. For fiscal year 1963, it is expected that these funds will increase to more than \$28 million.

The research and training programs of the Institutes of Mental Health and Neurological Diseases and Blindness have made possible a continually mounting attack on the causes of mental retardation, and significant advances have been made in the treatment and prevention of mental retardation. Since 1956, funds allotted to combat mental retardation by these Institutes have increased sixteen-fold, from \$1.3 million to almost \$20 million.

In the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, plans for 1963 will make possible the rehabilitation of at least 5,400 mentally retarded persons through State rehabilitation offices. Overall expenditures in this Office, including demonstration projects and training programs, have increased ten-fold since 1956.

The Office of Education now administers a program to improve the professional preparation of educators in the field of mental retardation and to multiply the number of teachers trained to work with retarded children. Funds allotted for programs concerned with the mentally retarded have more than doubled in the last few years.

This is also true of programs in the Social Security Administration: those administered by the Children's Bureau, and the Bureau of Family Services. These programs have stimulated and encouraged the establishment of special clinics for the mentally retarded in the various states until there are now 80 such clinics.

Examples of other accomplishments brought about, in part, by the activities of these Bureaus are: over 25,000 public health nurses have received some training in the problems of mental retardation; and students, residents, and interns in 14 medical schools have become familiar with mental retardation through demonstration projects set up in conjunction with these medical schools.

In short, by continuing to stimulate and support these Federal programs designed to help the mentally retarded, Congress has, over the last decade, strengthened the alliance to conquer mental retardation. Total expenditures by Federal agencies for mental retardation programs have increased fifteen-fold in the past six years.

But no one knows better than a Federal legislator the extent to which the will of Congress is dependent upon the will of the people. Unless Federal legislation--including appropriations bills--are based upon broad public support, Congressional efforts to promote progress in a particular field will be to little avail. An alliance with a membership of one is no alliance.

Congressional action in recent years, though determined and expanding, has been matched--perhaps surpassed--by actions taken by other members of the alliance.

For example, forty-eight states now have legislation providing for special classes for the mentally retarded in the public schools--double the number of state programs which existed only a year ago. It is estimated that these classes had enrollments of 275,000 pupils in 1960.

Then, too, the recent contributions of the professional and scientific communities have been outstanding. I am thinking now of how it came about that only recently the Children's Bureau announced the application, on a wide scale, of a new blood test designed to locate babies with PKU--thereby making possible the control of this disorder by dietary means. I was much impressed, too, by testimony presented only recently to the Appropriations Subcommittee on what is called "the long-term collaborative project." This project, which will eventually involve some 50,000 mothers and children in many parts of the country, is investigating those biological and medical factors operating between conception and birth that may be associated with various types of birth defects. The scientists have found, for example, that of all those infants who perform poorly on a psychological test when they are eight-months old, one-third has shown evidence of lack of oxygen at birth or soon after birth.

Besides the contributions of the professional and scientific communities, the alliance has been strengthened by the rapid growth of the citizens groups interested in this field, and by the increased contributions of private foundations. From its original membership of 40 parents in 1950, the National Association for Retarded Children has grown until today there are more than 50,000 members of this organization in 1,000 local associations in every state in the country.

And of the private foundations contributing over \$100,000 annually to the field of mental health, one third are interested in mental

retardation--a greater number than have indicated an interest in alcoholism or psychopharmacology. An outstanding example of the contributions made by private foundations to this field, of course, have been those made by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Memorial Foundation. The Foundation only recently made possible the establishment at Stanford University, of a new research center--the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Laboratories for Molecular Medicine.

What is the present status of the alliance to conquer mental retardation?

It is stronger than ever before. Recognizing its existence and wishing to emphasize the great importance of the work it must do, the President, last fall, announced the appointment of a special panel to develop a national plan to combat mental retardation.

Next month, some of the members of this panel, many of whom have been working in this field for their entire professional and adult lives, will meet here in Rhode Island. They will appraise the adequacy of existing programs here, evaluate present and future needs in this field. They will get your views as to what had best be done to form a comprehensive national program in this field.

I have no doubt that they will note the progress we have made here in Rhode Island--the construction of this Medical and Rehabilitation Unit, the state-wide counseling and referral service which is helping the families of the retarded, the sheltered workshop which is making possible a socially useful life for ten persons who were formerly residents of the Ladd School.

As members of the President's Panel hold hearings in other parts of the country, they will find similar signs of progress. But the President's Panel will also find many areas of desperate need, and many examples of human suffering and despair.

They will find that we need 50,000 more teachers, especially trained for their work, if we are to educate our retarded children as they should be educated. They will find we need many more medical research centers with programs designed to investigate the complex medical problems of the mentally ill. They will find that we need many more physicians trained in pediatric neurology and in child psychiatry. And we need a great deal more knowledge into the causes-- and possible cures--of mental retardation.

It is true--and I am sorry that it is true--that the alliance which was formed to conquer mental retardation has not achieved its goal. But I shall remember this occasion--which has touched me so deeply--and this circular building as indications of the strength of this alliance. We have made progress. We have defined our problem, drawn a perimeter around it, established the foundations for a total attack against mental retardation.

Though the time may still be far away when all the problems of mental retardation have been solved, we have already insured a "season under the sun" to many of the mentally retarded who are now alive-- and we have prevented a life in the shadows for many children who are yet to be born.