Garden of Hope:
Laradon Hall

George V. Kelly
with
Harry Farrar

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For Joe and Elizabeth Calabrese
Introduction

Rarely does one willingly admit a gross error in judgment. Supposedly good for the soul, confession wounds the ego.

My blunder occurred about three decades ago, after a slim, agile dark-haired man of medium height, dressed in the slate blue of a U. S. Postal Service uniform, strode into the Rocky Mountain News building. It was about midweek, shortly after 6 p.m. The paper’s city room was thinly populated. Most staff members were at dinner.

The visitor conferred briefly with City Editor Vince Dwyer. Peering over his glasses, the latter scanned the panorama of typewriters and desks until his eyes locked with mine. Beckoning with head and hand, Dwyer motioned me, a rewrite man, to his side. Introduced to the postal worker—Joe Calabrese—I noted his intense, blue eyes. The editor quickly briefed me about Calabrese’s private school for mentally impaired children.

“He’s got a new angle,” Dwyer said. “Let’s do it.” Obviously, the letter carrier had been in before.

During the ensuing interview, the visitor mesmerized me with his enthusiasm and evangelistic fervor. The point of the news item escapes me, but I never forgot the forcefulness of its bearer. I handed the finished copy to Dwyer, with a flip comment, like: “It’s a good
yarn. Too bad the school won’t last. Not enough cash.’’

As years passed, I was peripherally aware of Laran­
don’s growth and achievements. Not until I started this
book did I realize how wrong I had been—30 years
earlier.

I am now trying to correct that misjudgment. This
volume attempts to chronicle how pioneering, unprece­
dented feats by two ordinary mortals, with “not enough
cash,” have produced an extraordinary harvest from the
Garden of Hope.—GVK.
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“A School Is Born

“I’m sorry, Mr. Calabrese, but our system simply has no place for your sons.”

Saying that, the elementary school principal shifted her gaze from the visitor and began shuffling papers on the desk.

Tacitly acknowledging his dismissal, Joe Calabrese shook his head slowly, slid from the chair, grasped the hand of his young son, and left the office. It was not the first time he had been frustrated in efforts to secure a public school education for his boys, Donald, 12, and Larry, 7, both retarded since birth.

Joe automatically donned his hat and looked sadly down the long hallway that would never echo his sons’ footsteps. Despite, or perhaps because of, the turndown, he didn’t have quite the same numb feeling he had experienced on earlier rejections.

There were some elements in this rebuff that made Joe’s blood boil, giving him a new determination. In the principal’s reception room, he had felt uncomfortable, almost unwanted, as he waited for admission. After what seemed like a long time—too long a time, Joe thought—he ignored an admonition from the secretary and literally burst into the principal’s office at Beach Court School in Denver. He demanded to know why his boy couldn’t be admitted.
His son, Larry, the principal reminded him, had taken a test, but hadn't achieved a high enough rating for admission. Then, she added the cruelest comment possible:

“You can take one look at the child and know that he is not for our school.” She also acknowledged that not even the Denver public education system could cope with retarded children.

He and Larry took a few steps toward the exit, then stopped. His sad eyes brightened, his head snapped erect and he said fiercely to himself and Larry:

“By golly, this time, I'm not taking ‘No’ for an answer. I'll carry this thing downtown, right to the big brass in the school system.”

Joe and the boy walked briskly from the school building to his car. He was actually whistling, as he drove toward his modest home in Denver’s “little Italy.”

On that sunny day in the spring of 1947, Joseph Vincent Calabrese, a special delivery messenger for the U. S. Post Office, seeking only to solve a stubborn family problem, unwittingly was about to launch a crusade that would reverberate throughout the educational world. The crusade’s goal: Training the mentally handicapped for life in a cold and callous world.

In striving for that straightforward objective, Joe and his wife, Elizabeth, would touch, change and brighten the lives of thousands of persons. They would never quite solve their own problem, but would achieve near-miraculous feats for inhabitants of a limbo society had created for brain-injured children.

When Joe decided to confront the school powers, he was 36, survivor of a poverty-plagued childhood, and a battle-scarred veteran of the depression, the economic war of the 1930’s.

Born in North Denver April 2, 1911, to Joseph Calabrese, a second generation American, and Josephine Mortellaro, a native of Italy who came to the U. S. at age 13, Joe was the oldest of five children. His mother was 19 when he was born.
The elder Calabreses had long ago agreed their first child would be named after both of them, regardless of sex. The midwife who presided at the delivery, however, almost fouled up that plan. Not speaking nor understanding English, she entered the name “Gia” on the birth certificate. That mistake was corrected many years later, but in the intervening time the family always called the oldest child “Joseph.”

Eventually, Joe had a brother, Frank, who died at 20, and three sisters, Margaret, Hazel, and Helen.

There was little to distinguish the Calabreses from thousands of other Italian-American families who colonized Denver’s near North Side. The father, a railroad laborer, toiled long and hard for his growing brood.

The first ten years of Joe’s life hardly prepared him for the months following his 11th birthday. Fast-moving events transformed him from a child to an adult before he was 12.

Tragedy struck in 1922. Joe’s dad died of pneumonia.

To hold her family together, Josephine, in the U. S. only 16 years, called on seamstress skills she had learned in the old country. As a needle worker, she staved off poverty, fed and housed her family.

At 11, Joe was small, skinny and gutsy. He learned kids could make money selling newspapers, so he became a Denver Post “hustler” by scraping up 20 cents, which bought him his first bundle at a penny apiece. Since the real action was downtown, that’s where Joe sought customers.

Hawking papers at two cents a copy was not an easy way to make money. To get a “corner,” a newsboy had two choices: Buy one or fight for it.

At first, Joe found, fought for and won a location at 14th and Curtis Streets. It wasn’t particularly productive, but he hustled and made it pay.

“I wouldn’t go home until I made 50 cents,” Joe recalled. “Sometimes it would be 8 or 9 o’clock at night before I walked or hitched a ride over the 20th Street via-
duct to home. I gave most of the money to Mom, but kept a kitty so I could stay in business."

Joe's native shrewdness, later to play a large role in his life, cropped up early. A few weeks after he started selling, he had saved enough to buy a better corner—a choice spot at 15th and Champa Streets, a half-block from the Post building. He had the corner, however, only for the last edition. It was not only profitable, it was close to the source of supply, the Post circulation dock.

"I was usually able to net about $1.50 on Saturdays," Joe said. "I would sell the afternoon paper, then get the early Sunday edition about 6 and a later issue about 9. Saturday was the big day.

"It didn't cost much to eat in those days," he continued. "A beanery at 15th and Curtis sold soup for a nickel. I'd order a bowl, load it with crackers and ketchup, and have a big meal. At a dairy bar not far away, I got all the buttermilk I could drink for another nickel."

Joe sold papers for several years and learned the tricks of the "hustling" trade, before that term took on a different meaning. When his lifelong friend, Dan Dock, left the Post to work for the Denver Express, Joe switched his allegiance to the latter. At various times, he sold the Denver Times and Rocky Mountain News, as well. Regardless of what paper he peddled, most of the profits went to his mother. He was also a free-lance rag-picker. Pulling a small hand-wagon, he traveled up and down alleys seeking old clothes, newspapers, bottles, metal and anything else salable to the big junk dealers.

Shortly after her husband's death, Josephine found it necessary to move her family to the West Side, which had a large Jewish colony.

"For a time there," Joe said, "I thought there were only two kinds of people, Italians and Jews."

To climax Joe's hectic 11th year, he stumbled into his first major adventure outside the big city. Learning from playmates that kids who went to the West Side Neighborhood House, at West 10th Avenue and Galapago Street, had a chance to attend camp, Joe promptly
became a patron. He was able to get his name on the list for a late summer vacation, because, as a partial orphan, he qualified.

The camp, located near Bailey, Colorado, in the mountains 50 miles southwest of Denver, was directed by Roy (Dolly) McGlone, a robust 180-pounder who was a strong, but gentle, disciplinarian and a proponent of mental and physical fitness.

"It was a real thrill for all of us, just going to camp," Joe recounted. "We rode the old Colorado & Southern narrow-gauge train to camp—a treat I'll never forget.

"Once we got there, we found that two permanent shelters had already been built. We kids helped build cabin tents, in which we lived. Dolly took us fishing and on hikes. At night, he would gather us around the campfire and talk about nature.

"I thought it was funny—calling him Dolly. He was so big and muscular—like a moose. He made a big impression on me, as you can tell. Although there was plenty of time for fun, we also had to help improve the camp. I worked harder than I ever did in my life. Dolly must have liked the way I pitched in, because he let me stay an extra week.

"I've always remembered that summer."

It would be 30 years before Joe and Dolly would see each other again... a meeting that would have a profound effect upon their lives and eventually open society's doors to thousands of retarded persons.

When Joe returned to the city from the peace and freedom of the mountains, he resumed his newsboy career and elementary education. His mother continued her work for a tailor at 17th Street and Glenarm Place and later joined the seamstress staff at the May Company department store.

By the time he was 14 and a Skinner Junior High pupil, Joe was looking forward to vacation with greater anticipation than usual. An uncle in Fort Collins, operating a candy store, invited young Calabrese up for the summer. Once there, Joe launched his own enterprise.
"I paid $50 for a horse and wagon," Joe recalled, "and went into the refreshment business. Ice cream cost 90 cents a gallon and I got 20 scoops to the quart, so I made pretty good money."

Thus, long before the Good Humor man, Joe, his horse and the wagon became familiar figures on Fort Collins streets. Business was so good one summer, he made $1,200. The other two years were almost as fruitful. His last season as an ice-cream-cone merchant was 1927, when he was 16.

Two significant things happened that year. He completed formal public schooling by finishing the sophomore year in North High. He also fell in love with his future bride.

As Joe recalls the latter event, it wasn't much different, at first, from the way he met other young ladies. With a friend, probably Fred Lucci, he went to the dance pavilion known locally as the "World-Famous Trocadero Ballroom," at Elitch's Gardens in North Denver.

In the late 20's and early 30's, Elitch's was the place to dance in Denver during the summer, especially on Saturdays and Sundays. The big bands, conducted by such leaders as Isham Jones, Kay Kyser, Dick Jergens and Guy Lombardo, made regular stops at Elitch's and drew large crowds.

The ballroom crowd comprised about 60 percent couples on dates. The remainder were stag patrons of all ages, but chiefly in the teens and young 20s.

Proper introductions were unnecessary when a stag male dancer sought a partner. Young men knew where their feminine counterparts would gather. They would wait until a wide choice was available. Then, the male would stalk the girls until a particularly attractive one caught his eye. If he already had his 5¢-a-dance tickets, he would simply walk up to his prospect and say something like: "May I have this dance, please?"

The would-be partner, not unaware that she had been carefully inspected from afar, would respond. If the bidder pleased her, the answer was usually positive, but
it was her option and no young man ever challenged the lady's right to reject him.

Once matched, the couple would join the swirling hundreds on the dance floor, or wait until the music stopped and the succeeding three-minute number began. Usually, if it were the first dance for a couple, self-introductions comprised the initial exchange between them.

Elitch's employed a staff of attendants who circulated among the participants and "took" tickets. They also policed decorum so that "improper" or too-athletic dance movements were kept to a minimum.

With this background and under those conditions, hundreds of romances budded and bloomed in the flower-bedecked Elitch's ballroom. For many years, the Trocadero was credited with sending more wedding-bound couples down the middle aisle than any other romantic setting.

In 1927, money jingling in his pocket from his suc-
cessful ice-cream venture and several dance tickets in his hand, Joe Calabrese spied an especially attractive young lady in the girls’ stag section. Making sure she was as pretty as she seemed at first glance, Joe approached her boldly and made the traditional request. She nodded, stepped onto the dance floor and floated away with him. It didn’t take more than a dozen steps for Joe to realize his partner was a super-dancer. Well before the last dance, the twosome knew there was something special about their relationship.

Elizabeth McAuliffe, his new-found friend, Joe learned, had been born in Superior, Colorado, a northern coal-mining community. She, like he, was 16 and lived with her mother, from whom her father was separated.

After that first dance, they never dated anyone else again.

From that point on, Joe and Elizabeth and Fred and his date danced away summers at Elitch’s, or sometimes in the ballroom at Lakeside, the other big amusement park. In the winter, they moved to the Bon Ton Dancing Academy downtown or the Rainbow Ballroom at East 5th Avenue and Lincoln Street in Central Denver.

“We’d bring a little jug,” Joe said, “buy a quart of ginger ale and have a ball. We usually rode in a model T Ford that Fred and I bought for $25. We had great times in that thing, but we had to be good mechanics to keep it running.”

During that period, Joe and Fred played baseball for various teams, including one sponsored by Blackie’s Chili Parlor, owned by Maurice J. Keating, father of Bert Keating, who later gained fame as Denver’s district attorney.

“Fred Lucci was a great pitcher,” Joe said. “I wasn’t too good as an outfielder, but liked the game, so wherever he went, I went along.”

With his recreation and social needs adequately accommodated, Joe still had the problem of making a living and helping support his family. He attended Parks Business School, specializing in commercial courses, for
a year and a half. He mastered shorthand, typing and bookkeeping, skills that led to a job with the Dorr Co., which handled mining and sewage disposal equipment.

Serving as file clerk, typist and, occasionally, switchboard operator, Joe worked for Dorr until 1932, when the company folded. It was an early victim of the depression.

Joe felt he was "forced" to get a high school diploma, so he enrolled at Emily Griffith Opportunity School. He completed the formal part of his education, interrupted in 1927, and became a prep graduate.

While attending school at night and other times convenient to him, Calabrese and his brother-in-law, Vincent Tagliavore, started a bakery at West 32nd Avenue and Tejon Street. "We called it the Sunshine Bakery," Joe said, "and sold both wholesale and retail. We charged five cents for Italian bread and sold doughnuts for ten cents a dozen. We bought a truck for $50 to service grocery stores throughout the city. Those were hard days when people had little spending money and credit was tough to come by.

"Sometimes three-fourths of our deliveries would be returned unsold," Joe added. "When that happened, we passed the merchandise off as day-old products. We sold bread for three pennies and the doughnuts a nickel a dozen.

"We had only $200 invested in capital equipment, but it was still a big blow when we had to close after nine months. One thing that forced us to the wall was sliced bread, which was introduced and quickly became popular.

"We couldn't afford a slicer," Joe continued, "so we folded."

When he was 21 in 1932, Joe entered politics, an avocation he would follow most of his adult life. He was elected committeeman in his Democratic precinct and worked vigorously for Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Democrats, riding on Roosevelt's coat-tails, swept most offices in Denver and Colorado, so Joe's timing,
politically, was excellent. His work earned him party recognition, which was valuable later.

Even though a Republican had been chosen mayor in Denver's non-partisan election of 1931, Calabrese landed a municipal job in 1933. Enough Democrats held key positions to help Joe exercise his new-found political pull.

He worked as a laborer at $5 a day and was given 16 days' duty per month. Though there were periodic layoffs, as the city's money ran out, Calabrese did fairly well. In the late fall, he helped install the city's famous Civic Center Christmas decorations, under the direction of John Malpiede, a Democratic power, the city's chief electrician—and Joe's friend.

He also labored at Sloan's Lake on Denver's far West Side, cleaning the snow from ice, so skaters could have fun. In the spring and summer he trimmed trees in various parks. He helped build nine holes of golf at the scenic Willis Case course in Northwest Denver.

When the depression-spawned Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds became available, he worked on Table Mountain, in the hills west of Denver, where the city had a rock quarry. He served as water boy, carrying a bucket or pitcher to other laborers; he also dug rocks and helped haul them to the Platte River, where the banks were rip-rapped to prevent erosion.

From 1933 to 1937, he held a variety of outdoor jobs—all with the city.

Elizabeth, meanwhile, worked in the accounting department of a downtown department store and helped support her mother, just as Joe was doing. The pay was meager, around $15 weekly, but she managed to save enough so she could buy furniture, which, when purchased, went into storage.

Almost from the beginning of their courtship, it was a foregone conclusion Elizabeth and Joe would be married. Early in 1935, they decided they would take that step on February 23 that year. They arranged for the nuptials to be conducted quietly in the Cathedral of the
Immaculate Conception, near downtown Denver. The rites, in fact, were so quiet they were secret.

"We really weren't financially able to get married," Joe said. "Elizabeth had a steady job, but she was helping her mother. Besides, I didn't want my wife working. I believed a woman's place, if she had a husband, was in the home, raising a family.

"I had jobs," Calabrese continued, "but they really weren't producing enough so that we could have our own home and I could keep on helping my family.

"We went ahead with the wedding, anyhow. We decided to keep the news from our folks until I had a better job."

Both continued living at their mothers' homes.

The masquerade worked for more than three months. On Memorial Day, 1935, they were returning to Denver from Cheyenne, Wyoming, where they had visited Joe's sister, Margaret. Driving toward Denver in their 1931 Ford Victoria sedan, a rather flashy automobile, they passed through Nunn, Colorado, about 6 p.m.. South of that community, a car going toward Wyoming swerved and hit the Calabrese vehicle head-on, rolling it into a borrow pit.

The driver of the other car, Lester C. Hunt, who later became governor of Wyoming, had been blinded by the sun, he said, and didn't see Joe's car.

Elizabeth was seriously injured. Taken by ambulance to a Cheyenne hospital, she was treated for internal injuries, including a fractured pelvis. She was hospitalized two weeks, then released, wearing a body cast and walking with the aid of crutches. All medical expenses and the cost of replacing the automobile were assumed by Mr. Hunt, who conceded the accident was his fault.

The couple decided during Elizabeth's recuperation they would disclose their marriage. Her mother took the news in stride, but Josephine Calabrese was furious. She refused to speak to her son or daughter-in-law for almost a year.
“It wasn’t that she disapproved the wedding . . . or Elizabeth,” Joe said. “She was angry because she wanted to have a hand in, be present for, and help celebrate the marriage of her oldest child. I tried to explain our reasons for the secrecy, but she wouldn’t listen. Even though her attitude irritated me, she was probably right. It was a long time, however, before she finally accepted my apology.”

After Elizabeth slowly recovered and got rid of the cast, the couple rented a small house at 3909 Wyandot Street for $20 a month. They were proud of the new furniture Elizabeth had bought with her savings before the wedding. They set up housekeeping with the enthusiasm of any newlyweds.

Late in 1935, Elizabeth learned she was pregnant. With typical enthusiasm they anticipated their first-born, who arrived July 22, 1936.

Virtually from the moment of birth, it was touch-and-go whether the boy would survive. It had been a difficult delivery for mother and child. Doctors later conceded Elizabeth’s injuries in the automobile accident probably contributed to the brain damage diagnosed in the baby shortly after birth.

The son, Donald, was fed oxygen from primitive equipment day and night for a month. The youngster didn’t have enough strength to suckle, so he had to be force-fed.

“Don’t worry,” a physician assured the parents, “he’ll grow out of it.”

Unable to sit up at six months, the baby was a year old before he crawled.

Despite the ordeal of birth and the boy’s prolonged hospitalization, Elizabeth was unaware of the multiplicity of problems related to her child.

“I didn’t recognize Donald’s retardation,” she recalled later, “until he was about 18 months old. The doctor said the boy needed his tonsils removed. He told us we’d have to pay cash, because he didn’t think Donald would survive the operation. One of Joe’s fellow em-
ployees urged us to seek another physician. The second doctor was furious about the recommended tonsillectomy. He said: ‘Tonsils are not his problem. He’s retarded and probably will never get out of his crib.’

“We then took Donald to a chiropractor. He got a little better. He could sit up, if I sat with him. Then he started to crawl, with a little help.

“We even went to California,” Elizabeth continued, “thinking he would improve with a change of climate and weather. When it was obvious the move hadn’t helped, we came back to Denver, working constantly with him.

“He started walking at 2½,” Elizabeth said, “and we were encouraged.

“The doctor who had refused to remove his tonsils inquired about Donald. When we told him about the progress, he commented: ‘Walking? I don’t believe it. Well, I want him to do more.’ But he didn’t offer help or guidance.”

Joe’s employment with the city lasted from 1933 to 1937, when he again used political influence to secure work. This time, it was at the Post Office. It was not, however, mail handling or a postal route job. Calabrese was made a special delivery messenger.

Instead of being paid a flat salary or by the hour, Joe received nine cents for each letter he delivered and 90¢ an hour for use of his car. He also picked up additional revenue in the summer by helping irrigate the Willis Case golf course from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m.

He and Elizabeth, meanwhile, continued their relentless, but vain, search for someone or some institution that could help Donald on the road to normalcy.

“I had to work like hell to pay the doctor bills,” Joe said. “I was always available for double shifts at the Post Office and would accept any job that would help keep our budget balanced.”

When Donald was four, Elizabeth again found herself with child. As the pregnancy progressed, she developed an extreme nervous condition.
Her doctor told Joe: “She is almost in a state of shock.” He advised them she needed a rest from her constant care of the boy.

With great reluctance, they agreed to place Donald in St. Anne’s Convalescent Home, a haven operated by Episcopalians for physically handicapped children.

“Although not equipped to provide Donald with any more than custodial care,” Joe said, “the sisters were marvelous. They gave him love and attention and it took pressure off Elizabeth.”

The latter agreed, but before she delivered her second child, she and Joe decided to bring Donald home.

“We missed him so much,” Elizabeth recalled. “We wanted to try to help him, as best we could. We know now that if he had had a lot of professional training at that time, he would have improved tremendously.”

Early in 1941, Elizabeth entered the hospital to give birth to her second son, Larry, born February 4. The delivery was normal. No complications followed. It appeared, at first, the youngster was okay.

“Donald had much brain damage,” Joe said, “but Larry didn’t.”

The Calabreses, nevertheless, were faced with numerous other problems. Larry had acute eczema. Regardless of what he was fed, he would break out in a rash.

“Elizabeth tried everything,” Joe explained, “even goat’s milk, but nothing worked. When we fed him, he would frequently vomit up the food. As a consequence, his physical growth was slowed and he didn’t have the strength to develop, so he could crawl and sit up. On top of that, Donald, probably jealous of the new baby, teased Larry. That didn’t help, either.

“Finally, when Larry was 1½, we listened to the advice of one doctor. ‘You must separate the children,’ he said. ‘Larry is simply mimicking Donald and he’ll never make progress when they’re together.’

“With great reluctance,” Joe said, “we decided to place Donald in the State Training Home at Ridge in
Arvada. He was six years old. We had been urged to have him admitted several times. Finally, our defenses were down and we agreed.

"Getting him in was not easy. Under the antiquated laws of the time, he could not be enrolled, except through court action. As the father, I had to sign a complaint against my own son, which I did. The state required that a lunacy commission representative visit the child and touch him with my complaint petition. After that the paper was taken to the County Judge, who ruled he should be committed. The reason he gave was: 'This boy is dangerous to the neighborhood.' The whole thing was a trumped-up case from the beginning.

"I almost wept in the courtroom. I actually cried when I got into my car to drive home. When we took Donald to Ridge, he was in beautiful physical condition. He looked as good as he ever had.

"Once he was admitted, Ridge officials told us we couldn’t see him for 30 days. We were aware of that restriction and agreed to abide by it. We were permitted, however, to make inquiries by telephone, which we did, as often as good taste permitted.

"One night a Ridge doctor told me: 'Your boy got in a fight. This other boy gave your son a black eye.' I knew that had to be a lie. My boy didn’t know how to fight. At that time, Ridge was housing 50 to 60 children in one room, with a single attendant. This made it possible for the less aggressive kids to be molested or injured by the bolder ones.

"A few days after the doctor called, we went to Ridge to visit Donald. We couldn’t believe what we saw. He was bed-ridden. He looked like a skeleton and couldn’t stand.

"A nurse told us he had a severe case of diarrhea. 'He’s going downhill every day,' she said. That puzzled us. I asked a doctor what was wrong and he said Donald had contracted an infection.

"'You may take him home and nurse him, if you wish,' he advised us.
"We didn’t remove him that day, because of the infection, but we did the next day. We had to carry him out on a stretcher. When we got him home, we called our own doctor, who diagnosed the illness and prescribed medicine that eventually cleared up the problem.

"Ridge wasn’t through with us, though. The head man called and ordered us to return Donald to the home. ‘If you don’t,’ he threatened, ‘I’ll send the sheriff after you.’

"We were frightened at the alternatives. We couldn’t, in good conscience, send Donald back to certain death. Yet we didn’t want the sheriff coming after us either.

"Weighing the consequences, we decided to keep the boy at home and risk arrest. We so informed the Ridge doctor.

"He never followed through on his threat. As far as I know, Donald has never been officially released from the institution, because I would have had to sign a discharge request."

Larry, meanwhile, was making little progress. His diet had to be watched constantly to prevent painful and irritating rashes and stomach problems. He was tiny and thin and crawled quite a bit, but was too weak to stand. The doctor blamed malnutrition, caused by his inability to retain food.

"Larry finally started walking at about two, but he didn’t talk until he was five,” Joe said. “There were some similarities between the boys’ problems. Donald had had great difficulty talking. He could say ‘Mama,’ but he couldn’t put words together. Larry didn’t even do that until he was five. Both crawled all over the house, so Elizabeth had to watch them constantly.

"I continued holding two jobs, so that meant I was away from home sometimes for 16 hours or more a day. That put a tremendous strain on Elizabeth. Finally, our doctor told me she needed a rest.

"Give up one of your jobs and stay home more,” he warned, ‘or better still, let Elizabeth go to work.’ That
ultimatum did it," Joe said. "I kept my special delivery work and stayed home more.

"But we needed additional income, so Vincent Tagliavore, my partner in Sunshine Bakery, and I looked around for a small business. We negotiated with Elitch’s Gardens and opened a place called the Sweet Shop, near the main gate at the park. We sold candy and other goodies when the Gardens were open from the first part of May until after Labor Day.

"I would put Elizabeth and the kids in the car and drive to Elitch’s, where I worked from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. She kept the boys occupied part of the time and I’d relieve her so she could work in the shop. The change in scenery seemed to help them all," Joe said.

The parents, nevertheless, were still looking for a miracle. At the same time, they were saving as much as possible to provide for the boys.

By the time Larry was 6 and Donald 11, Joe started trying to get them enrolled in the public school system. He was more concerned about Larry’s admission than Donald’s, so he pressed particularly hard in behalf of his younger son.

Despite several rejections, including one after Larry had scored only 37 in an I.Q. test, given by a woman psychologist, Joe decided on a last try. It resulted in the confrontation and denial of admission by the Beach Court School principal.

When Joe arrived home after that bitter scene, he reviewed with Elizabeth the incident in the principal’s office and told her of his plan to confront a top school official with their problems.

"I was mad," Joe recalled, "and Elizabeth shared my anger. I called Guy Fox, who was, I believe, assistant superintendent for elementary schools. I told him the reason for my call and virtually demanded that he see me.

"'Certainly, Mr. Calabrese,' he told me, 'I'd be happy to see you.' His graciousness throughout our conversation surprised me, because I wasn’t accustomed to
that kind of response from school people. We found a mutually suitable date and agreed to meet on that day when I'd be through work.

"I entered his office on time and saw he was reading a paper. I assumed it was about Larry.

"He put the document down and told me he was familiar with Larry's case. 'You know, Mr. Calabrese,' he said, 'Larry was tested and failed. No pupil is admitted unless he has an I.Q. of 50 or more.'

"'Would you mind,' he asked, 'if I brought in the school's psychologist? He's kind and gentle. Maybe he can help.'

"I told him," Joe said, "I'd be more than willing to talk to him. Somehow, I was getting excited about the way the interview was going. Mr. Fox was most helpful. He got on the phone and shortly Allan Murphy, the psychologist, joined us. That's how he entered our lives—through an inter-office call.

"Allan and I chatted amiably for several minutes. He finally suggested we arrange a new test for Larry. Several days later, I brought the boy in. I held him on my lap, while Dr. Murphy conducted the examination.

"'Can he do it?' Allan asked at the beginning. 'I believe he can,' I replied.

"After it was all over, Allan credited Larry with good marks. I was elated. Instead of having the boy admitted to school, however, he urged me to enroll him in a speech clinic at the University of Denver. His reasoning: 'Larry has definite speech problems and if we put him in school it could harm him. Kids can be cruel, especially to children who don't communicate too well.'

"He also suggested that we place Donald in a school at Longmont."

Despite the harrowing experience at Ridge, the Calabreses agreed to try the institution Murphy had suggested. It was St. Coletta's, run by the Sisters of St. Francis from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Joe and Elizabeth inspected the school and found it acceptable, so they enrolled Donald. St. Coletta's was
the only residential facility of its kind between Chicago and the West Coast.

"At first," Joe said, "St. Coletta's was a good place for the boy. One or two of the sisters took excellent care of him and we were pleased. Then, one of the nuns was called back to Chicago and the school immediately became under-staffed.

"Very shortly, Donald started regressing. He became quite thin and was in poor shape physically, because no one had the time to feed him. As far as nutrition was concerned, it was a repetition of Ridge and the hospitals where Donald had been treated. The people in all those institutions failed to understand that some of the retarded had to have help at mealtime. It was a difficult way for us to learn such a fundamental fact, but it was a lesson not forgotten when we opened Laradon Hall. We have always insisted that a child eat for its health. A teacher or other employee sits at the table to help the youngsters, if they need it.

"With great regret, we removed Donald from St. Coletta's and brought him home again," Joe said.

"Not much later," he continued, "we were saddened to learn the school was going to close. Apathy and lack of financial and other support from the public caused the closing. The nuns had received and accepted an invitation from Cardinal Stritch, the Archbishop of Chicago, to open a similar school there."

While Donald was in Longmont, Larry attended speech classes twice a week at D.U. He made some progress, but it did not warrant the expense or the time it was taking. It was believed he needed a more intensive program.

Dr. Murphy, also affiliated with the D.U. program, closely monitored Larry's efforts. Reluctantly, he told Joe it might be better if other avenues were explored. In the long run, he said, Larry would not be helped by the brief periods of guidance available at the university.

"When he told me that, I was stunned," Joe said. "The public schools weren't the answer, nor were the
special classes.

"I turned to Allan and said:

"'By golly, if there's no place for my kids, I'll start a
school of my own for them and other youngsters like
them.'

"'Are you serious?' he asked.

"'You bet I am.'

"'Great,' he said, 'I'll help you.'"

He explained that several professionals and some
lay persons recognized the need for a school similar to
St. Coletta's, but with provisions for day students.
Murphy promised to contact them and try to organize a
group that would assist Joe in the work he was about to
undertake.

"That's how it all began," Joe recounted. "I hurried
home and talked it over with Elizabeth. She agreed we
should give it a try."

Joe knew he needed a lot of money to launch the
project, so he turned to the only major asset in which he
had an interest—the Sweet Shop at Elitch's. He and Vin-
cent, his brother-in-law, had made the enterprise
prosper. Despite the welcome profits it added to their in-
come, the Calabreses decided to sell the shop. Vincent re-
luctantly agreed and the business was offered for sale.
Shortly, a $20,000 bid was received and accepted. Joe
and Elizabeth pledged their $10,000 share to finance the
school.

Dr. Murphy had learned about the availability of a
14-room house being used by Catholic Charities as a
home for babies of unwed mothers. Located at 3129
Federal Blvd., the facility was operated by a nurse, Mrs.
Rosemary Purdy.

Joe, Elizabeth, Allan and Dr. Murphy's wife, Anne,
inspected the property in the summer of 1948 and con-
ferred with Mrs. Purdy. A change in policy of providing
shelter for unwed mothers, she explained, would necessi-
tate closing the home. However, she indicated a strong
interest in the Calabrese school concept. She also offered
to stay on, once the nursery operation ceased.
That was good news for the Calabreses. They knew their school would need a practitioner to monitor the pupils’ health and provide care for minor illnesses.

Mrs. Purdy had a young child of her own, so she agreed to house Larry at the nursery and work with him while preparations were made to open the school. Pleased with that arrangement, Joe and Elizabeth were given more freedom to make the school a reality.

“I talked with Dr. Frank Zarlengo, who owned the house,” Joe said. “He was agreeable, provided we made and paid for the repairs to bring the structure up to building code standards. We settled on a monthly rental of $130, the same amount he was charging for the nursery.

“We took possession in September, 1948, and requested the City Health Department to send out an inspector, so we could comply with the law. When he finished his examination, he gave us a long, long list of improvements that had to be made. They included revamping the electrical wiring and plumbing, installation of fire protection devices, such as enclosed staircases and exit lights, a triple sink in the kitchen and on and on.

“It took five months from September to get our occupancy permit and school license. We cleaned, scrubbed, painted and redid almost everything on the first and second floors.

“Mrs. Purdy lived on the third story, so we didn’t have too much to do up there. We planned to have the kids’ sleeping quarters upstairs, but the Fire Department said ‘no.’ We put the dorms and eating facilities on the ground floor and classrooms above. It was awkward, but the fire inspector was right.

“We were renovating—the whole project took more than $4,000 of our $10,000 stake—we scoured the city and the countryside for useful furniture and equipment. We even bought some stuff from St. Coletta’s, which closed in October.

“During this hectic period, we got detoured briefly when both Mrs. Purdy’s child and Larry were stricken
with poliomyelitis. We were panic stricken at first, but because of prompt attention and the fickle nature of the disease, neither child suffered severe after-effects.”

As renovation of the building progressed, Joe and Dr. Murphy recognized that the school had to be incorporated and given a formal name.

Events leading to that action are accurately described in Murphy’s doctoral thesis, entitled “An Evaluative Survey of the Laradon Hall School Program in Special Education,” published in June, 1952. Excerpts from that document follow:

Personnel connected with the Psychological Services Division of the University of Denver, of the Denver Public Schools, and parents of mentally handicapped children (in 1948) had formed themselves into an organization called the Co-ordinating Council for the Handicapped Child, whose general purpose was to bring to the attention of the public and of the State Legislature the pressing problems of the training and rehabilitation of this large group of the state’s hitherto neglected children.

One of the active members of the Co-ordinating Council, the father (Joe Calabrese) of two mentally handicapped children . . . proposed to other members of the group the foundation of a school to serve, both on a residence and day basis, the children of Denver and Colorado who were being denied any educational opportunity because of their handicaps. The school which this man proposed to found would serve children excluded from or denied permission to enter public school classes, and unable to receive accommodation at the State Training Schools.

From the beginning, it was his wish that the school should maintain fees at a point where the parents in the lower and middle income brackets could take advantage of the educational opportunities offered, as the cost of almost all other private educational facilities was prohibitive to this group of parents.

This parent, agreeing to bear the original expense of the launching of the school and being assured of the supportive assistance of his professional associates on the Council, called a meeting at his home on Dec. 30, 1948, to
form a non-profit, non-sectarian corporation whose pur-
pose shall be to operate a school for mentally handi-
capped children, to begin operation at 3129 Federal
Boulevard on or about February 1, 1949.

Present at this meeting comprising the original
founding group were three psychologists, four parents of
handicapped children, one public school teacher, and one
professional promotional agent. By unanimous consent of
those present, and in recognition of the truly humani-
tarian motives of the host to the group, the society and
the school were named Laradon Hall, after the two sons
of the host, Larry and Donald.

As a school Laradon Hall is unique in that its estab-
lishment and support were brought about through the
combined efforts of volunteer and professional people,
individually, and as members of service organizations.

Opening of the school. On schedule, the school opened
in an old building, once a residence and later a nursery,
where city regulations permitted the taking of only boys
on a residence basis. The original staff consisted of two
teachers, one for crafts and one for academic subjects; a
cook, a registered nurse who also served as a resident
house mother, and a volunteer part-time psychologist in
charge of in-take and classification.

Thus, on February 1, 1949, Laradon opened with
Donald, Larry and one other pupil. Because of comments
by the Coordinating Council and other interested per-
sons, the word quickly got out that there might be, after
all, some educational hope for brain-injured and men-
tally handicapped children.

Inquiries soon poured in, not only from Denver and
Colorado, but from all over the United States. The Cala-
breses quickly learned their school—and others like it—
was desperately needed by hundreds.

Within a month, the school had a dozen pupils.
Three months after opening, full capacity was reached.

"We had 12 boys living in the house," Joe re-
counted, "and 13 day students. That was all we could
handle. Pretty soon, we had a long waiting list.

"Shortly before we opened, Wallace School for Re-
tarded Children (now Wallace Village) had been started in the basement of Mrs. Cleo Wallace’s home. I tried to get my boys entered there, but through some misunderstanding, Mrs. Wallace declined to admit them.

“When we reached our capacity, I tried to find additional space. I heard about a recreation center that might be rented and decided to try for it. Mrs. Wallace was after the same building, because she, too, was having problems accommodating her day students at home.

“I suggested to her that we merge. ‘I’ll help you make ours one of the finest schools in the country,’ I told her. She didn’t want anything to do with the idea. Later I learned she expected Laradon to close within six months after opening. She did get permission to use the rec center, so we lost that battle.”

The Wallace institution subsequently moved to Broomfield, Colorado. It presently serves about 50, in-
cluding some boarding students.

Once Laradon was open, Joe and Elizabeth learned they had assumed a tremendous task. Except for skills acquired in caring for Donald and Larry, they seemed to be poorly equipped to direct such a complex undertaking.

But love and patience made success possible.

How did they go about learning to operate?

“It was a matter of one day at a time,” Joe responded. “We did have skilled assistance. Dr. Murphy was the beginning of our team of pros. He helped us get psychiatrists, medical doctors and psychologists. They enthusiastically volunteered their services and were just as anxious about the operation as we were.

“One big problem was testing the kids. It was difficult to separate the retarded from the disturbed.

“Another area that gave us concern was compilation of case histories. Without accurate information about the youngsters’ health and physical makeup, we would have been in a vacuum. We could not get case histories from some medical doctors or other professionals, because they were not sold on our school, or simply did not understand the problem.

“The so-called professional people,” Joe continued, “were madder than hell at us. We were upsetting their apple cart. The pros were telling retarded childrens’ parents to move out on a farm, so the kids could get better, or put them in Ridge and forget about them. It was terrible. Few medical doctors knew what retardation was all about.

“Many kids were mistreated at home. There’d be fighting in the family; husbands would accuse wives and vice versa. Parents didn’t get proper counseling. A doctor would tell them, ‘Oh, give the child a chance. He’s just a little slow. A year from now he’ll be doing this or that.’ The doctor didn’t really know what to advise. We had all that to contend with, when the kids reached us.

“So we were fortunate to get our own M.D. He was Dr. Alfred Hicks. He volunteered to serve as a consul-
tant. He was terrific. A young pediatrician, he was one of the new breed. He had an inquisitive mind and a great desire to help. We really put him to work. He helped compile case histories and secured information from other doctors whose patients came to the school.’’

At first, Calabrese recalled, there was much excitement among the volunteers—many of them D.U. psychology students, who had been recruited by Dr. Murphy. They worked well for a short while, then petered out. From that group, however, Laradon got its first principal, Elvern Garber, who had started as volunteer coordinator.

As the paid staff took hold, under Elizabeth’s direction, Joe assumed the big chore of procurement officer. He sought assistance of any type—financial or in kind.

“Sister Rita of the Queen of Heaven Orphanage,” said Joe, “taught me how to scrounge . . . for food, clothing, toys, other supplies—anything we needed. She took me to many sources and introduced me to the right people. It wasn’t long before I was better at scrounging than she—and she had 350 kids to feed.

“We had to rely on gifts for much of the food we consumed, because we were always short on cash. The most anyone paid for a child’s care was $125 a month; day students $40 a month. Some couldn’t pay anything, but we kept them anyway.’’

Still it was touch-and-go until April, when Lawrence Martin, associate editor of *The Denver Post*, came to Laradon’s aid. Martin had been writing articles each Sunday on various programs geared to help rehabilitate handicapped persons. He learned about the Calabreses’ school and penned the following observations:

Laradon Hall shows a middle-aged face to the traffic flowing past on Federal Boulevard; but inside the old, red brick house, youth is served. Laradon Hall is the name given to a place in which a unique and very gallant project in child rehabilitation is being carried on in the face of great difficulties.

The rehabilitation of handicapped adults has been ex-
tensively discussed in these columns ... but what about handicapped children? They, also, all qualified experts agree, must be given the maximum treatment and care, so that they will come to adult years as full-fledged members of the community, self-supporting and complete persons, so far as that is possible.

Denver does a great deal for its handicapped children, but still, not enough is being done. Laradon Hall is an attempt to meet one of the deficiencies.

Children who have cerebral palsy, who have been crippled by polio or from some other cause, who are blind or deaf, can be admitted to the Denver Public Schools if their intelligence quotient satisfies a certain minimum. But there are youngsters who can't reach that minimum. The only provision made for them is admission to the homes at Ridge or Grand Junction—and both those institutions are so badly overcrowded that they cannot adequately meet the need, either in housing more children, or in giving those already there the special, patient, individual training which is their only hope of becoming reasonably self-sufficient.

Many children never will be normal. The most that can be done in their behalf will not remove the handicaps with which destiny has unkindly cumbered their lives.

But a man named Joseph Calabrese refused to let the hopelessness of this rehabilitation task stump him. He opened Laradon Hall, putting into it his own money, and most of all, his own warm spirit on doing whatever can be done for the extra-exceptional handicapped children of Denver.

Laradon Hall, where Calabrese now has a dozen boys in the first stages of training, is at 3129 Federal Boulevard, in North Denver. It is a big, roomy, old house, transformed into schoolrooms, workshops, a dormitory, and the necessary kitchen and dining arrangements. There Calabrese and his wife, Elizabeth, with four or five teachers, a full-time nurse, and a doctor who comes in periodically, are doing what nobody else in Denver has found it possible to undertake.

The boys now enrolled live there, with one exception. Most of their parents have literally scraped the bottom of the family barrel to raise funds sufficient for the modest
cost of maintenance at Laradon Hall. They all hope Joe Calabrese will make a go of his project. Anyone who sees inside Laradon will echo that hope. It would be too bad to have rehabilitation fail there, for lack of money or any other cause.

The youngsters range in age from 5 to 14. There’s Bill, for example. He’s about 13, a husky big lad, who, if nature hadn’t cheated him, would grow up to be a big man, strong and good natured. When Bill came to Laradon, his mother was nearly frantic because she could no longer control him. The school had sent him home, after passing him along, grade after grade, to the sixth. He was the right size for the sixth grade, but he couldn’t spell the simplest three-letter words without much labor.

He had a couple of disturbing habits. One was filching matches and occasionally setting things afire. Another was stealing keys, wherever he could find them.

Bill arrived at Laradon only five weeks ago. His tendencies toward pyromania have diminished—or so it appears—and he no longer steals keys, because Joe Calabrese gave him a whole bunch, for his very own. Heretofore, everybody took keys away from Bill, assuming—probably correctly—that he had pinched them. They’re making progress with Bill. What the final result will be, it’s too soon to tell.

There’s another boy with a too-low I.Q., who had a picture puzzle, a jigsaw map of the United States, given him for Christmas. One of the teachers, for a test, picked up different states of the Union, held them backwards and upside down, and asked the boy to name them. He named every one correctly, no matter how it was shown him, and he knows the capital of every state. He has the ability to remember patterns.

There’s hope that out of this ability something useful to the lad’s future can be developed.

Joe Calabrese is a special delivery man in the post office, national vice president of the Association of Special Delivery Messengers. That kind of work is the source of the thousands in savings that Joe is putting into Laradon Hall.

If you want to see faith and determination at work in behalf of children whose needs are terribly great, go to
Laradon Hall. Its future is in doubt. But it is, so far as it has gone, a child-rehabilitation effort of the highest order.

"A lot of nice things started happening after Mr. Martin's story appeared," Joe said. "People started coming with all kinds of things. Marty Madigan, a Denver policeman and an Elk, came out to see us. Elizabeth was in the basement washing clothes and putting them through a hand-operated wringer. A couple of days later out comes a washing machine and dryer.

Joe and two Denver Elks—Exalted Ruler Francis Mancini and Secretary Bob Ellerman—with first washing machine.
“In the summer,” he continued, “we got enough cabbage to last three months. I had a panel truck and would get produce from commission houses in the old Denargo market, where Sister Rita had introduced me around. Safeway stores always saw that we had plenty of bread. We got so many bananas one time we had problems using them up before they spoiled. We fixed bananas every conceivable way, so the kids would eat them. We even fried them.

“Elizabeth, meanwhile, was so busy we hardly had time to talk to each other. She cut the kids’ hair, washed clothes, cooked, nursed, cleaned house, and taught, if a teacher didn’t show up.”

Despite their valiant efforts at salvage and scrounging, the cost of operating the school became a real worry. Even with the revenue received from tuition and fees, the Calabreses saw the remnants of their original $10,000 stake melting away. In September, 1949, the State Elks’ Association raised $10,000 at a convention and gave the entire amount to Laradon. It was the first in a long series of contributions from that fraternal order.

Despite that help, it was tough going. Late in 1949, Joe borrowed his mother’s last $2,000, not to spend, just to keep on hand in the event other resources ran dry. But better days were ahead.

“Certainly, we had some narrow squeaks,” Joe admits. “There was never a time, however, when Elizabeth and I had a single doubt about our ability to keep the school operating. Regardless of how discouraged we became, we believed one thing:

“With God’s help, we would get the job done.”
Elks To The Rescue

When Joe Calabrese credits divine intervention for the continued existence of Laradon Hall, he is not being ultra-reverent. Nor is his sincerity to be challenged. If the union of Laradon and the Colorado State Elks Association had depended entirely on mere mortals, the alliance might never have occurred.

Since 1950, however, the two have been a team—a team that has liberated hundreds of suffering youths from closet-like living. These useful human beings now dwell in a world once thought unattainable.

As already recounted, Calabrese and Dr. Murphy agreed in mid-1948 they had to find a way to open a school for the retarded. They achieved that objective but were painfully aware Laradon existed on a badly frayed shoestring. A few months later, Colorado Elks voted to establish a program to aid handicapped children throughout the state. When made, neither decision was related to the other. Ultimately, the two goals became one in a seemingly predestined pattern. Before unity was achieved, however, there were false starts, followed by snail-like progress; high hopes reduced to sobering reality; simmering skepticism replaced by grudging acceptance.

The Colorado State Elks, organized in 1903 as a
loose federation of local lodges, for years had been seeking a benevolent program that would merit the support of its entire membership. The 36 lodges in the association operated charities in their respective communities. As individual entities, they also participated in the humanitarian work of the national organization. At the state level, however, there was a void in their often-expressed desire to establish a program of help for the less fortunate.

The biggest obstacle in the Elks' search for such a humane program was the principle prized most dearly by each lodge—its own autonomy.

Lacking vested authority to compel even one lodge to support adopted policy, the state body was forced to rely on the pride of unselfish Brother Elks to get things done. Dedicated members, either appointed or on a voluntary basis, promoted programs through doggedness and/or persuasion. Usually, this non-system worked.

When it failed, the Elks' chairman responsible for a project had two choices: Either swallow his disappointment quietly and let the program die, or share his frustrations and the blame with fellow lodge members while still trying to get cooperation that would lead to success.

The latter course was chosen in the late 1940's by four Elks from three lodges. Operating almost independently, each wanted to launch projects that would aid underprivileged or handicapped boys and girls. The quartet comprised Dr. Edwin J. Haefeli, an optometrist, and Lewis E. Kitts, both of Greeley; Louis Weisberg of Longmont and John Godec, Jr. of Colorado Springs.

All eventually played key roles in developing the bonds that linked the Elks and Laradon.

Dr. Haefeli, for example, offered the state Elks a 200-acre farm north of Johnstown, Colorado, as the site for a youth haven patterned after Boys Town, Nebraska. He proposed creation of such a shelter following a visit he and Kitts made to the famous Father Flanagan institution near Omaha.
As envisioned by Haefeli, half the farm would be cultivated and the other hundred acres developed as pastureage. The farm had a small lake which, with the pasture, would be ideal for a dairy farm, he said.

Haefeli believed the project could be started on a small budget and expanded as the farm produced revenue and ultimately would be self-supporting.

An Elks' committee named to review the proposal recommended against it, because of a controversial string attached by Haefeli. Deeply impressed by the efficiency achieved in the sectarian atmosphere created at Boys Town, he insisted supervision of the Elks' farm experiment be entrusted only to a religious organization.

Minutes of the state association meeting held in Ouray September 16-18, 1949, graphically describe the demise of the Haefeli plan.

O. J. (Jack) Fisher, addressing the last afternoon session of the convention, made this report:

About a year ago we had a member of Greeley Lodge 809 by the name of Doc Haefeli who offered a farm out west of Greeley for a Boys Town. Well, some folks out over the state thought Ed was doing that to sell a farm, but us boys in Greeley knew that Ed meant just what he said: That when Boys Town was started, the Elks would get a deed to that place when they showed they were going to make a go of it.

We appointed a committee out over the state. I think I had a member in each jurisdiction. Everything went along fine. I had a meeting down in Colorado Springs and talked about it and then we had a recess and I got some of them into a huddle. We had about 20 people in that huddle.

It went along fine until we reached the point in the contract that the farm had to be turned over to a religious organization. Now I think anyone has a right to his belief. I don't care what religion it is. I think one religion is just as good as another. I think the Elks have about as good a religion as all of them. However, when we had that huddle and it came out that a religious group would run the show, the whole thing fell, just like that. I went back to
the big meeting and made a report that Boys Town was off for the time being.

That ended the Haefeli dream. The rejection did not go unnoticed by Calabrese and Dr. Murphy. The latter, after learning about the decision to veto the Boys Town proposal, said to Calabrese: “Let’s go talk to Dr. Haefeli. Maybe he’ll give us the farm for the school.”

Calabrese, who had been struggling valiantly for about six months just to keep the fledgling program alive, was skeptical.

“I think it will be a waste of gas,” Joe said, “but we might as well try.”

Years later, in a letter dated May 17, 1966, addressed to Dr. Haefeli, Murphy reconstructed from memory the events generated by the “waste of gas” trip to Greeley:

As you know [Murphy’s letter began], considering the lack of facilities for Exceptional Children in Denver and vicinity at that time and coincidental with the removal of St. Coletta’s School [a home for retarded youngsters that had a short life in Colorado] to Chicago from Longmont, making such facilities even scarcer, Mr. Joseph Calabrese and I, in July of 1948, decided to open a school at 31st and Federal Boulevard in Denver. We incorporated it as Laradon Hall School for Exceptional Children, under the auspices of Laradon Hall Society. Such incorporation, with the donated legal services of Attorney James Friel, took place on Jan. 26, 1949, and the school opened shortly thereafter with nine children.

Before too long, Mr. Calabrese and I knew we had bitten off more than we could chew, so to speak, in terms of financing, personnel and the acquiring of adequate teaching and clinical services, and we realized we would have to have outside assistance.

I noticed in the Denver Post in March of 1949 that your very generous offer of the gift of a beautiful, ideally situated farm be used as a Boys Town, to be supported by the State Elks Assn., had not been accepted.

I felt, even though I did not know you, that a person of such benevolent feeling for unfortunate children as
yourself, might become interested in the cause of retarded and brain-injured children. I, therefore, called on you at your home in Greeley. Your generous response to my plea was far greater than my highest expectations and you were kind enough to arrange interviews for me with Mr. O.J. Fisher and Mr. Jack Williams in Greeley. You invited Mr. Calabrese and me to return and you had kindly arranged interviews for us with Mr. Louis Weisberg at Longmont and Mr. Frank Holitza at Boulder.

At that point, I was invited to speak at a State Elks’ meeting where I laid the case for the neglected retarded child before the entire state body of Elks. Again, the response was most generous. Out of that initial meeting, Laradon Hall became the ‘child’ of the State Elks. All its present buildings, grants and equipment, as well as a great share of its support, have come from this fine organization.

You [Haefeli] have the distinction [Murphy’s letter concluded] of being the first Elk to become interested in the cause; you have been most generous with your time and support ever since. I fondly remember that, in actuality, Laradon Hall, as it stands today—a nationally known institution—had its inception on the swing of your front porch on a warm May Sunday in 1949.

Although the visit to Haefeli by Murphy and Calabrese failed in its prime purpose—use of the 200-acre farm—it launched a series of events that ultimately produced results far more fruitful than anyone dared dream possible.

Written nearly 17 years after the first contact with Haefeli, the letter by Murphy seemingly treats the Elks-Laradon alliance as an accomplishment that really did not require extraordinary effort. Nothing, however, could have been farther from the fact.

Before Brother Fisher made his negative report about the Boys Town offer at the Ouray convention, the delegates had been severely scolded by Louis Weisberg, who was mentioned in Murphy’s letter.

In December, 1948, Weisberg had accepted the chairmanship of a committee to establish an Elks’
Handicapped Children's Program. Despite valiant efforts, Weisberg suffered repeated disappointments in the months that followed.

In his report at the Ouray convention, he detailed the lack of cooperation by some lodges that had resulted in many failures, sweetened only by a few minor successes. Despite frustration and disillusionment, he was not willing to jettison the aid-to-handicapped concept completely. He concluded his remarks with these recommendations:

1. That we establish a home for handicapped children, where all cases can be referred and taken care of.
2. That a committee of five (real) Elks be appointed to act as a board to run the home. (The committee should consist of Elks living in the town where the home is located, with power to act.)
3. That a board of trustees act as financial advisers for the home.
4. That the home be known as THE COLORADO STATE ELKS' HANDICAPPED CHILDREN'S HOME.

"To keep the home running," Weisberg continued, "each lodge could pledge a certain amount each year. When parents of a child admitted are financially able to do so, they should pay for the youngster's care. Charity cases, however, would be admitted at no charge."

Weisberg then disclosed that a school of the type he recommended "called Laradon Hall" had already been started in Denver. He identified the founders as Calabrese and Murphy.

"They are now out of money," he explained, "and would like to have the Elks take over. There are 16 children in this home, seven from Denver, nine from other parts of the state. Some of our good brother Elks have children in the school.

"I am happy to report that Mr. Murphy and Mr. Calabrese will attend this convention and explain the details of the program," Weisberg concluded.

Through some mix-up, neither Calabrese nor Murphy attended, so no first-hand explanation was
made. Despite that void, Weisberg's proposal was strongly seconded by one of the state's most popular and most powerful Elks, John R. Coen of Sterling. He had been Grand Exalted Ruler of the National Elks, was extremely active in the state association, and was an excellent and convincing speaker.

He had served on Weisberg's committee and thus shared the chairman's disappointment—a fact he made clear to the delegates. Using the oratorical skills he had developed for the courtroom and for the podium of the national convention over which he presided, Coen first charmed, then mesmerized his listeners. His lengthy and dramatic plea closed with this challenge:

I was president of this association way back in 1923, 26 years ago. I know during those years, at least, we were groping and stumbling around trying to decide on a program, just like we are today. Three or four years ago, we became interested in a proposed Boys Town up at Mt. Princeton. Judge Alter, who is here today, and other men in this room gave a lot of time to it, but it was decided the building wasn't practical. It was an old barn. It would have to be rebuilt in its entirety. It would cost $100,000 to $200,000 to do it, but more than that, we would be confronted with supervision of the place. If the social workers up there would walk out on us, and we would be left with the supervision of 50 to 60 kids, with noses to wipe and bottoms to clean, it would be just too much.

Now this Laradon Hall proposal is something that is sticking out like the nose on your face that this organization can take hold of and put over—if you want to do it! I say you should decide emphatically here, today or tomorrow, whether you are going ahead with it or not. Tell Louis [Weisberg] . . . he's one of the hardest workers in the association—tell him to put up or shut up, or else support him!

With that kind of enthusiasm and the earlier prodding by Weisberg, the State Elks accepted the responsibility thrust upon them. Formal action was delayed at the Ouray convention until a quarterly meeting in Colorado Springs the following November. A new com-
mittee—one destined for success—was named.

Even before that November session, however, Colorado Springs Lodge 309 voted to spend $2,000 investigating the possibility of adopting Laradon as a project. Fortunately, the money never had to be spent.

Lodge 309 had a history of helping handicapped youngsters. It was deeply involved in the financing of a cerebral palsy clinic at St. Francis Hospital. It also had money from a trust fund to aid other children who needed but could not afford medical assistance. Both programs were under the direction of John Godec, Jr., who was to play a lengthy and major role in the Elks-Laradon alliance.

Godec’s involvement with Laradon began primarily because of his efforts to solve a family problem. He and his wife, Dorothy, had two children. A daughter, Joyce Lea, was born in 1940. When a son, John III, was delivered August 17, 1943, the couple was jubilant.

Eventually, however, after noting the boy did not seem quite normal, they got the bone-chilling news he was mentally retarded, because of a German measles attack Dorothy suffered six months before his birth.

In recalling that family trial, Godec said: ‘‘When my wife and I realized our boy had a problem, we decided to find a place to leave him while I was attending many Elks’ functions. I was traveling frequently and often my wife accompanied me.

‘‘A friend told me about Laradon,’’ Godec recalled, ‘‘and later I read about it in a Denver Post article by Lawrence Martin. It was a new school on Federal Boulevard in Denver. My wife and I made three trips to Laradon, but we never actually entered the building. We just drove around the school and looked at it, but it didn’t appeal to me.

‘‘After the third trip,’’ he continued, ‘‘my wife convinced me to go inside, at least, and see what the school was like.

‘‘So, next time, when Johnny was six years old, we went in. The school had Mr. and Mrs. Calabrese, a cook
and some young people who helped. Although it was not physically impressive, there was something about the place that fascinated us.

"We went on a trip to Cleveland," Godec said, "but we kept thinking about Laradon, because we had left Johnny there while we were in Ohio. That was in March of 1949.

"I wondered why Johnny’s deficiency should happen to us. Most people seem to react that way when a retarded child is born in their family. One day, my wife said:

"'The Good Lord decided to put you to work (on the mentally handicapped program), that’s why we have Johnny.'"

"Johnny lived at Laradon about three years," Godec recounted. "At first, he was in the original building, then we brought him home. When Laradon moved into the Globeville school, we returned him to the care of the Calabreses.

"After about three years," he recalled sadly, "we recognized that Laradon couldn’t help him, because he was too severely retarded. He was merely occupying space that could be used by an educable child. We transferred him to Ridge Home in Arvada. It was difficult for us, but it was the practical solution."

Johnny III died at age 22. One day at Ridge, he strode unobserved into the kitchen. Looking for a snack, he found a piece of chicken and gulped it down. A bone lodged in his throat. He became critically ill. He was hospitalized and treated immediately, but did not respond. Death came a week later . . . in 1966.

Because of the Calabreses’ understanding and sympathetic care for Johnny, Laradon gained a powerful and steadfast friend in Godec. His deep concern for his son and the ultimate acceptance by him and Dorothy that even Laradon could not help him did not embitter the couple. Instead, it seemed to inspire in Godec greater dedication to and support for work among handicapped youngsters.
John began his own career—as a printer—in 1920, at 16. Like many in that trade, he had a variety of back­room jobs, including one stretch when he teamed with John Dingle, later a Michigan congressman. In 1933, Godec was hired by Alexander Film Co. in Colorado Springs. For much of the next 27 years, until 1960, he was head of that firm’s printing department.

Concurrently, he was one of the most active Elks in the Colorado Springs lodge and the state association. He moved steadily through the various local positions until his 1949 election as Exalted Ruler of Lodge 309. He served on several Colorado committees, was elected state president for 1960-61, and later was district deputy.

Even in his declining years (he was diagnosed a cancer victim in 1972), he continued to devote much time to helping physically or mentally deprived young people. In addition to his work on behalf of Laradon, he was for many years prior to his death in 1977 secretary-treasurer of the George W. Trimble fund administered by Lodge 309.

The Trimble trust is another marvelous example of how benevolent the Elks can be when money is available.

George Trimble, who died in Seattle, Washington, in December, 1929, had visited Colorado Springs in the early 1920’s during Christmas season. A fellow Elk invited him to attend the annual children’s Christmas party in the old Burns Theater on Pikes Peak Avenue. Hundreds of indigent boys and girls, as guests of the lodge, were royally entertained and given presents. Carefully clasping their gifts, the youngsters, faces beaming with happiness, filed out of the theater as Trimble and his friend watched with quiet satisfaction.

Trimble was impressed by the orderliness of the boys and girls and by the generosity of the Elks. Although he did not disclose it at the time, he decided to make Colorado Springs children, with the Elks Lodge as trustee, beneficiaries of his estate.

In 1930, when the Seattle First National Bank filed
his will for probate, it was disclosed the Colorado share would be 35 percent of the estate's proceeds. The money was to be used to assist indigent residents, particularly children, of El Paso County "without regard to race, color or religious affiliation."

Lodge members were thrilled to learn their organization had been selected as the instrumentality for disbursing the trust fund. More than three years passed, however, before the Seattle bank forwarded any money. If the original excitement sparked by news of the estate had tapered off substantially, it was understandable.

On February 20, 1933, the lodge received its first check—for $974—a bountiful amount in that gloomy depression year. Two other payments were banked in 1933, making the first annual income from the estate a tidy $4,894.

Since then, thanks to Trimble, an improving economy and wise investments made by the Seattle bank, the trust fund has produced an annual appropriation of sizable amounts.

Through 1977, the Trimble trust over a 43-year span has provided $1,849,916 for distribution to the poor of El Paso County. In the same period, handicapped children benefited from expenditures of more than $232,500, much of which went to support Colorado Springs young people enrolled at Laradon. During the six years ending December 31, 1977, for example, $29,576 was paid Laradon for students sent to the school by Lodge 309.

A seven-member rotating committee appointed by the Exalted Ruler administers the fund. The consistently prudent and far-sighted management of the money disbursed by the Elks has brought repeated praise from the financial consultants in Seattle.

Because of his work with the Trimble trust and interest in the cerebral palsy clinic, it was only natural Godec would be appointed chairman of the special committee to investigate what role, if any, the state association should play in the rescue of Laradon Hall. Godec got that responsibility at the Elks' quarterly meeting No-
vember 27, 1949, in Colorado Springs. State President G. A. (Bud) Franz, Jr. named Ralph Rieves, also of Colorado Springs, as co-chairman. Others nominated to serve were Clement Hackethal of Idaho Springs, Jack Fisher of Greeley, Martin Madigan of Denver and Clarence Williams of Walsenburg.

Not included on that committee, but a key figure nevertheless during those crucial days for Laradon, was Brother Lew Kitts of Greeley. He had visited the school when it first opened and immediately became a strong supporter of it and an able ally of Godec.

“When we went to Laradon in 1949,” Kitts said, “eleven youngsters were just getting ready for the evening meal. It tugged at our heart strings.

“My first thoughts were about the Calabreses. Here’s a young couple, I said to myself, who are trying to do something about a very difficult and expensive problem.

“If John and I had viewed the school as a business proposition, we wouldn’t have touched it with a ten-foot pole. The chances for survival of the institution seemed just about nil, I said to John.

“We decided, however, we would help that couple, if there were any way to do it.”

And help they did. Kitts himself established a remarkable record of participation in the school’s growth. In the years that followed that first visit, Kitts served as a Laradon board member for 19 years, 17 as chairman. He had been an automobile dealer and an airplane sales manager in Greeley and was widely known throughout the state. Even when economic reverses caused him great personal problems in 1954, he maintained an unflagging interest in the Elks-Laradon partnership.

“You can learn things going broke,” Kitts said. “Especially how much better off you are than those youngsters in the hall.”

In 1969, he resigned from the board and became director of the Laradon vocational program, a position he held until retirement in 1976.
During the 47th annual State Elks Convention at Idaho Springs in September, 1950, two significant events occurred. Kitts was elected president and the Laradon committee made its first report. In retrospect, that meeting was the most important in the 30-year history of Laradon.

After assuming leadership of the committee in November, 1949, Godec immediately put his fellow Elks to work. On February 19, 1950, he gave an accounting of progress at a quarterly Elks’ meeting in Walsenburg. Bud Franz, who had appointed Godec, asked the chairman to expand the report and present it at the Idaho Springs convention.

Godec’s compilation of events made for a remarkable document. It was incisive, thorough and business-like, yet it conveyed a humanitarian feeling usually not associated with response from an ad-hoc group. It demonstrated that Godec and his committee members, in a few short months, had been able to accomplish an objective that had eluded their fellow association members for more than a quarter-century: Find, endorse, and activate a permanent benevolent program. Godec’s remarks follow:

We have made a complete investigation, to the best of our ability, of Laradon Hall School for Exceptional Children, as directed by the members of the Colorado State Elks Association. Our inquiry and examination disclosed the following:

1. The school, now located at 3129 Federal Boulevard, Denver, housed in an old building and limited in capacity, is doing a very fine job in care, instruction and rehabilitation of students.

2. The school is staffed with fine, capable teachers, college graduates; an experienced house mother on 24-hour duty, a night matron, and an excellent cook.

3. The children were neat, clean, happy and looked very well cared for. The food was excellent in quality and ample in quantity, served family style; the children were assisted at mealtime by the teaching and household staff.
4. The school is operated by the Laradon Hall Society for Exceptional Children, a non-profit, non-sectarian organization incorporated under the laws of the state of Colorado.

5. There is no discrimination of any sort in evidence at the school. The staff and students are made up of various religious faiths and racial groups. [This observation was a revelation. The program peacefully predated by more than a decade the equality and civil rights movements of the 1960's.]

6. A review of the present financial situation and an inspection of the books to date reveal the school has been operated in a very economical manner by Mr. Joseph Calabrese, president of the society. He has made excellent use of volunteer help, government surplus assistance and donations of various types in such a way as to show a comparatively small deficit at the end of the first year of operations. The deficit was assumed by Mr. Calabrese himself.

7. The fees charged are very reasonable. If anything, they may be below the cost of maintenance. Effort is made to assist the child whose parents cannot pay the full amount of maintenance and tuition by securing aid from private and public welfare assistance and sponsorship.

8. A student-teacher training program is now in effect, in conjunction with the teacher-training program of a local college. Thus, the school is contributing to the education of future teachers to assist in the growth of the exceptional child.

9. The society has enlarged and strengthened its Board of Directors and Board of Consultants by the addition of prominent educational, medical, religious and lay persons who have a deep interest in the welfare and education of these children.

10. The school and its fine work recently received international fame through a story in Time Magazine. Response was received from around the world, congratulating the founders on the work being done. (See Page 49.)

11. The society has in mind to purchase a former public school building erected in 1934. It is in excellent con-
dition with sufficient grounds for work and recreation, ideally situated in a location to carry on a long-range program. This building is appraised at $175,000 and its replacement value at present costs would be at least $225,000. This structure can be purchased for $25,000, since, because of its location, it no longer is suitable for public use. The school administration is sympathetic to the problems of education of the exceptional child.

12. Laradon Hall has been licensed by the State Board of Standards of Child Care, the Department of Health and Hospitals of the City of Denver; its teachers are certificated by the State Commissioner of Education.

13. At present the school is supported in part by fees from the students, donations, private funds supplied by Mr. Calabrese. Bookkeeping and services by a consulting psychologist, medical examiner and housekeeper are donated in full. No personnel is paid more than $140 per month and none of the teaching staff in excess of $100 per month. No public assistance can be expected in the 1950 distribution of Community Chest funds. This assistance, however, may not be forthcoming soon, because the school has not actually been accepted as a Chest agency, as yet.

14. At the request of our committee, the Executive Board of the school furnished tentative schedules of long-range plans. The school hopes to have a well-equipped modern building, fenced in grounds and agricultural activities for the training of the children. Estimated cost of such a plan is as follows:

- Purchase of building ....................... $25,000
- Remodeling of building and fencing grounds ......................... 15,000
- Total ...................................... $40,000

- 50 boarders at $105 per mo. ............... $63,000
- 50 day students ............................ 20,000
- Total ...................................... $83,000

Anticipated annual operating expense of
- 100-pupil school ............................ $75,000

It would be expected that students would be kept up
to 18 years of age, with a possible maximum of 21. An employment service would be maintained by the school. A program is now under way to acquaint prospective employers as to the value of the services of the handicapped. This program includes working with the Denver Parks Department, Goodwill Industries, laundries, novelty, biscuit, candy and soap companies, particularly in their packaging and shipping departments. After consideration of the obligations entailed, the worthwhileness of the project, the responsibility of the people who are engaged in the work, the members of your committee respectfully recommend that the Colorado State Elks Association sponsor this program.

Chairman Godec then told the Idaho Springs delegates that the report had been previously accepted at a quarterly meeting, the program endorsed unanimously and the committee given full authority to implement the recommendations submitted. Permission was granted, in addition, to contact all lodges for contributions and other support needed for establishment of the program. Godec also revealed his committee had been expanded to include David Hamil, Sterling; John Wilmer, Durango; Denny Holmes, Greeley; Walter Cooper, Fort Collins; Floyd Sears, La Junta; Virgil Clifton, Pueblo, and Carl Tipps, Boulder.

The enlarged committee had convened in Denver March 12, 1950, to implement plans and get better acquainted with the project. Inspection trips were made to the original school and the soon-to-be-acquired Globeville structure.

In his report, Godec said the committee selected "Elks Laradon Hall for Exceptional Children" as the formal name for the school. He also disclosed a temporary financing plan had been adopted. It called for voluntary direct contributions of $2 per member. Pledge cards had been sent to all lodges. Exalted Rulers were asked to urge individuals to participate on an ad-hoc basis until a permanent fund-raising system could be established.
The committee set a goal of $40,000. Through their individual generosity, the Elks moved steadily toward the objective. At a quarterly meeting in Boulder, gifts totaling $18,000 were reported. At another session in Gunnison, prior to the Idaho Springs meeting, Godec was to reveal that the first objective—purchase of the Globeville school—had become a reality. Individual gifts from the brotherhood had raised $24,000. The state association dipped into its treasury for the other $1,000.

The $25,000 was turned over to the Denver Board of Education and title was received to the school, which was to be the permanent home of Laradon Hall.

Much of the negotiation with the School Board, so crucial to the success of the project, was done voluntarily by Attorney Jacob L. Sherman, who was also responsible for providing legal advice to Laradon down through the years.

"As a measure of fairness to all," Godec said, "a contract, drawn by Brother Sherman, between the Elks Laradon Hall Committee and the Laradon Hall Society, through which all contributions clear for the operation of the school, has been executed. It is on file with the Clerk and Recorder’s Office in Denver.

"With $15,000 still to be raised to attain the original goal of $40,000, the committee continued its untiring efforts toward this balance which is needed to complete the remodeling for occupancy," he continued.

Godec then listed for the delegates the lodges that participated, the amounts contributed through each by members and the way the money raised had been spent.

He further disclosed the state association had achieved a major victory in its Laradon campaign: It had received recognition in the form of a $1,000 grant from the Elks’ National Foundation to be used for the operation of the school. The committee chairman graciously credited Brother Coen, the fiery Irishman from Sterling, for securing that grant—the first of many for Laradon from the foundation.

In his final convention remarks, Godec closed with a
prayer:

"May the Almighty make it possible for us as Elks to work together next year in behalf of charity, so that those less fortunate human beings may be rehabilitated to the fullest extent of our ability by contributing to this worthy humanitarian cause."

Following prolonged applause that signaled unanimous satisfaction with the work of the committee, several Elks added enthusiastic postscripts, including:

Brother Coen, who had a special surprise. He disclosed that the National Foundation, in addition to the $1,000 for operating expenses, had pledged a similar amount to pay tuition for one of the Laradon teachers to gain further education in the highly specialized field of helping retarded youngsters.

Brother Haefeli, who had been instrumental in launching the project, was impatient. "Let's put up the balance of the money ($15,000) and get this school open in its new home," he shouted into the microphone.

Brother Cooper of Fort Collins, vice president of the association, pulled $100 from his wallet, held it high above his head, marched to the podium, and dropped it into a quickly contrived collection box. He urged others to do the same.

Coen seized on that gift to whip up a near-frenzy among the delegates. Reverting to the classical oratorical pleading he had used so dramatically the preceding year in Ouray, he stimulated the audience so effectively, there was electricity in the air.

Under President Franz' approving eye, Coen urged, coaxed, pleaded and cajoled his fellow Elks to follow Cooper's example. Follow they did. Before the session was over, several thousand additional dollars had been contributed by the convention delegates themselves.

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Calabrese, meanwhile, was performing some marvels of his own. While the Elks were taking care of capital plant requirements, the school's founder was scrounging support in a variety of ways to pay monthly bills and
meet the teachers' payroll, meager as it was.

Because he never stopped trying to raise funds, nor cared particularly where they originated, Calabrese found help in a variety of ways.

The Denver Post article of 1949 caught the eye of Barron B. Beshoar, Time magazine's bureau chief in Denver. He visited the original school and was so deeply impressed by the experience, he wrote the article reproduced here for the December 5, 1949, issue of his magazine.

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For In-Betweens

One day in September 1948, a tired-looking Denver postman stood in a grade-school principal's office and heard these words: "I'm sorry, but we simply don't have any place for your sons." To Joseph Vincent Calabrese the words were deadly familiar. For years he had searched for a school that would take his boys. The answer was always the same.

The fact was that Joe's boys were unfit for normal school life. Despite tireless coaching at home, eight-year-old Larry had only a halting vocabulary of 110 words; 13-year-old Donald could barely dress himself. They were tragic "in-betweens," not quite eligible to enter even Denver's special schools for retarded children, yet not so hopeless that they had to be shut away in a state institution. Said stouthearted Joe, after his last turndown: "If there's no school that can help my kids, by golly I'll build one myself."

Paint & Paper. And so he did. After months of tramping the streets, he found a ramshackle, three-story building that he thought he could afford to rent. He and his wife scrubbed it from top to bottom, then painted and papered it. Out of
their thrifty life savings of $10,000 they equipped classrooms, dining room, kitchen, isolation ward and dormitories. Then they named the school Laradon Hall, after Larry and Donald.

Last winter Laradon Hall opened its doors with but one entrance requirement: the ability to learn, however slowly. Soon 17 children came—most of them thin and staring youngsters suffering from nervous instability and poor muscular control. With the children came volunteer teachers: an ex-G.I. from the University of Denver, a former schoolmarm whose own son was born mentally defective, a young Negro woman who was studying psychology, one Ph.D. candidate and two undergraduates from the Denver university.

As the weeks passed, Laradon Hall began to win a few small victories. It cured nine-year-old Billy of pyromania by letting him burn the rubbish each day, until gradually ("Aw, I don't wanna") he lost his interest in lighting fires. Another boy had a mania for stealing keys. So Mrs. Calabrese bought a whole batch of keys for Harold and gave him one whenever he deserved a reward. Now Harold has a pile of keys and has stopped stealing them.

"Please Close the Door." But most of the children had deeper trouble. The most clearly retarded ones had to be taught to wash and feed themselves, and to understand such simple instructions as "Please close the door." For them there were courses in handicrafts, exercises to improve muscle coordination. For those less retarded but held back by emotional disturbances, e.g., a ten-year-old who vomited whenever he became excited, there were courses in reading and writing, and patient guidance.
Today, beyond its teaching staff, Laradon Hall has a registered nurse, a night matron and a dietitian. To get everything started, Joe had exhausted his savings. Boarding students are supposed to pay $140 a month, day students $40. But for parents who cannot afford to pay, Joe has been charging nothing.

By last week the Denver Area Welfare Council, without whose approval no organization can get community chest funds, had recognized Laradon as a member. That was the first help Joe had had, but it might not be enough. "Sometimes when the going gets rough," says he, "I wonder if the whole thing's worth while. But when I look at these kids, my own and all the others, I see that we've got to go on."
With its vast circulation, *Time* reached across the nation and spanned the oceans. The article touched the hearts and wallets of hundreds, both in the United States and abroad. Contributions, most in small amounts, began arriving. Calabrese estimated some $9,000 was netted because of Beshoar's story.

In addition, cash and gifts of food, beverages and other materials were secured by the tenacious Calabrese, who proudly wore the title of Colorado's No. 1 cadger.

Although the Idaho Springs convention action was a personal triumph for Godec and his helpers, it was not a no-strings commitment by the Elks for support of Laradon.

Later, in reviewing his attempts to gain continuity in financing for the school, Godec recalled several disappointments.

"At one meeting," he said, "I arrived late because I was involved in another Elks' activity. When I got there, I was told:

"'We've already thrown the idea of more money for Laradon out the window.'

"With some fast footwork and faster talking, we had the school support plan restored to the agenda," Godec continued.

"At another session, one member offered to donate $1,000 merely to buy time on the convention floor, so he could criticize the Laradon program. Lew Kitts, who was presiding, rejected the rebel's $1,000, but permitted him to speak.

"Another brother proposed that instead of sending flowers when Elks were ill or to funerals at time of death, the money be given to Laradon in the name of the sick or deceased member. A florist objected and that proposal was killed.

"It was a terribly hard job selling the idea to my brother Elks. Time and again, I left meetings with tears in my eyes. I was crucified at some Elks' gatherings. I was also frustrated at times, but we finally got the job done.

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Above, Globeville school at time of purchase.

Below, the “new” Laradon Hall.
“For a brief time,” Godec said, “I considered giving up on trying to sell Laradon to the Elks as a permanent program. Then I decided I wasn’t going to let a few guys run me out.”

Burdensome as were those aggravations, Godec and his committee had other problems to solve. In order to gain prestige for his fledgling school, Calabrese had assembled an unusually large board of trustees numbering 21 persons. Included were many prominent citizens of Denver and Colorado, because Calabrese believed well-known individuals would give the school stature, which he felt was needed.

Quite justifiably, the Elks contended they should have adequate representation on the board, since they were the largest single contributing body.

At the first trustees’ meeting attended by some of the Elks, including Doc Haefeli and Lew Kitts, the Laradon board adopted an annual budget of $72,000, without too much discussion. This startled Kitts, who as president of the association had been speaking throughout the state as a school fund raiser. He knew the Elks were having difficulty finding money for support of the school, so he was surprised at the large budget approved by the trustees.

Through agreement with Calabrese and incumbent directors, Elks were gradually added to the board, so they could help oversee day-to-day expenses. Calabrese, who readily admitted being a novice in organizational financial matters, listened to and heeded the advice of the board.

Although their members were welcomed as trustees, the Elks continued to press for a reduction in trustee membership because they were convinced a more compact board could provide better and more active supervision. Within a few years, the governing body was not only smaller, but dominated by brothers of the state association.
Sunday, February 18, 1951, was a heady day for all parties—the Elks, Mr. and Mrs. Calabrese, the faculty, and, most of all, the students. Dedication rites were held to proclaim officially that the newly acquired and partially remodeled school building was now a permanent home for this inspiring venture.

The principal address by Jake Sherman, known as "Mr. Elk" of Colorado, was masterfully delivered. He had been a moving force in mustering support from lodge brothers for Laradon and used the podium to urge them on to greater achievements in behalf of the school.

In the friendly, golden tones for which he was noted, Sherman said, in part:

The person who was instrumental in forming the organization known as Laradon Hall for Exceptional Children is Joe Calabrese.

Joe, you're a super-salesman for human welfare.

On this occasion, we're thinking of kids all over the state—once lonely and desperate—yes, kids who call you 'Joe' and whose eyes light up when they catch sight of your kindly face that will never grow older than your heart.

We're thinking of other youngsters who have heard of you and your Laradon Hall, and who are sitting by windows watching other kids playing, and who are waiting, hoping—that some day you will touch them with your friendly hand and aid them in getting their chance for a life of usefulness and happiness.

We're thinking of the love and devotion you have poured into your job. We're thinking of the heart-hungry boys and girls in Laradon Hall. We're thinking you were able to carry on this great work and all the worry it entails, because you have a loyal and faithful wife—Elizabeth—who modestly worked and worried with you through it all. No one can realize or know how very hard you and Elizabeth have worked—God bless you both!

We're thinking of the 'kids' who can look in the mirror today and begin to smile because of you, Joe.
We're thinking of your many friends who have helped make Laradon Hall a reality, especially the Colorado Elks Association, which purchased this building. It will stand as a monument to human understanding.

We're also thinking of all the eyes that would have been red with crying and all the men and women and boys and girls who would have been heartsick, if you hadn't started this school. So, in the words of the philosopher, let me say: "It is better to build boys than to mend men."

The torch has been lit, let's keep it burning. A great work is well on its way. Let's see that it continues, so that in years to come Elks Laradon Hall will spread like the branches of a tree and continue to grow and grow and grow!

In addition to Sherman's moving comments, other important roles in the dedication were played by President Kitts, the National Ritualistic Team of Greeley Lodge No. 809, and the latter's glee club.

Well in advance of the dedication, it was agreed that title to the building and the 14 lots it occupied would rest with the state association.

"Dr. Haefeli and I," Godec explained, "wanted to be sure the lodges would be protected, as well as any money invested in the project. If the school didn't succeed, each lodge would be given a pro-rata share, should we be forced to liquidate the property.

"Even though we enthusiastically supported Laradon," he continued, "there was some doubt the school could survive, so we had to safeguard our investment."

Acquisition of the school building was, of course, a critical milestone for Laradon. Although they had performed a minor miracle in a short time, in buying and renovating the structure, the Elks were not yet committed to perpetual support of the project. Nor were they pledged to underwrite current expenses. They had promised to purchase the building and refurbish it, but nothing more.
At dedication of new school, left to right, Dr. Allan Murphy, his wife, Ann; State Elks' President Lew Kitts, Elizabeth and Joe Calabrese.

There were still internal struggles to be won before the lodge brothers would regard themselves as perennial guardian angels, thus guaranteeing a long life for Laradon.

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The 1950-51 fiscal year was one of generosity by the Elks, who contributed $58,142 in that period, far above the $40,000 of the previous year. Despite general agreement the project was a worthy one, there were still some doubting Thomases within the state organization. Rumbles of discontent were being heard. Some surfaced at the 48th annual Colorado session held September 6-9, 1951, in Pueblo.

Hard-hitting and heart-rending reports on progress by Calabrese and Godec effectively muffled the dissident voices that year. Eloquently, but tersely, Calabrese presented his arguments for continued support by the Elks.
“These handicapped children are not problems or delinquents, nor are they psychotic,” he said. “The handicap that is theirs is an impairment of the brain cells, either before, during or after birth.

“More than any other type child,” Calabrese continued, “handicapped children need encouragement and a helping hand. They have had something so much less. Neglected and often ridiculed, they are seldom permitted the common social privileges normal children enjoy. Relegated to back rooms for their own protection, they have become the hidden children, the forgotten children of the world.

“The innocent hearts of these children cry out for a chance to live a happy life,” he emphasized. “Our American way of life is based on ideas of equality and free enterprise for every citizen. The children at Elks’ Laradon Hall are seeking a chance to learn, so that they too may eventually be participants in this democratic system . . . How can anyone forget that we are God-loving people and that we owe a share of our good fortune to others not so fortunate?” Calabrese concluded.

In his report, though not so poignant as Calabrese’s, Godec furnished his brother Elks with a factual accounting of how their money had been spent and the results achieved.

“We have 27 children now enrolled on a residential basis and 17 who attend as day pupils,” Godec reported. “Records show the majority have made marked improvement through the training they receive from the competent instructors at Laradon.”

Recognizing that Elks are fiercely proud of their charitable activities, especially where children are involved, Godec played on that pride. He emphasized that the national organization was watching the Laradon experiment with keen interest.

“Our committee,” Godec explained, “prepared and displayed at the Grand Lodge Convention held in Chicago, a booth featuring Elks Laradon Hall. We had photos, explained in footnotes, and a booklet describing
the program and its aims. This display attracted hundreds of delegates to the extent that several other State Associations are considering a similar program.”

Godec systematically presented facts and figures, threw bouquets to individuals who helped, and gave a full account of the contributions from each participating lodge. When he concluded his lengthy report, Godec and members of his committee were cross-examined by several delegates.

Brother Coen offered a resolution reaffirming participation by the association in the Laradon Hall program based on voluntary contributions. Denny Holmes seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The Calabrese-Godec one-two punch successfully assured Laradon of Elks’ support through the next fiscal year, which ran from October 1, 1951, to September 30, 1952.

In the early 1950’s, the Elks, other fraternal organizations, veterans’ groups and social clubs fell victims to an anti-gambling crusade that shook the financial foundations of non-profit, charitable associations.

For most of the 20th century, Elks, Moose, Legionnaires, Eagles, etc., owned and operated slot machines, which permitted members to engage in petty gambling on their own premises. As always with gaming, the “house” was the only consistent winner. Net profits, however, went toward worthy objectives: Charity programs; repair and maintenance of buildings housing the associations; elimination of deficits accumulated because prices charged for food and beverages were enticingly—sometimes ridiculously—low.

Rarely were there big losers among slot machine players. The one-armed bandits were regarded as a harmless diversion for individuals, but a lucrative source of revenue for the house.

No one ever pinpointed the reason for its start, but a drive to banish the slots developed as the private clubs watched helplessly. Some believed the impetus came from backers of legalized gambling—owners of horse and
dog tracks. Since their operations had received approval by the state's voters in 1948, the reasoning went, the bow-wow and bangtail bookies didn't want any kind of illicit competition, regardless of how petty it might be.

Others pointed an accusing finger at law-enforcement officials, particularly district attorneys, who were threatening crackdowns unless the machines were removed. Some D.A.'s believed it would be politically popular to silence the whirring slot wheels. Their anti-gambling stance supposedly was based on vague reports that organized crime was ready to step in and control the machines. There were even hints underworld characters already had clandestine ties to some of the private organizations.

Regardless of the reason, the machines vanished because of the threats from office holders. Revenue was drastically reduced for charitable, benevolent and non-profit groups.

Although the official records do not show it, the outlawing of the machines had a profound impact on Laradon. Virtually all the Elks' lodges had slots. A portion of the income from them went to support the lodges' charitable programs, including the school for the retarded. Other organizational friends of Laradon, such as the Footprinters, a club for law officers and associates; labor unions, and Veterans of Foreign Wars, also contributed to the school, using slot machine receipts. Their gifts were reduced by the anti-gambling crusade.

In the 1951-52 Laradon fiscal year, receipts from the state association fell to $15,778, more than $42,000 below the Elks' contributions for the previous 12-month period. The decline for 1952-53 was even more painful—to an all-time low of $14,730. How much of those decreases was caused by junking of the jackpots is unknown, but it had to be substantial. It was a grim time for Laradon and for the Elks, but brighter days seemed to be ahead.

At the 49th annual state meeting held September 18-21, 1952, in Greeley, Godec's Laradon Hall com-
mittee report contained what appeared to be an unexpected bit of good news.

Lowell Elisha of the Aspen Lodge, a member of the committee, had contacted Godec earlier in the year with news that Sherwood Crocker of Long Beach, California, a one-time Aspen Elk, had become interested in Laradon. Seeking details about the program, Crocker had sent a letter indicating he would like to remember the school in his will.

Godec immediately complied with Crocker’s request for information about Laradon and received from the Californian a letter which said in part:

I will say that I have definitely decided to take such steps as will assure the Laradon Hall program with whatever assets I will be possessed at my decease. I have for this purpose about $100,000 in stocks, bonds, real estate, all of which at the present time produce about $5,000 gross income, which is a living trust fund, with the Colorado National Bank.

I want to make sure that all of my estate goes to Laradon Hall first, and, as stated in case the Laradon Hall program is discontinued, I would want the estate to go to such charities as your state association desires.

Godec responded to that generous offer with the “proper expression of gratitude” and received a reply from Crocker asking additional information as follows:

It is necessary for me to know the exact legal title of the Colorado State Elks Association, whether it is a nonprofit association incorporated under laws of the State of Colorado and such other data as is necessary for me to present to my attorney here, in order to properly draw up the correct papers to carry out my action in the matter we have in mind.

This request posed a small and short-lived problem for the association, which had never been incorporated.
With a potential windfall of $100,000 at stake, the Elks quickly had legal counsel draw, file and certify the corporate papers.

In due time, Godec was notified by Crocker his new will had been executed, naming the Colorado Elks as principal beneficiary with provision proceeds of the estate be used for Laradon.

After presenting that happy news in his introduction, Godec continued his report and closed with this sobering comment:

The time has come for a decision as to whether or not to continue with this project in which we have an investment of approximately $75,000 as of this date, and many hours of untold hard work. I pray that a decision of continuance of this worthy project is effected at this session. I now call on Brother Lew Kitts... who has some suggestions and recommendations.

Speaking both as state president and a director of Laradon, Kitts reported on one of the few irritating encounters the school experienced in dealing with governmental bodies.

The Globeville site is located in northwest Denver, just inside the city limits. The general neighborhood had long been a mixture of zoning uses, ranging from heavy industrial in the stockyards section on the east to neatly kept small residences nearer the school. The area immediately surrounding Laradon was vacant at the time, except for small commercial developments compatible with family homes.

Ever alert to any development that might affect the project for good or bad, Calabrese learned of a proposal that would intensify industrial development around the school. Alarmed, he mapped a grass-roots assault on the proposal that had been submitted to the Denver City Council for approval.

"It would have been wonderful," Kitts told the convention delegates, "if you could have seen the promo-
tional job Joe Calabrese did when he decided to fight that zoning change. He organized every line of defense. When the hearing finally became a reality, we held our regular board meeting that evening at the City and County building in Denver, where the Council meets, and the place was packed. I think there must have been 300 to 500 people there."

Kitts gave a graphic account of the meeting and said the Elks "were helped by a galaxy of people representing other organizations—Eels, Moose, Knights of Columbus, various veterans' organizations and some fraternal groups that I've never heard of. . . .

"I think one of the clinchers was a presentation by a very respected psychologist from Colorado General Hospital. He spoke about the great job being done at Laradon Hall—a job that wasn't fully recognized by the people of Denver and of Colorado. It was his opinion that any type of heavy commercial activity out there could conceivably have a detrimental effect upon our program.

"After the speeches had been presented, one of the councilmen said: 'Well, no one has convinced me this zoning is any good. I'm ready to vote against it.' Apparently he was a leader, because in rapid succession, three or four others got up and when the smoke cleared, we had averted what we think would be a catastrophe and the zoning change was defeated."

After describing the victory, Kitts reported on a more positive contact with another governmental body—the Denver School Board. The latter, after selling its surplus school building and some land to Laradon, retained title to 24 lots, representing about 70,000 square feet of real estate, immediately north of the hall.

A prospective purchaser had submitted to the school board a lucrative offer for acquisition of the land. Loath to limit Laradon's hopes for future expansion, the school board suggested the Elks might like to acquire the property by matching the bid it had in hand.

"We were able to offer only about 25 percent of the bona fide bid that had been made," Kitts said, "so we
were concerned we might lose the land. Through the work of Jake Sherman and other interested Denver people, we have been able to lease those lots, with a few stipulations, at $100 annually.” (Years later, Laradon bought the property outright. It is now part of the school’s nine-acre campus.)

In continuing his report, Kitts recounted two non-financial highlights of the year. The first concerned a student who had been repeatedly rejected for admission by the Denver system as non-educable. “I’m proud to tell you,” Kitts said, “that he was in our school about one year and then he went before a review board and was accepted by the Denver schools. That was our third such case.”

Kitts’ other success story was about a boy who wanted to be a member of the tumbling team, but showed no interest in learning to read.

“Knowing the situation,” Kitts explained, “the tumbling instructor decided to give some instructions for the team in written form. This boy couldn’t read them, of course, and wasn’t permitted to be part of the group. Once he saw that there really was a reason to learn to read, everything changed. His progress now is absolutely astounding.”

Near the end of his report, Kitts recognized the skepticism still harbored by some brother Elks. Acknowledging that Godec’s committee and the Laradon Board had taken some verbal lumps from the critics, Kitts reacted:

“When we are criticized, we know it’s because we’re doing something effective. We may not be doing it the way someone else would like to see it done, but when we run down that criticism, most of it, we find, stems from a lack of understanding of the program. Almost every time we’ve been able to get to the person who doesn’t thoroughly grasp what we are trying to do, and show him exactly what we have done, the criticism vanishes into thin air.

“The Elks of Colorado,” Kitts continued somewhat
ominously, “have arrived at this point: We have fulfilled every commitment we’ve made to Elks’ Laradon Hall. We met the first rough estimate of $40,000 for buying and remodeling the school. The actual cost of putting the plant in A-1 shape has been fulfilled and we are at a point of decision.

“There are several routes that might be taken,” he said. “We could say to Joe Calabrese: ‘We feel we’ve given you a great boost along the road, now see if you can’t stand alone on your own two feet.’ I don’t believe the Elks of Colorado will make that decision.

“We could also say to Joe: ‘We’ll take over the entire program and furnish you some $100,000 a year.’ That’s what it would take, if we wanted to assume full responsibility, but I don’t believe we are in a position to do that.”

Kitts then disclosed President Clarence Williams had named a small committee, consisting of Byron Albert, Bud Franz, Williams and Kitts himself. That group had met with Calabrese, Godec and Haefeli and concluded the best way the Elks could continue serving Laradon would be to pledge about $25,000 annually, with each lodge responsible for producing $1 per member from whatever resources were available.

A specific fund-raising plan was not presented or adopted, but several alternatives were discussed.

During the discussion of the financing problem, a member from Pueblo, Brother Arthur Allen, challenged the administration of Laradon. Causing some uneasiness among those who had worked so diligently for the school, the highly respected Allen said:

“I’m not opposed to Laradon Hall, but if my memory serves me right, when we bought that property and equipped it, it was to be self-sustaining. The record here today doesn’t bear that out. I wonder where we are going. This body cannot make an assessment on any subordinate lodge. They can pay it, if they want to, and they don’t have to pay, if they don’t want to. We’d better not get ourselves in debt before we know where the money is coming from.
“I don’t think Laradon is on a business-like basis,” Allen charged. “I talked to Joe (Calabrese) and he says they have one child there paying $150 and some others $125, some $75 and six charity students. He says his records show that it costs $210 to maintain a child in that institution, so I’m asking the question: Where are we headed?”

The next two or three speakers ignored Allen’s question, but spoke, instead, of the good that had been done and urged the association to continue its good work.

Kitts, however, felt that Brother Allen’s query should be answered fully, so he responded:

“Brother Allen’s question, ‘Where are we going?’ is a good one. Probably the best way to reply is to ask and answer this question: ‘Where have we been?’ I recall the first day I saw Laradon Hall in an old broken-down three-story home out on North Federal Boulevard. That’s the day I became interested in this great program.”

Warming to his task, Kitts continued: “They were scraping the bottom of the cash barrel; they didn’t know how they were going to pay the rent on that building. Perhaps you’ve heard me tell the story of how four people, Joe and his wife, and a little Irishman by the name of Murphy and his wife, had scrubbed on their hands and knees and painted and papered that building in order to have it be used as a school at all.

“To be sure . . . it’s not like a business proposition, because we have not the sources of income we’d like to have. Every step we’ve taken has been a tough one. The way we have done it is to more or less trust in God and the kindness of human hearts. The things that had to be done were done; the things that must be done in the future will be done. We’ve taken steps that, from a business standpoint would curl your hair, because we took them without the absolute knowledge of when money was going to be available, or even if it would be available at all.

“Just a little over a year ago,” he continued, “no one
in the school was paying over $125 a month for a student's keep. We pored over those figures; we know exactly what it would take if the family of each student could pay—if we wanted it to be a going concern from a business standpoint—but we know that can't happen. We reason this way: If a family has a retarded child at home, they'll feed and clothe that child. If the youngster is entered in our school, the family should at least assume the same burden of food and clothing while it is in our care, as they would at home.

"I'll tell you where we're going," Kitts said proudly and emphatically, "we're going ahead, with God's help!"

Following that response, the convention floor became a beehive of activity. Motions were made and seconded. Amendments were attempted. Points of order were called for and dismissed. Finally, the mover of the original resolution, which called for the raising of $1 per member from each of the state's 27,000 members, withdrew his motion, so order could be restored.

Judge Wilbur Alter presented a motion calling for the association "to continue to support the Elks Laradon Hall as a State Elks' project."

An attempted amendment was declared out of order. The Alter resolution was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

It was followed by a successful motion to direct the incoming president to appoint an Educational and Finance Committee to support Laradon Hall.

That ended the first and only floor fight about the future of the school, but the method of financing was still more or less in limbo.

In fairness to Art Allen, who had challenged the entire Laradon concept, it must be noted that eventually, and not long thereafter, he became an ardent supporter—vocally and financially—and helped make the Pueblo Lodge, largest in the state, a major contributor to the program, as it is today.

As indicated earlier, the 1952-53 fiscal year was lean. The Elks contributed but $14,730 to the school, a fact
that may have embarrassed some members, because the next budget year saw a big increase in gifts. The amount raised for 1953-54 was a much more satisfying total of $32,305.

About that time, Brother Art Drehle developed strong support for and approval of the "buck-a-member-per-year" concept that previously had been tabled or ignored. That financing pledge has remained unchanged since, although it is still voluntary in nature.

The big increase in the 1953-54 contribution might be attributed to a carefully worded, well-timed report by Godec at the state golden jubilee session held in Colorado Springs in September, 1953.

After dispensing with the formalities of recognizing and thanking lodge members who had aided his committee, Godec, for the benefit of novice or ill-informed delegates, reviewed again the goals of the Laradon program.

"You are reminded," he explained, "that retardation of these children is not a disease, but a condition or injury to nerve centers of the brain. Some, it has been proved, can be helped by proper diagnosis and treatment. The disorders are not contagious or inherited, but occur in direct proportion to population. The aim of the training is to help these children help themselves by learning, or to talk, so they may become self-sufficient. The methods of treatment include psychological and vocational assistance, physical, occupational and speech therapy, and academic education by specially trained teachers. Fifty-two children are being habilitated at the present time.

"I am proud of the participation of the lodges of Colorado in this effort," he continued. "Last year, only five of 39 lodges made no voluntary contribution toward Laradon Hall.

"It is not the desire or intent of the Elks Committee," he explained, "to force participation on any one, but to continue to make the project so worthwhile and satisfying that each member will contribute his share,
not because he has to, but, in the spirit of true charity, because he wants to . . . We are confident that by our next annual session, every lodge will have participated in meeting the goal of $1 per member or more.

“This year,” he said, sadly, “the record is not good. We have fallen considerably short of the goal we discussed at the convention in Greeley last fall. The answer for this lapse lies within the lodges who did not participate in supporting this project. I sincerely hope conditions will alter this situation this coming year, and we can shout: ‘Colorado Elks can, and will, support this project!’”

As if to ensure reluctant donors that their money would be wisely spent, Godec continued:

“Expenditures for projects and activities of this committee have all been approved, either in quarterly meetings or by the president and board of trustees of your association. At the Sterling quarterly meeting, approval was given to proceed with the new girls’ dormitory and gym building when the Laradon Board felt conditions were right. Shortly thereafter, we voted to proceed on advice of the architects and contractors, who felt the economic climate was satisfactory. The building is now nearing completion. It will be dedicated in the near future, marking another milestone in the progress of Elkdom in Colorado.”

As he had in previous reports, Godec closed with a prayer:

“With helping hands extended to these mentally retarded children, the Elks of Colorado reverently echo the words: ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven.’ God must look with favor on our great project, to have granted us such success in these early years. We pray that He will guide and direct our actions always, so that we may continue to bring assistance and help to these children in His name.”

Following Godec’s report, Lew Kitts described the achievements being made within the school itself. His
objective was to acquaint convention delegates with the educational and therapeutic programs that were begin­ning to attract national attention.

"This year," Kitts began, "five of our children have graduated from the school. Three have transferred to public schools. We feel this is one of our main functions: To prepare children, whenever possible, for participation in public education. Two more children now have regular jobs, one is a hotel bus boy and the other is a farm hand and apparently doing very well.

"The main emphasis this year," he added, "has been placed on the provision of many phases of 'life experience' geared for the levels of development of our children. The best illustration is the school store. Here, the students buy real things that they need or want with real money. They make withdrawals from their bank accounts and make deposits. Bills are made out by the children and sent to the parents.

"They make change, order new materials, take in­ventory, make advertisements of 'This Week's Special,' keep the place neat and clean, etc.

"It has been found that this project has definite carry-over value for students who have never handled money before and who are now going out into the com­munity, making their own purchases, and counting their change.

"Other 'life experiences,'" Kitts said, "have been making out applications for a job, using a pay telephone, eating at a restaurant, where they had to order and pay for their meals."

Kitts also commented on construction progress being made on the new gym and girls' dormitory, which would house 15.

"Our embryonic sheltered workshop has had its in­ception, incorporating four students. They assemble charm bracelets, identification tags and key chains. Con­tracts are currently with Red Rocks, Echo Lake, Conoco Service Stations, Kane Auto Sales and Scientific Supply."
This was the forerunner of an industrial training pro-
gram that has been a boon to the school, a revenue pro-
dercer and an outstanding method for developing stu-
dents who can be referred to private employers.

As promised at the Colorado Springs convention, the gym and girls' dormitory were completed and dedicated at impressive rites Sunday, November 22, 1953.

Explicit in the partnership agreement between Elks and Laradon is a pledge the school will never go into debt to build any capital improvement. The necessary funds must be in the bank before any major addition can be started. That was true of the gym and dormitory, completed at a cost of about $24,000 furnished entirely by the association.

At the services, chaired by Jake Sherman, Calabrese shared the platform with Godec, Kitts and Art Drehle. As a surprise to many in attendance, the Elks had also invited, as an honored guest, Sherwood Crocker of Long Beach, who had made Laradon beneficiary of his estate.

Responding to the Californian's gesture of generosity, the Laradon Board voted to name the new addition in his honor—Crocker Hall.

The dedicatory address was by John Coen, whose oratory was sparkling as usual. In their inimitable style, the Elks staged dedication services that made the afternoon a memorable one.

That episode in the continually unfolding Elks-Laradon story should have ended there—on a happy note. Ironically, it did not.

Apparently glad to be back in his old home state, Crocker took up residence in Colorado Springs. He lived, in fact, with the Godecs. As he grew older, he had second thoughts about disposition of his earthly goods. Before his death, he revised his last will and left the estate in trust for retarded children in Colorado Springs. He cut off Laradon completely.

The sole gift he made to the school—long before his death—was a large luxury automobile, which Laradon sold for $1,000.
Nevertheless, the building dedicated in 1953 still bears the name, Crocker Hall.

Although deeply disappointed by the disinheriting, Elks on the Laradon board philosophically accepted the whim of their elderly brother, even though it was a severe blow at the time. The amount involved—about $100,000—would have provided the school with a start on a much-needed endowment that could grow through the years.

The Crocker misadventure had one bright spot. It alerted the board of trustees to the wisdom of suggesting that Laradon friends consider the school as a beneficiary when drawing a last will and testament.

Although difficult to pinpoint precisely, bequests from estates of Elks or others interested in the school have totaled more than $500,000.

Jake Sherman, who has been particularly active in this endeavor, was responsible for several such gifts. He observed that many individuals are receptive to including Laradon as an estate participant, once the value and need of such gifts are known to testators.

It is expected that inherited gifts will continue to play a substantial, but unscheduled, role in the future of the school’s funding.

In the first years of the program, several lodges were reluctant to participate, as indicated earlier. Although agreeing with the school’s educational and vocational objectives, they feared participation might jeopardize local programs that had existed for years.

As Laradon’s reputation for quality care and innovation grew and its value became recognized nationally, backing for the school eventually spread statewide, until every lodge was helping to some extent.

Curiously, Elks’ support has always been on a year-to-year basis. No long-range commitment has ever existed, nor is there any desire by either the association or Laradon to insist on one now.

This tacit understanding, based on respect, sincerity and mutual admiration, is far more effective than a cold,
business-like long term contract. It encourages a friendly, flexible relationship that has served admirably the students, school, Elks and the state association.

In its remarkable history, the school has been the beneficiary of nearly $2,500,000 in grants by the Elks. That total does not reflect untold or uncatalogued gifts of appliances, buses, health aids, sports and exercise equipment and other tangible property. Nor does it include cash donations made directly to the school by individual Elks and lodges.

From 1958 through 1978, the National Foundation contributed $158,200, an amount emphasizing the importance American Elks attach to this showcase project.

The state association itself has used a variety of money-raising devices to achieve its annual commitments. One project that produced substantial revenue, but also brought serious internal problems, was a Christmas-card selling venture. It lasted two years and netted $17,762, but caused so much dissention it was happily dumped on expiration of the contract with the supplier.

Another cash-producing project was the saga of a live goat, named Westminster Bill. He began a journey from the Denver suburb whose monicker he had acquired. Traveling through the state, he went from city to city.

After Bill arrived at a lodge, he was a guest until the brothers met a loosely set money goal assigned to them.

At first, the goat’s presence was welcome. He was a pet, as well as a conversation piece. Once his newness wore off—something his odor never did—contributions mounted until the lodge’s quota was met. The animal was then ceremoniously shipped to his next destination, where the process was repeated.

Although Bill raised about $8,700—many times his actual value—and provided every lodge with a lot of laughs, he went into early retirement. It became painfully obvious that a circuit-riding, money-raising goat was not a permanent solution to the Elks’ annual pledge of financial support for the school.
The most ambitious revenue venture undertaken was a three-year courtship between the Elks and the then-struggling Denver Broncos.

Two members, Charles S. (Chappie) Chapman of Aurora and John Haynes of Denver, both dedicated, hard-working Elks who loved football, were appointed in 1965 co-chairmen for major projects.

Heading the agenda of such programs was aid for Laradon Hall. The co-chairmen, with the cautious endorsement of the state association, took responsibility for leading the sponsorship of pre-season games featuring the professional gridders.

The Elks did much more than merely sell tickets and share in gate receipts. They assumed full responsibility for all expenses—the printing and distribution of tickets, use of the stadium, hiring of officials, and costs incurred by the teams, including expensive transportation of the visiting squad.

In those years, starting with 1965, the Broncos had not yet arrived as a sure-fire gate attraction. Despite that, and the tremendous expense "nut" that had to be cracked, the Elks raised $42,892 from three gridiron gambles.

After the 1967 season, however, the association decided there had to be a less strenuous and a more rewarding way to help Laradon.

Under Haynes’ direction, the single most successful and the longest running source of financial support was discovered in 1967. The bonanza was a statewide raffle, in which each lodge would participate at its own pace. The first drawing netted $24,430.

Over its first ten years, the raffle generated an average of more than $40,000 annually. It was easily the largest single source of Elks funds for Laradon.

At the 1978 convention, delegates were informed the association’s gifts since inception of the drawings was a healthy $415,829.

There is nothing magical about the raffle’s productivity, unless it is the purses, which are substantial. In
1978, for example, a total of $20,000 cash was awarded. Half was first prize. The other winning tickets brought smaller sums, but still money. With such rich rewards for participants, the annual drawings assure Laradon of continuing, almost painless, support from the Elks.

Most of the proceeds have gone into building improvements and/or land acquisition as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Property Acquired</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Main Building</td>
<td>$70,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>John R. Coen Vocational Building</td>
<td>46,617**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>John R. Coen Addition</td>
<td>37,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Dining Room</td>
<td>152,622</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Auditorium, Classrooms, Warehouse</td>
<td>271,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Warehouse</td>
<td>120,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Six Cottages</td>
<td>499,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Two Dormitories</td>
<td>390,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Sheltered Workshop</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Snack Bar</td>
<td>52,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Residence, 5275 Sherman Street</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Two Apartment Buildings</td>
<td>327,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total $2,168,463

*Includes $45,000 for remodeling.
**Financed by contributions from Colorado Elks, Grand Lodge and personal friends of Mr. Coen.

Real estate owned includes 48 lots purchased from the Denver Board of Education, 16 lots acquired from Adams County and the land under the Workshop building and the Sherman Street residence.

Through their steady support of Laradon, Colorado Elks have established a record of benevolence that seemingly is without parallel among the state's fraternal orders.
Interestingly, the initial fears voiced by some lodges have proved groundless. Financial backing for Laradon has not siphoned off support for local charitable activities. During the 30 years the Elks participated, their backing for the school has represented less than 25 percent of the money spent by all state lodges on a wide variety of other humane activities in Colorado.
Grateful as they were for the timely rescue of Laradon by the Elks in 1949-50, Joe and Elizabeth knew the school could not rely solely on financial support from a single organization.

"The Elks recognized it, too," Joe said. "They told me our problems were too big for them alone and urged me to get as much community acceptance and assistance as possible."

Besides revenue, Calabrese acknowledged the school needed other elements. Included were a flexible curriculum; multi-talented staff for teaching, medical advice and general guidance; reliable personnel for housekeeping, food service and maintenance duties, and a general understanding by the public of the school's objectives.

In seeking that understanding, Joe and Elizabeth started at home—in the neighborhood they shared with others on Federal Boulevard. Immediately, they learned one thing: Nearby residents did not readily buy the presence of several retarded children in their midst. Recognition of Laradon's humanitarian goals by neighbors did not, at first, include acceptance of the project or its beneficiaries.
In his thesis, Allan Murphy described the dilemma:

While the original Laradon Hall was in a location zoned for business, it was situated between two residences. As the pupils grew in number, the problems peculiar to children in the school became increasingly annoying to neighbors. The solutions could only be brought about by education of the public to:

1. The worthwhileness of the program.
2. The harmlessness of the children. (Fear plays a large part in attitudes.)
3. The constructive role which neighbors, as individuals, can play as passive participants in a program essentially humanitarian in nature.

Through patient application of these principles, the Laradon staff was able to change attitudes of open and active hostility to those of friendly cooperation, understanding and tolerance of those treated less fortunately by nature.

Calabrese has nothing but praise for the school’s first neighbors, especially the operator of a greenhouse located west of the school across an alley.

“One of our boys kept breaking glass in the greenhouse,” Joe said. “We’d pay for the damage, try to change the kid’s bad habit and work with the owner in other ways.

“When he understood our program, he became a real booster. He brought flowers to us frequently, all the time we were on Federal, to brighten up the school.”

Once acceptance was assured and the possibility of harassment eliminated, Calabrese turned his attention to other phases of the operation. He relied heavily on Dr. Murphy who never reneged on his original promise to help launch and maintain the school.

“Allan had an awful lot to do with keeping Laradon going,” Joe admitted. “He helped shape the curriculum and administration, while I was doing the begging and keeping up the supplies.
“Allan’s wife, Anne, was our first real bookkeeper. She took over from me. For several months in the beginning,” Joe confessed, “I kept the books in my back pocket. I knew that was foolish, so I was relieved when Ann offered to set up a system we could show to anyone.”

For his part, Murphy, with one eye on the school and the other on research that would help bring him a Ph.D. in education, was recording everything noteworthy that happened.

Some of his observations of those early days at the school follow:

Problems of personnel: Development of Laradon administration has been one of trial and error, partially due to lack of trained personnel and partially to financial inability to hire the best personnel. The care and training of this type child, particularly when emotional problems accompany mental retardation, require the utmost patience and understanding. While these qualities may be found occasionally in untrained personnel, the safer policy seems to be to seek individuals trained in handling problems associated with the particular type of handicap concerned. Frequently, applicants imbued with pseudo-humanitarian viewpoints are hired. Regardless of their good will, they are constitutionally unable to communicate their intentions of assistance. This may result in unpleasant experiences for them and the students. The resultant turnover in staff is deleterious to the program, particularly to an individual child. The latter may be seeking constancy in relationships and, for the first time in his life, may be experiencing a semblance of security in a substitute-home situation.

Problems of finance: Laradon is an example of a rare institution, akin to Boys Town, started on a shoestring that has survived and will continue to survive financially because of the ability of its administrative staff and board of directors to interest philanthropic individuals and organizations in the project.

Other projects inaugurated since Laradon Hall, equally worthy in intent and similar in purpose, have not been able to weather the financial storm. It must be re-
membered that special education programs, by their very nature, are expensive. They require small classes and employment of skilled personnel. A sizable back-log of guaranteed financial support is advisable before the project is begun.

Enlisting public support: The institutional stability of Laradon is due to two circumstances:

1. The moral and technical support given by lay and professional persons who lent the institution a dignity and bona fide endorsement which brought wide support from individuals and organizations. The high caliber of the staff added great prestige to the program. Serving voluntarily and at no cost to the school were a pediatrician, a social worker, a consulting psychologist, a clinical psychologist and an educational planning specialist. Each was highly regarded in his own field. There may have been a lack of financial backing at the outset, but there was no shortage of responsible citizens willing to give time and effort toward accomplishment of Laradon’s objectives. Such support undoubtedly has been as valuable as financial backing at the outset.

2. The frank request for, and willing acceptance of, all kinds of publicity—newspapers, national magazines, radio, screen, pulpit, podium and platform. Although the nature of the publicity at times might have been open to question from the standpoint of good taste, there never was a time when its efficiency as a medium of attracting financial help and publicizing the cause could be questioned.

Murphy never pinpointed the type of publicity whose “taste” he questioned. Admittedly, he could not argue with the results. The continuing public relations campaign and attendant fund-raising efforts by Joe, Elizabeth and friends met with heart-warming response.

In the period 1950-52, for example, a partial listing of revenue-producing activities, each duly publicized, included:

*Participation in the television show, “Strike It Rich,” in which Eva Gabor represented Laradon Hall. She failed to answer the $120 question asked by M.C.
Warren Hull, so she sent a personal check for $500 to Joe and Elizabeth.

*Mrs. Calabrese was selected as one of three Colorado "Women of Achievement." For that honor, she was awarded $1,000 by Columbia Savings & Loan. The presentation was made at a banquet, which featured Clare Booth Luce as speaker. Elizabeth promptly announced she was giving $500 to the school.

*Laradon students made and sold candy Christmas wreaths.

*Bette Davis and Jack Benny delivered a $1,000 check from Music Corporation of America.

*North Denver fraternal, civic and veterans' organizations jointly sponsored a two-day festival that netted $7,500.

*A gasoline station owner turned his business over to a woman's sorority from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. one day and donated 10 percent of the receipts to the school.

*City Councilman Ernie Marranzino sponsored and chaired a Downtown Denver Tag Day, which featured as sales persons members of the VFW Auxiliary and attractive fashion models.

*Gifts of $1,200 each were received from Westminster and Denver Elks' ladies, the Civitan Club and Masonic officers. The money helped remodel and equip classrooms in the newly acquired building.

*A long series of other contributions, including:
  Gold Bond stamps collected at Laradon parties.
  Folding chairs given by a sorority.
  A Thanksgiving dinner provided to all children by a restaurant.
  Free hair cuts for a year for all boys by the North Denver Barbers' Association.
  A three-year program of landscaping and planting of shrubs, bulbs and perennial plants by the Home Garden Club.
  An "art gallery" for the school painted by the famed artist Angelo di Benedetto and some of his Denver Art Institute students, who utilized materials and
supplies furnished from a *Denver Post* fund.

An avalanche of toys, pencils, books, blankets and bath robes contributed by the public after a Fitzsimons Army Hospital WAC suggested the gifts for Christmas.

Proceeds from a concert directed by Harold Wippler, assistant conductor of the Denver Symphony Orchestra, whose members were featured.

Complete Boy Scout outfits for each member of the Laradon troop by the Denver Elks Lodge. (It was the nation's first Scout unit for retardates.)

Joe, with early supporter and admirer, Cartoonist Milton Caniff, creator of "Steve Canyon," and Paul.
In addition to those—for the most part—one-time gifts, Joe and Elizabeth had another source of revenue.

Although the candy shop had been sold to get Laradon started, the Calabreses did not desert the sweet-tooth business. Joe purchased a simple, portable device that could convert a pound of 10-cent sugar into 20 cotton-like candy cones, which sold for a dime each. Utilizing heat, which melted the sugar, and centrifugal force, the machine spun out the confection before the eyes of intrigued young customers.

"I went all over the city, wherever there was a crowd," Joe recalled. "We always did big business wherever we went. At Washington Park, square dances were held regularly throughout the summer. Although I aimed at the kids' market, I found adults, especially the square dancers, liked the stuff, too.

"In those days, I didn't need to have the machine completely enclosed by glass. Health regulations were not too tough then. I carried the equipment in a panel truck. Setting up was simple. I had four pieces of four-by-eight-foot plywood that I assembled, like a big box. Then I'd set my machine in the center, put up a counter and I was ready for business.

"Elizabeth usually was along and brought the boys. She would roll the paper cones and keep an eye on Donald and Larry.

"We had many regular stops, such as the Knights of Columbus hall, church group meetings and annual PTA carnivals. We spent about two or three nights a week throughout most of the year selling cotton candy.

"One summer, we took the equipment into the Polo Grounds, which is an exclusive residential area reserved for the wealthy. A couple hundred youngsters ran all over the place and had a great time. The rich kids liked cotton candy as much as the poor ones, so we did a landslide business that night."

Joe said net profit from the operation ran from $25 to $100 nightly. Over the six-year period the Calabreses traveled the cotton-candy circuit, they picked up around
$16,000 for Laradon, a tremendous contribution supplementing the personal lives they had already dedicated to the school.

Much of the success achieved in the early days must be credited to the Calabreses’ zeal and continuing quest for opportunities to tell the Laradon story, resulting in wider recognition of the school.

As president, Joe had three principal responsibilities: Development, training and supervision of the domestic staff, a job he immediately handed over to Elizabeth; direction of business and general management, and, finally, public relations.

In the last-named category, he also included professional acceptance and community-wide support for Laradon. Early in the school’s history, Joe and members of the board petitioned for membership in the Denver Area Welfare Council (DAWC) and inclusion in the Community Chest. Acceptance by DAWC, which set standards for organizations eligible for Chest assistance, would provide professional recognition for the school, as well as possible additional financial support.

Lengthy investigations of Laradon were made by joint committees representing both groups. Laradon finally was approved by DAWC, but Community Chest aid took much longer.

The reports issued by the investigating committees, however, were valuable. They contained guidelines gradually incorporated into the school’s governing policies and helped Laradon avoid the stigma of being hampered by ingrown philosophies.

In 1951, scarcely two years after its founding, the school’s staff developed and the board adopted a “Manual of Policies,” which blueprinted responsibility for Laradon’s operations. It provided that the professional staff should consist of a medical director, a social service specialist, a psychologist and an educational director, who would be assisted by teachers and technicians trained in speech improvement, vocations development and recreation guidance. All staff members had to
possess either degrees or appropriate certificates.

The "Manual of Policies" was distinguished by a clarity of purpose. It attempted—and succeeded admirably—in defining clear-cut rules that could be understood by parents of students. It reduced misunderstandings and helped the boys and girls adjust more easily to routine, once they were accepted for enrollment.

A portion of the Manual established these basic procedures:

Day and residence pupils will be accepted only on a three months' probationary period. This period may be extended or modified, as the committee sees fit in each individual case. Day pupils have no further restrictions. Residence pupils are governed by the following restrictions on visitations from parents and friends:

a. For the first 30-day period, no visits to home or visits from parents or friends.
b. For the second 30-day period, visits by parents or friends may be made every two weeks, or the pupil may go home every other weekend.
c. For the third 30-day period, visits may be made home every weekend, as decided upon by the parents. It is suggested, however, that the visits to the home be limited to every other weekend.

All clothing needed and prescribed by the school is to be provided by the parent. The school will not accept money to buy clothing.

If a child has been out of school for any period exceeding three days because of illness, the child may return only upon the written permit of a medical doctor. No child may return to school with a fever, breaking out of the skin, or other symptoms of contagious disease.

Similar meticulous directions were contained in the Manual for other phases of the school's program. Because of the care with which policy was established, Laradon had no difficulty gaining recognition as a competent and innovative special educational institution.

After it had outgrown its original home and moved to the building purchased and renovated by the Elks, the school could point to visible progress in all phases of its
activities.

Again, the project attracted widespread attention. The Laradon story was dramatically told in The American Weekly, a magazine furnished by the Hearst newspaper syndicate for distribution by scores of dailies throughout the nation.

Written by Faith Baldwin, a famous novelist and short-story writer, the article did not appear in Denver, since neither local daily distributed the Hearst magazine. It, nevertheless, did give the school national attention. It also provided additional revenue for Laradon and brought a flood of inquiries from individuals and organizations interested in the problems of schooling the retarded.

A portion of Baldwin’s comments, published May 18, 1952, follows:

In Denver, everyone knows the school Joe Calabrese built—and those who haven’t heard about it should. For it is a dream come true. Love built it, and courage, driven by a furious energy and a determination which overcame every obstacle . . .

The educational program was begun by a university student, named Elvern Garber, who was working for his master’s degree in psychology. At an infinitesimal salary, and board, he took over the job of being with the children and caring for them when he wasn’t at the university. He also lent Joe a hand with the cotton candy projects.

What of the children, from every walk of life, well-to-do, middling, poor—and mainly over-protected by their parents—children suffering from various degrees of backwardness, due to various causes? Many were terribly destructive. They set fires, ruined wallpaper, broke glass—these were their only means of getting attention and showing the resentment they couldn’t express otherwise at having been ‘born different.’

Mr. Garber and a volunteer psychologist studied their problems, systematically, realizing the frustrations which drove the children to these measures. With infinite patience, they gave each child what he needed, made him feel he belonged to a group, offered him creative release
from frustration; they diverted destructive abilities into practical channels. Today, many of these ‘lost’ children have progressed so far that their educators know they will be able to care for themselves, even eventually to earn a living.

With Mr. Garber’s help, Joe built his staff—a retired teacher, a woman taking her master’s degree, a graduate occupational therapist . . .

Elks-Laradon today serves 49 children, and the difference between the actual cost per child and the tuition fees is made up outside. Joe Calabrese’s dream has been realized. In the majority of cases, students are better equipped to face the world than they would ever have been. In other cases, the school is a way station between the home and a state institution, as a child may remain at Laradon until his parents are convinced he cannot progress. This means adjustment over the bad time, during which parents realize that their children belong in an institution.

Joe Calabrese is Laradon’s president. He always has been, and probably will continue to be. He is a happy man. He still works—in spite of an accident two years ago in which he almost lost the use of an arm. Now he can use the arm a little. He’s drawing compensation, but when he’s well again he’ll be back at the post office, still with his dream.

He wants a gym, a bakery and space for a shop in which sewing, shoemaking, weaving and upholstering can be taught. He wants a poultry house in addition to Laradon’s vegetable garden, for could not some of ‘his’ children become farmers?

Few dreams achieve perfection, perhaps that is reserved for heaven. Elks-Laradon came too late to help Joe’s older son. At 15, small and fragile, he has been constantly ill, his school attendance limited to a few hours weekly. His mother stays with him. When he goes to school, she does, too, and works there, pinch-hitting wherever needed.

God moves in mysterious ways. Joe moved heaven and earth to help his boys. As far as his personal life’s concerned, he succeeded only in part, but his love for his sons is a whole triumph, for Elks-Laradon is an extension
of it. Too late for Don the dream and the effort—but not too late for other men's children, nor for Larry.

Larry is progressing. Three years ago, he had scant coordination, but he's learned a lot. He can form entire sentences. He performs dining-room duties and dresses himself. He, too, hasn't been spared physical illness. An attack of polio two years ago has slightly affected his right leg.

But Larry's doing fine. In another year, he can be a Scout, and he looks forward to it. His father says, 'I hope some day he'll be able to support himself. Even if it means the business end of a shovel, I'll be satisfied. As long as he's useful.'

That's Joe Calabrese, the dreamer who was a do-er, who looked at his boys and said: 'They'll go to school, even if I have to start one myself.'

Love built Elks-Laradon, the love of a man and woman for their children, which extended to similar children everywhere; the love of hundreds of people, seeing the spirit of the school and being moved by it; and the love of a Heavenly Father, to Whom we are all children.

It was more than a dream, Joe. It was a Crusade for Children, to bring strength to the weak, to illumine the dim mind, brighten the dull eyes. A crusade which affects us all, for the rehabilitation of a child means a useful citizen, and each useful citizen means a better world.

Despite Faith Baldwin's flowery editorializing and her positive assurances the school was a smashing success, she was guilty of literary license and oversimplifying Laradon's problems.

Joe and Elizabeth faced a new challenge daily, simply to keep the school functioning. Events that affected the world and the nation had impacts on Laradon.

"We had an awful time during the Korean War," Joe said.

"It was almost impossible to keep good help. Our house mothers, for example, have the toughest jobs in the school. They are with the kids from late afternoon through the night. Then they take them to breakfast.

"Some of the people we had to hire during that war
were more interested in getting off work at 6 a.m., than in doing a decent job. They’d get the kids up at 4 a.m. and the youngsters would run wild until they went to breakfast just before 6, when their house mothers would leave.

“Naturally, those kids were tuckered out by early afternoon, so we had to make adjustments. We usually ended up firing the house mother and looking for replacements.”

Even if they had difficulty with such workers, Joe and Elizabeth could take solace from the high caliber of competence and loyalty of professional employees.

In her story, Mrs. Baldwin referred briefly to the staff Joe and Mr. Garber had assembled. She casually mentioned, but did not identify, “a retired teacher” who was working with the children.

That person was Dolly McGlone, the tattooed hero of Joe’s childhood.

Calabrese had not seen the muscular teacher-counselor since the memorable camping days of the early 1920’s at Bailey.

Late in 1951, Dolly appeared at Laradon to inquire about a job on the faculty.

“Before his retirement from the school system,” Joe recalled, “Dolly had planned to work with senior citizens. He believed many old folks needed guidance; were lost souls.

“But Allan, who had long admired the man’s genius for teaching ‘slow learners,’ talked Dolly into looking at our program.

“Allan really engineered the deal that brought Dolly to Laradon. It was the single most important addition we ever made to our staff,” Joe said. “Even though Allan was chiefly responsible, he had some help,” he continued.

“I’ll never forget the day Dolly came out for a chat. A little girl, about seven, was one of our ‘greeters.’ They’d hang around the front door and greet visitors. She was a pitiful little thing,” Joe said. “Very sweet.
One of her eyes looked one way and the other, another way.

“'She put her arms around Dolly's leg, looked up at him and said: 'Please, will you come and live with us?'

"That did it. Dolly went home and that night he called Allan and said:

"'I'm ready to go to work at Laradon Hall.'

"He started for us in September, 1951. For $150 a month. That was the most we paid anyone at that time, because we just didn't have money to pay reasonable wages.'

McG lone's decision not only gave Laradon an out- standing faculty member, it brought new concepts that changed the thrust of special education programs all over the world.
Before he was 12 years old, Roy (Dolly) McGlone was a dope peddler, counterfeiter and burglar. He survived by doing business with bookies, bootleggers, pimps, prostitutes, madams and other enterprising residents of Denver's red-light district.

He wangled any kind of shelter for a lodging, including a livery stable. One night, he made his home in a hearse. His boyhood scrounging made Charles Dickens' young, thieving Artful Dodger look like a slow-witted Little Lord Fauntleroy.

McGlone was an odds-on favorite to wind up in a Denver skid-row gutter before he reached teenhood. A neighborhood bookie would have given long odds to anyone stupid enough to bet that Dolly would make it through life without spending at least one stretch in prison.

The bookie would have lost a bundle, as they say on the street.

Dolly McGlone beat the odds against him. He wound up as a local saint and an internationally respected edu-
cator—not bad for a dedicated truant who was a grammar school dropout.

Long before he joined the Laradon Hall staff in 1951 and became its most famous and beloved teacher,
McGlone was an heroic figure in Denver. He salvaged and enriched the lives of thousands of Denver boys and girls.

Father Flanagan, of Boys Town fame, was the compassionate genius who reconstructed the lives of youthful criminals and ne'er-do-wells. Dolly McGlone was a salty Samaritan who build ingenious detours that sidetracked youths headed for reformatories and prisons.

Recording the highlights in McGlone's life is like trying to condense War and Peace for Reader's Digest. There were many McGlones in a single human body.

His life began in Benkelman, Nebraska, on July 9, 1886. His parents were Charles Michael and Gertrude McGlone. They moved to Denver when Roy was two years old. When he was still a baby, a young aunt remarked that he "looked like a dolly."

The nickname became a lifetime endearment, although the feminine appellation was ironic for a man so completely masculine, athletic and, occasionally, profane. McGlone infrequently spiced his fluent monologs with earthy language, probably to spoof the odd notion he was supposed to pose as a puritanical school teacher.

"I was a hellcat," Dolly remembered. "I lived at 23d and Market Streets [a neighborhood haven for whores and patrons]. I shot snipes [cigarette butts] in the gutters. I was a dope pusher. We called them snowsheds. They were about two bits worth of morphine. Hell, we kids sold opium, codeine, marijuana. Marijuana was called hemp. Some mothers in the neighborhood used marijuana as 'herbs.' We called marijuana the laugh weed.

"I shoveled snow for the madams. I stole tulips and sold them to whores. I swiped squabs and sold them to whores. I was a gangster between the ages of eight and fifteen.

"One time, I broke into a printing shop and swiped lead and made counterfeit quarters which I sold to other kids. I stole lead pipe and made coins out of it. I stole copper wiring and sold it to junk men."
"Whores were some of my best customers. I'd go to a nearby swamp and pick watercress and catch frogs and sell them to whores in our neighborhood.

"I had a pet albino rat. It wouldn't eat rancid, leftover hot tamales that a peddler gave me, but I ate them.

"There were 30 or 35 boys in our neighborhood. Only three didn't go to prison. Some became bootleggers, burglars or pimps. One was a murderer."

Despite the obvious dead-end quality of his childhood—dominated as it was by poverty, with child abusers for parents, and life generally a quagmire of degradation—Dolly had something mystical about him.

His first job, as a boy, was providing companionship and serving as a paid playmate to a brain-injured child. Probably because he was a youngster himself, Dolly did not fully comprehend the significance of the affliction suffered by his handicapped companion. The experience affected him deeply, however, and memories of it stayed with him throughout his life.

That first paid job was the initial episode in a long series of coincidences that shaped his life. Each helped him to establish an unparalleled career as teacher-counselor-innovator of special education for the retarded.

"My life gradually changed after that first job," McGlone recalled. "I wanted to be a jockey, then I trained to be a boxer and gymnast. I organized a kids' circus in an abandoned warehouse and we started doing a trapeze act.

"I took boxing lessons from a small-time pug and fought a lot of fights, 'pre-curtain raisers,' on professional boxing cards. Fans would throw money into the ring, if they liked the action we were giving them. Then we 'amateur' boxers had to battle the professional seconds for the coins on the canvas.

"In our neighborhood, boxers' cauliflower ears were status symbols," McGlone said.

"I went to school when it suited me, and school seldom suited me when I was a kid." McGlone's formal education was a mysterious chapter he reluctantly
discussed.

"I guess you'd say I was a dropout, beginning in the fourth grade," Dolly confessed. "I didn't go to high school. I got some credits through correspondence courses. I entered Colorado Teachers' College [now the University of Northern Colorado] and didn't even have a high-school diploma. I took summer courses and went to some extension classes.

"I never received a college degree. Anyway, I always figured the college of life did more for me than any degree ever would."

Despite that lack of formal education, McGlone was certified in 1918 as a physical education and industrial arts teacher.

When he was 20, the former delinquent tried law enforcement for six months, but he decided being a cop didn't fit his style. Perhaps he didn't relish badgering his former cronies, most of whom were still dealing, stealing, pimping and mugging. His entire adult life was devoted to society's underdogs—the poor, the misunderstood, the misdirected, discrimination victims and, especially, the mentally retarded.

McGlone, who gave so much love to society's cast-offs, was despised and neglected by his own mother, who told him: "I wish I had never had you." His alcoholic father ignored him.

After his parents' divorce, Dolly, his mother and sister, Grace, lived for a while in one room on Larimer Street, a dreary thoroughfare lined with small businesses on the ground floor and living quarters above. It was, for the most part, a symbol of squalor and a rendezvous for skid-row derelicts. A derelict, according to Webster, is "a person or thing abandoned as worthless," a perfect description of McGlone as a boy.

Eventually, the body of Dolly's mother was found in the South Platte River, which was just a few blocks from her lodgings. One version: She was murdered.

Desperately seeking love he never received as a boy, Dolly married Lillian Calone. The marriage produced no
love and ended in sordid tragedy.

During prohibition, his wife consorted with bootleggers. She even tried to convince Dolly he should provide a whiskey recipe for a friend, so the latter could have a better product. (Dolly had taken a correspondence course in sugar chemistry, but he wanted no part of an illicit liquor business. He always remembered what booze had done to his father.)

On August 27, 1923, the bodies of Lillian McGlone and her friend, Emma Vascovie, were found by neighbors in the McGlone apartment. The young women had been shot in a double murder that reached sensational proportions.

McGlone learned about the slayings when he returned from a camping trip.

For several days, Denver newspapers used their biggest, boldest headline type and the gory, over-imaginative reporting style of the day to describe the murders and subsequent police investigations.

Dolly was subjected to intensive grilling by police and reporters, as if he, indeed, were a suspect.

Despite lengthy and thorough work by homicide experts, the case was never solved. Both Dolly and the detectives, however, believed a bootlegger was the killer, but proof never surfaced.

McGlone once aspired to be a circus performer. He started the Lucky Buck Club, rented a store and taught gymnastics. He entered his team in Denver Athletic Club tournaments.

"We built some rubbing tables for our 'gymnasium' and some of the poorer kids slept on them at night," McGlone recalled.

"Our Lucky Buck Club would put on smokers and we'd have boxing, wrestling and gymnastics. We drew peculiar audiences, including hustlers, pimps and dope pushers. At one smoker, the cops raided our hall. They weren't after us—just the guys and gals in the audience."

For a few years, McGlone dabbled in wrestling and
became the Rocky Mountain middleweight champion. Although he won the title because of his skill as a grappler, he had a psychological advantage over many opponents. His muscular body was covered with tattoos, some of them self-applied. Such skin decorations were recognized in polite society of the day as "tough guy" symbols, an implication not lost on his unadorned foes.

In 1917, McGlone became a physical education instructor at the Denver YMCA. One day a young boxer came to McGlone and asked Dolly to teach him ring fundamentals. McGlone trained the young man—Eddie Egan—who became Olympic heavyweight champion in 1920. He later fought and unofficially decisioned Jack Dempsey and became a successful eastern business executive.

Among other boxers who received early training from McGlone were Eddie Bohn, long-time Colorado boxing commissioner, and a cousin, Edward S. (Big Ed) McGlone. The latter developed into a great all-around athlete at the Colorado School of Mines and climaxd a successful business career as executive Vice President of the Anaconda Co., the copper giant.

At age 34, McGlone launched what was to become a lifetime career quite apart from the vocation of teaching to which he was then committed. In 1920, Dolly, nine youthful delinquents and one retarded youngster started a summer camp near Bailey, Colorado. They cut logs, erected tents, built cabins and constructed bridges spanning creeks that flowed into the Platte River. The camp was sponsored by the Denver Neighborhood House Association, which had been founded in 1901 by a group of women members of the Plymouth Congregational Church.

Under McGlone, the camp was physically enlarged and improved as the teacher and his boys from Denver's slums continued building it throughout ensuing summers. For many years, mothers and their children from impoverished neighborhoods enjoyed camp life, courtesy of McGlone and boys. As many as 300 (mothers and chil-
dren) would use the facilities during a season.

Totally neglected as a boy, McGlone lavished love upon thousands of Denver kids. He kept potential delinquents busy in activities they enjoyed. He didn’t give them enough spare time to get into trouble.

Long before “minorities” became a part of the national social idiom, McGlone was working with and for ethnic groups whose members were victims of discrimination.

“Years ago,” McGlone said, “the Denver ‘minorities’ were Irish, German and Italian. Then came the Spanish, the Negroes and their problems.”

All were welcome in McGlone’s War Eagles, his own boys’ club, which he operated for 25 years. About 2,200 graduated from the ranks of the War Eagles, one of the most remarkable youth organizations in the nation’s history and entirely the product of one man, Dolly McGlone.

Only one of their members ever went to prison, a remarkable record when one considers that many boys had been tempted to try the kind of life McGlone had lived in his youth.

“The good guys and I worked to make and keep the bad guys good,” McGlone recalled philosophically in describing the War Eagles.

The club name was adopted in memory of an Indian named War Eagle, whom McGlone had wrestled when he was Rocky Mountain middleweight champ.

The War Eagles participated in all sports, but their favorite was gymnastics, in which McGlone had excelled for many years. One summer, he bought a beat-up, rundown truck, renovated it, loaded some of his War Eagle acrobats into the vehicle and barnstormed throughout the neighboring state of Nebraska.

“We had a lot of fun,” Dolly said, “and we even made $400 profit for the club.”

One of the summer highlights for the War Eagles was a canoe race on the Platte River, from Littleton to downtown Denver. Corrugated iron sheeting and oak
flooring, scrounged by McGlone, magically were turned into canoes by the handiwork of Dolly and his boys.

"All materials in each canoe cost about $1.50," he said.

Milton R. Erickson, a Denver businessman, is one of the more than 2,000 War Eagle graduates. When McGlone retired as a teacher at Byers Junior High School after 34 years' service, Erickson wrote:

"No kid was too weak, no bully was too strong for Dolly McGlone to guide toward a common goal of good citizenship. Dolly put the mark of acceptance on being strong and healthy without having to be a 'champion;' on being good and decent without being called a sissy, and learning and scholarship without having to fear the label of bookworm.

"Most of us started out at Byers as ordinary kids—some good, some bad. Most of us were scared. Dolly guided us along paths that are just as sound and vivid today as they were then.

"I will never forget the pride Dolly had in his War Eagles. To be deserving of the understanding Dolly bestowed, every War Eagle had to be able to say that he had not cheated, nor been disrespectful to a girl or bullied a kid. Otherwise, he couldn't hold his head up with pride in being a good War Eagle," Erickson said.

"I couldn't have kept the War Eagles going without my wife, Marion," McGlone insisted.

Marion Wire McGlone, who was Dolly's companion and counselor for 49 years, was a strong partner in the McGlone's children's crusade.

They met in a setting natural for perfectly matched mates—in Denver's West Side Neighborhood House, at West 10th Avenue and Galapago Street, now part of the campus of West High School.

She was in charge of the girls' program at the center. McGlone was moonlighting as an instructor at the club, which was one of the bright spots in an otherwise impoverished neighborhood.

She taught drama, music and dancing and also
served as a sports instructor. "She had a championship softball team," Dolly proudly recalled.

"During the years we had our War Eagles, she repaired the kids' clothes [there were usually about 70 members in the club] and served as cook. She did the clerical work. When we'd go on hiking trips, she carried our son [Allen] on her back, like a papoose.

"On the War Eagles' barnstorming trip through Nebraska, Marion was there to keep tabs on the kids—and me."

Now past 80, Marion is still a bubbling girl, as she brags about her beau. Her sharp mind is a storehouse for the many happy years and the tragic episodes she shared with Dolly. Her memories are laced with a mixture of emotional admiration and grudging objectivity, the latter in deference to the fact that her husband really had a few mortal shortcomings.

After their marriage in 1925, Dolly told Marion: "I don't know how I got you . . . I was so crude." He had been a street urchin and was embarrassed because of his ignorance in the social graces.

In one of several odd coincidences that marked his life, Dolly was acquainted with her father long before he met Marion. He worked one summer for Frank E. Wire, her dad, who owned and operated a silver mine in Frisco, Colorado.

When he proposed marriage to Marion, Dolly recalled asking:

"Would you mind being a mother as well as a wife to me? I've never known a mother's love."

After she recalled the poignant question and her positive response to it, Marion plunged into a recitation of Dolly's "genius" and "his innovative education techniques."

"Who knows what he could have accomplished, if he had had more formal education," Mrs. McGlone mused. "There's no end to the possibilities." In a self-contradictory reaction, she then asked: "On the other hand, what more could he have accomplished, if he had received a
dozen degrees?’

If McGlone’s first marriage was a tragic mistake—and it was—his second brought him a wife perfectly cast for mutual adventures beyond their fondest hopes.

Like Dolly, Marion had remarkable natural talents that were to enrich the lives of thousands of Denver boys and girls.

She attended the University of Denver for a year and a half, but had to quit the classroom to help support her family, which had fallen on hard times. She worked two years as a dentist’s assistant, attended nursing school four months but resigned because she again had to help her family, and was a teacher two years at the Neighborhood House.

She served two years on the teaching staff of the first Montessori school in Denver. (Some Montessori techniques later were adopted by teachers of the retarded.) She was Denver’s first physical education teacher of retarded children—at the Meeker Home in North Denver. In the mornings, she taught at a nursery school in South Denver, then boarded a street car for the long trip to Meeker, where she instructed brain-injured children in the afternoon.

Marion could have preceded her husband as a full-time teacher of the retarded. The owner of Meeker urged Mrs. McGlone to take over the school, which, like Laradon Hall today, was an institution for resident and day students who were euphemistically called “slow learners.”

Marion declined, “... because Dolly and I had just been married and we wanted to concentrate on having our own family. I was 25 and he was 38. So, we had to get started on our family.”

Then came much happiness and an occasional tragedy, always the twin companions of the McGlones.

In the latter stages of her first pregnancy, Marion had fallen during a hike in the mountains.

Mrs. McGlone gave birth to twin sons. One was born dead. The survivor was Ivan. Almost seven and a half
years later, Allen was born.

"The boys meant so much to Dolly," Marion said. "He'd always loved boys, especially, and now he had two of his own."

On November 1, 1940, the McGlones' happiness was almost totally shattered. Ivan died of spinal meningitis. (Three years later, Marion remembered, life-saving sulfa drugs were discovered.)

Allen, only four months old, was also stricken, but, miraculously, survived an illness almost as terrifying in those days as poliomyelitis.

"Ivan's death was a terrible blow to Dolly," Marion said. "He almost physically forced the death out of his memory.

"'I'm never going to be hurt that way again,'" Marion recalls his saying. "'He never wanted to remember the date of Ivan's death, and that's the way it was. He simply closed his mind to it.'"

McGlone's genius in teaching the retarded probably stemmed from one of his unique experiments involving Ivan. The latter, at the age of four, was adjudged near-genius by two University of Denver professors who gave the youngster an IQ test.

McGlone authored a book, Learning While Playing, a remarkable "biography" of Ivan from age two months through four years.

In the introduction, McGlone wrote:

"With my background of experience, which involved thousands of boys from five to sixteen years of age, from criminal to saint, and from idiot to genius, I eagerly undertook my first experiment in pre-school education, and on my own child. Oh joy!"

Starting when Ivan was only two months old, Dolly devised games and built gadgets that developed the baby's motor nerves and senses—the same system he later used in training Laradon Hall students.

The chronology of Ivan's progress reveals the natural intelligence of the child and the skill of the teacher-father. Some of Ivan's accomplishments include:
*Learning to walk in a swimming pool at six months with the aid of an inflated tube wrapped around his chest.
*Feeding himself at seven months.
*Operating a four-wheel scooter, made by Dolly, also at seven months.
*Learning the alphabet at 19 months, using a device constructed by his dad.
*Taking “English courses” from Dolly at 22 months.
*Starting an insect museum at 32 months, housing specimens in about 100 vials provided by his teacher.

Prior to his fourth birthday, Ivan had his own indoor garden; participated in gym classes with older boys; learned trout fishing and caught three the first day he cast a line into a brook, and made some of his own toys with an adult set of tools.

When Ivan was 47 months old, he gave a lecture on taxonomy (the classification of animals and plants) before the Biology Club of the University of Denver.

A short time later, Ivan exhibited his collection of flowers to a nature lovers' group at Byers Junior High.

“For fear my motives might be misunderstood,” McGlone wrote, “we accepted no more speaking engagements for Ivan.”

In his book, McGlone observed:

“If the Greeks excelled all other people in genius, it was because they paid more attention than did the others to bodily exercise.

“In my humble opinion, boxing stands first among sports as a man-maker. I got boxing gloves for Ivan for their educational value when I considered the wonderful coordination that is developed by clever boxers.

“Young boys, and many older ones, invariably close their eyes and use their gloves as though they were tomahawks. To break a 37-month-old child [Ivan] of his slovenly boxing style is no mean accomplishment, but to train a right-handed one to deliver a straight left-hand punch with the weight behind it, is enough to warm the cockles of any father's heart. Especially a father who
wants his son to win the majority of the fights that he cannot honorably avoid.”

When Ivan was four, two Denver University professors tested his intelligence. His IQ was 149, about 100 points higher than those of Dolly’s average Laradon student.

“This IQ may prove something, or it may prove absolutely nothing,” McGlone wrote in the conclusion of his book.

“I have tried to record the high spots of nearly four years of happy play in the case of one happy, normal child. I am well pleased with the result of this experiment in pre-school education. The boy has been made acquainted with science, literature, music and art. He has been trained to think and to exercise self-control.

“It will perhaps come as a surprise to many to learn that his physical well-being has always been foremost in our minds.”

Ivan, the prodigy idolized by his parents, died at age seven.

It may seem that the energy, initiative and experimentation lavished on an exceptionally brilliant child were consigned to the grave when final rites were held for young Ivan. Not so.

The responses of the boy to his father’s patient guidance, as recorded in McGlone’s book, will live as long as parents and other adults care about the development of children, whether normal or retarded.

In the foreword to Learning While Playing, republished after McGlone joined the Laradon Hall staff, Dr. F. William Happ, the school’s education director, observed:

“Dolly McGlone developed his ideas out of his own observations and his comprehensive practice as an instructor, unaware of and uninfluenced by the opinions and efforts of contemporary educators.

“McGlone was the originator of the ‘Program of Functional Teaching of the Mentally Retarded.’

“He invented about 200 teaching aids.
“His experience as father of a talented infant son laid the groundwork for his prolific pedagogical accomplishments.”

Allen McGlone, the surviving son and now district geologist for Denver-based Great Western Drilling Co., is candid in recollections of Dolly.

“He was a demanding father, but he never laid a hand on me. I got the message, strong and clear. Dad instilled in me a strong feeling of responsibility, yet I had much more freedom than my contemporaries when I was a boy. I felt I had to do well, but I never had the law laid down to me.

“Dad was a tough Irishman,” he continued. “He battled for his viewpoint and he was impatient with the viewpoints of others. He was a dominating person.

“He had an unbelievable imagination. I was exposed to a great deal of learning, without realizing it at the time. His teacher role never was evident to me. He never ‘tutored’ me, as such. There was always good music, good literature and history books in our home. I gained an appreciation of the arts naturally, without being badgered.

“I was never forced to study anything. I was taking piano lessons and making no progress. Dad asked me if I wanted to quit. I said yes, as strongly as I could. That was the end of that.

“I learned a lot about nature from Dad without even being aware he was teaching me about plants, trees, birds, insects—everything you can possibly find in the mountains.

“Some people probably would have thought Dad crazy because of a few of his teaching ideas. But he had a God-given talent for knowing what children really want to know.

“I was in Dad’s War Eagles. During summers, we’d play Robin Hood in the mountains. There was Dad, a grown man, running around in a gunnysack costume, just like the rest of the kids. We’d be gypsies, backpacking all over the mountains. . . . One guy would be Robin
Hood, somebody else would be Little John. Another would be Friar Tuck.

"Silly games? No. It was education, with lots of fun. It was a learning process, but we kids didn’t realize it until years later.

“I know a little bit about a lot of things, because of Dad. So do many other men and women who had him for a teacher.”

Those memories and observations flowed from Allen’s lips as genuine tribute to a father whose son admired the mixed Athenian and Spartan qualities of a devoted dad.

“Those tattoos all over his body . . . even on his thighs . . . he applied some of them himself. . . . They must have symbolized something about his very virile nature. I guess tattoos meant manhood to him when he was younger.

“Dad’s physical abilities were simply amazing. On backpack trips, I’ve seen him carry 200 pounds. He could hike all day. And, if somebody pooped out, Dad would haul his gear, too.

“He was still a great gymnast when he was in his late 50’s. I remember one time while I was a student at Byers. Somebody tried to coax Dad into doing a very difficult gym routine. I thought, ‘Oh, my God, he’ll make a fool of himself.’ It was a tough routine that required sheer strength.

“Dad jumped onto the high bar, did the routine and ended it with a flying dismount. He probably hadn’t done that for many years, but he was such an amazing physical specimen the gym routine was simple for him.

“Life with Dad wasn’t always just a big round of fun, though. Some people say it’s not the time that a parent spends with a child that’s important—it’s the quality. I tend to disagree. I think it’s important to spend a lot of time with children. Just to be bored together prepares you for life, too.”

Dolly had only two real shortcomings, as far as son Allen is concerned.
“He could never comprehend math and he had no business sense whatever. Money bored him. The family financial affairs would have been a disaster, if Mother hadn’t handled the budget and checkbook.

“As for math, if figures were involved in the development of his teaching gimmicks, I had to help him with number-concepts.”

Allen volunteered that his father was no “sugary” person. “I have seen him take a smart-aleck kid by the scruff of the neck and tell him he was going to slap the snot out of him. In that particular case, that’s what the kid needed. Dad was never a bully, but if a boy needed discipline, he got it—right now!

“His real success with children was the rapport he had with them. He had the ability to reach them—whether they were brilliant or retarded.”

In 1967, professional colleagues and former students attempted to win for Dolly the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. International Service Award for his many years in helping the handicapped. Testimonials poured in from all over the nation.

Here are excerpts from a 1967 letter written by Allen McGlone:

“I’m sure that one factor in Dolly’s success is a remarkable ability to know what children like and what they dislike. This ability is partly God-given, but it is mostly derived from a knowledge of child behavior which has been acquired by intimate association with children for more than 50 years. Many times, his approach to a particular situation is in complete disharmony with all accepted practices of child-handling. You need only to talk with many men and women who were close to Dolly when they were children and you realize he is indeed a man children love.

“A great deal of his effectiveness is due to the constant dedication to his students. His idea of what makes a great song, for example, is whether it might be of value in training his class, or they would like him to play it for them on his harmonica. I have seen him spend hours in
the evenings with a tape recorder and his harmonica, working out songs and rhythms for his students.

"When my own children were quite young and were learning to walk and talk and were trying to grow up, he would play with them and love them, as any other grandfather might. Yet, he would always be observing them closely to detect some clue in the actions of his grandchildren that might be useful in teaching his retarded students, who were trying to do the same things.

"His conversation is enthusiastic and conspicuously devoid of statistics and references to the publications of others. You sense that here is a man who knows what he is teaching, not because he read it, but because he feels it.

"Step into his place of work at Laradon Hall, and you step into neither an office nor a laboratory. You walk into a workshop that is filled with workable things and workable ideas. At first glance, it appears cluttered and filled to overflowing. At second look, it is evident that here, things are being accomplished. Good ideas are being put to work. You sense that the students are doing something real and significant.

"When you consider dedication to the cause of the mentally retarded, consider that Dolly launched a second career at a time in life when most other men have closed their productive years and have ceased making significant contributions to society. Consider a man almost 82 years old who still travels across a large city each day to a school for a full workday, then occupies most of his leisure hours writing and experimenting with new ideas.

"Dolly has a saying, that, to me, sums up his approach to the mentally retarded: 'Is it because he can't learn, or is it because I can't teach him?'

Gene Amole, veteran Denver radio and television personality, recalls that he had heard of McGlone before he became a member of one of the latter's gym classes at Byers.

"He had a reputation for being tough and demand-
ing," Amole said. "He was very guarded in the language he used in classes, but I'd heard he could use profanity expertly, when called for.

"As a matter of fact, when I did a television documentary on Laradon Hall quite a few years ago, I was afraid that at any minute Dolly would utter a few four-letter words.

"We did the show live, but Dolly thought we were just rehearsing. I sighed with relief after the show ended. Afterward, Dolly said: 'Well, when do we start the damn show?'"

Dolly would use any gimmick, gesture or maneuver to discipline or reassure a student.

One day, a frightened youngster came into Dolly's office. The boy was totally unprepared for what followed. McGlone leaped on top of his desk and began a perfect imitation of a monkey searching for fleas.

Although startled at first, the act quickly broke up the kid. He relaxed, related his problem, received counseling from Dolly and went on his way, giggling to himself about the goofy teacher and his monkey act.

After working for many years with boys, McGlone decided he had neglected feminine youngsters. As an offshoot of the War Eagles, he organized guilds, which taught crafts that would appeal to young ladies.

On Saturday mornings, kids studied journalism, photography and weaving. There was also a class for budding naturalists. All subjects were taught by professionals or craftsmen who donated their services.

Early in his teaching career, McGlone became concerned about the "slow learners."

"They were passed along, from grade to grade and when they entered junior high school they still couldn't read and write," McGlone said.

The youngsters desperately craved a sense of accomplishment. On his own, McGlone adopted the "slow learners" and taught them how to weave, a skill McGlone had learned from Indian squatters who had lived in his pre-teen neighborhood.
Later to become renowned for his revolutionary techniques in training mentally retarded, McGlone started researching and experimenting in that field while he was a junior high teacher.

"I got the idea of motor-nerve training from a book by Dr. Angelo Mosso," McGlone revealed. "He was an anatomist and authority on fatigue.

"Mosso said the myelin of the motor nerves develops first, and because of that, if you want to develop mental maturity, work on motor nerves first."

(Myelin is the white, fatty substance forming a sheath around certain nerve fibers.)

Before he became a teacher, McGlone, in addition to his many free services in War Eagle and guild activities, tutored children of wealthy families.

"The parents wanted me to try to improve their kids' health and physical skills," McGlone said. "Despite the folks' money, the kids were treated just like my other, poorer young friends. Never hurt 'em a bit, either."

A major watermark in McGlone's life came in 1966, when the Charles C. Thomas Co. published and distributed throughout the world a textbook acclaimed as one of the finest of its kind.

Entitled *Functional Teaching of the Mentally Retarded*, the volume was inspired by Dolly McGlone's work and personality. It is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

In the foreword of *Functional Teaching*, Dr. Edgar A. Doll, consulting psychologist for Bellingham, Washington, public schools, wrote:

"Now and then in the course of a professional lifetime, one encounters colleagues gifted with the imagination, resourcefulness and initiative each of us so earnestly strives for himself.

"Such an experience is at hand for those students of special education, including parents, who believe the instruction for the severely retarded should not be merely more of the same for longer periods and under greater
pressure.

"Rather, what is sorely needed is the development of devices which are capable of decontaminating a special child's previous frustrations by giving him the experience of success and a renewal of his original eagerness for learning.

"Mr. McGlone is one of those educational leaders who demonstrates the impossible is only so because solutions are not immediately self-evident. By an empirical development of imagination, he has used the salvage principle, not only with his students, but also with his materials and methods.

"Here is a philosophy, a method and materials of education which fire the admiration and structure the courage of the teacher as well as that of the pupil. Here is an exemplification of the principle that education science is uncommon use of the commonplace.

"The remarkable success of Mr. McGlone has been well systemized in a simply formulated theory and philosophy of learning by the authors of this volume. They have caught the gleam of Mr. McGlone's inspiration and have reflected it to the reader in terms which are readily comprehended.

"It was my good fortune to see Mr. McGlone at work in the early days of his endeavors [at Laradon Hall]. I naturally wondered how much of his apparent skill might be the result of discovering hidden talents on the part of his students and how much of his success was due to his personal skills and how much to his methods, as such.

"My evaluation confirmed the professional judgment of others that these pupils were really severely retarded in intelligence, in neuro-muscular aptitudes and particularly in initiative and motivation. It is a special tribute to the techniques described in this book that they do so successfully stimulate the handicapped child to the rebirth of enthusiasm, effort and achievement."

A few years after McGlone joined the Laradon staff, the Denver Post's Betty Jean Lee wrote:
“Often, Dolly spent more time with health, garden, boxing and wrestling clubs, subnormal members of society, and in projects that fed and clothed the poor than he did at his teaching job at Byers . . .

“Because of his unprecedented popularity at Byers, and his many worthwhile achievements, students at the school have celebrated Dolly McGlone day every year since his retirement in 1951.

“I have been concerned always with keeping decent kids decent, as well as with reforming wayward ones,” Miss Lee quoted Dolly as saying. “Long before my retirement as a public school teacher, I realized the need for teachers of brain-injured children. I came to Laradon Hall in the hope I could apply some of the original theories that I had found successful.

“The sense of feeling is the most vivid and concrete and the pupil’s attention and thought can best be held through this sense,” McGlone said in describing a fundamental technique in teaching the retarded.

“Students learn first to notice the differences in colors and then detect differences and similarities in design.”

In his system, the designs are made more and more complex until words are substituted for them. Eventually, the child learns to select the word to match one shown him and then to read and understand simple sentences.

The learning process that comes naturally to normal children is not easy, either for the teachers or pupils at Laradon. For every step of progress, there are many hours of patient labor. The methods developed by McGlone, however, have done much to speed this progress.

The McGlone technique is to start at the child’s level of ability and as each task is learned, the child is given another one a little more difficult.

One of Dolly’s students, a five-year-old, could do nothing more than drop blocks through holes in a box. Soon after entering Laradon he began to match colors—
120 of varying shades—by pairing skeins of yarn. Then he learned to distinguish between weights—a series of boxes containing iron washers and bird shot. At seven, the boy learned to read and do other first-grade work.

To teach differences in sound, McGlone placed many various objects in boxes the students would shake to get various types of "rattles."

"Those are but a couple of the more than 200 teaching devices Dolly invented at Laradon," Miss Lee wrote. "His greatest contribution, however, lies in the improved minds of the scores of children who can read a little, think more clearly and perhaps some day will hold jobs of their own . . ."

Edward Morey, who served as assistant principal during part of McGlone's long tenure at Byers, called Dolly "one of the most brilliant people I've ever known. He was an inventor, an innovator. He didn't copy others. He read what they had to say, then worked out his own ideas."

One day at Byers, a young teacher complained to the principal because pupils were addressing McGlone as Dolly, rather than as "Mister."

"Mr. McGlone," the teacher was told, "has a special dispensation from me to permit his pupils to call him 'Dolly.' There's a mutual love between him and his kids and one of the ways the kids show love is to call him by a beloved name."

The honors earned by McGlone would fill several shelves. He received a U.S. Navy citation in World War II for his physical fitness training techniques, which he devised at Byers. Denver judges and school administrators lauded him for one-man crusades that converted delinquents into useful citizens, including educators, physicians, scientists, attorneys and businessmen.

Noted educators praised and adopted McGlone's system of teaching "slow learners." Dolly probably would have uttered some earthy comment, though, if anyone suggested he was a sophisticated professional expounding philosophical theories.
He was an unlikely candidate for a Ph.D. because of his lack of interest in formal learning, yet many educators holding prized degrees have utilized McGlone's techniques. Dolly, busy teaching and rehabilitating children, had no time to earn even one degree. The Denver public school teaching certificate he used 34 years was granted at a time when requirements were less stringent than in the early 20's. The fact that Dolly was not only permitted but encouraged to test his theories speaks well for a school system that recognized his qualifications and ignored the lack of either formal training or diploma.

The Byers' colleague who categorized McGlone as "brilliant" shared an evaluation made by Will Durant, highly regarded educator and writer.

As an experiment in parental teaching, Dolly wrote more than 100 children's stories, which he read to his sons—Allen and Ivan—when they were small. McGlone's multiple talents are evident in the stories, which include themes in many areas of knowledge.

Six stories were sent Durant. Here is his critique:

"My daughter, Ethel, and I have read the McGlone stories for children and we both enjoyed them so keenly that we hope some way will be found to present them to the children of America.

"First, the tales were absorbingly interesting; no one who begins them wants to let them go unfinished. Second, they are written in splendid style—with all the beauty of simplicity; just such English as Dickens or Stevenson might have written for these stories. Third, they are made gay with a bright sense of humor, as if a happy father were telling them [and doubtless they were told in just this way originally] to beloved children on his knee or gathered round him in the woods or fields.

"Finally, they mean something; they leave the child with an aspiration toward fine conduct. Though some might think children would object to these 'morals,' I am confident the average child likes to be stimulated upward this way, and enjoys illustrations of kindness and
nobility.

"So, may these stories find a magazine form soon, and a book form soon thereafter, and gladden many homes. If the publisher cares to print any part of this letter in announcing the book, I shall be very glad."

It's remarkable that Durant discovered the real McGlone merely by reading a few of Dolly's children's stories. The author's descriptive phrasing is highly appropriate: "Stimulating upward ... kindness ... nobility ... they leave the child with an aspiration toward fine conduct."

In reviewing the dozens of stories he wrote, McGlone said:

"With the exception of talking animals, all the characters were true to nature. There was an abundance of scientifically correct information. Because of the teaching success of Aesop and his fables and the Teacher of Teachers with His parables, a moral was written in almost every story for the character education of the young.

"They were not the blatant, self-evident morals that were so prevalent when I was a boy. They were hidden or were so incidental to the story they left the boy in the mood to emulate the character of the heroes."

The McGlone genius for improvisation, coupled with a compassion for children, enabled him to inaugurate unique teaching programs at Byers and then transfer them to Laradon.

At Byers, he discovered that "slow learners" somehow acquired the skills needed for square dancing. McGlone, an expert dance caller who had donated his services to a Denver recreation program, organized square-dance classes at Byers.

Shortly after he joined the Laradon staff, McGlone started the same type dancing program at the school. "Those kids were champs," Dolly boasted.

An ardent advocate of music as an educational tool, McGlone conducted singing classes for several years at Laradon. He provided the instrumental music by play-
ing a harmonica.

"A musical background provides a child with the opportunity to improve his vocabulary, sequence of words, knowledge of melody pitch, rhythm and memory training," McGlone said. "Music, as a group activity, teaches children how to work together. Furthermore, it's just plain fun for them. They're happy and smiling when they're singing."

At the peak of McGlone's music sessions at Laradon, some of the children knew 250 songs by heart, a few in foreign lyrics.

Thus, again, McGlone had pioneered another aspect of teaching that attracted wide attention. Later, Ridge Home installed music therapy as a regular part of its curriculum.

McGlone plucked one of his programs out of his past, when he was a youthful gymnastics champion. He organized a gym team among Laradon Boy Scouts that won wide acclaim, including a state championship.

In his latter years, McGlone's teaching load was decreased, if his responsibilities were measured only by the smaller number in his classes. As he closed out his career, he had only four pupils, but they were the most severely retarded at the school. One of them, until another serious illness forced him to withdraw, was Larry, son of the Joe Calabreses.

"If Dolly hadn't been on the staff, those pupils in his class would have been in a state institution," according to Mrs. Helen Taft, a case worker. "Dolly was the only one who could handle and train them.

"He was incredible . . . a master teacher. He provided a stimulation that was unique. I sat in on his classes many times. Dolly didn't regard students as a group. He treated each as an individual. If he couldn't 'reach' a child using his normal skills, he kept trying different things until he did 'reach' him.

"There was the case of Jim. He came to Laradon when he was 28. He'd spent most of his life sitting on the floor at home, playing with trinkets. He had no skills.
For some unknown reason, he stopped talking when he was 10.

"One day," Mrs. Taft continued, "while I was observing Dolly's class, I had difficulty believing what I was seeing and hearing. Jim was saying words! Dolly had done it again. Now, Jim can write his name. He can differentiate among colors. He had been fearful, but now he's a happy human being!"

Among other cases recalled by Mrs. Taft:

Betty entered Laradon in 1968, when she was 17. She was and is severely retarded. She had been in therapy programs 10 years before she was enrolled at Laradon. There had been no progress.

Dolly worked with Betty for five years. She learned to follow directions, started performing simple tasks and now works in the school laundry.

"She's much better socially," said Mrs. Taft. "She can cope. She can take care of her personal needs."

Jean became a McGlone student in 1969 when she was 15. Her mental age is slightly less than that of a four-year-old. There is no adult future for her, but she has acquired some knowledge of numbers; she recognizes written symbols and has gained some social skills.

"Then there's Dorothy," Mrs. Taft continued. "She was 26 when she came to Dolly's class. She had been expelled from public school because she had repeated the first grade two or three times. She had no skill when she came to Laradon.

"Now, Dorothy knows colors and can write her name. She can do simple addition. She's advanced to the industrial class and helps in packaging projects.

"Dolly had a saying: 'I've never met a kid who could beat me,' meaning that no child, no matter how retarded, was going to prevent Dolly from teaching him."

And Dolly had a large collection of human miracles to prove that he indeed was an undefeated teacher.

Joe Calabrese has perhaps the best perspective possible of McGlone and his work.

"The school never would have succeeded without
Dolly. He started the entire teaching program—everything," Joe said.

"The kids' attention spans were very short, so it was almost impossible to teach them. We couldn't keep them seated at their desks. They would wander around doing unusual things. Some kids were disruptive, so we had to tie some of them to their desk seats.

"Dolly did away with all that. He got rid of the desks. He sat them on the floor. In certain periods, he had charge of 50 kids at a time. Imagine trying to handle 50 retarded kids at one time. Dolly did.

"He started developing his wonderful teaching devices. Then he showed other teachers how to use them.

"He made out all the lesson plans for the teachers and instructed them in ways to carry them out. Elvern Garber, our school principal at the time, learned a lot from Dolly, too. Dolly never wanted to be the boss. He simply wanted to teach, and show others how to teach, but he wouldn't accept an administration job.

"Dolly would come in at 8:30 in the morning and work until almost 5 in the afternoon. He worked on new teaching techniques home at night and on weekends.

"He started our recreation program. We hired college kids to supervise the children after school hours, from about 3 to 7 p.m. Often Dolly would stay late and show the supervisors how to handle retarded children at play.

"In some institutions, teachers had used threats and fear to try to control the retarded. Dolly said, 'Let the kid make mistakes, then correct him. Don't threaten him. Don't use fear tactics, that will just make him even more withdrawn. All these kids have known is failure. Let's capitalize on the things a kid can do, and build on that.'

"He rewarded the kids with praise. Kids crave praise. When they got it, especially from Dolly, they were somehow inspired to do more things—gradually, of course.

"At times, Dolly could be brusque, but only if a kid
who knew better would do something Dolly didn’t approve of. Dolly would say: ‘You sit over there. When you settle down and act right, come back and we’ll talk.’ Invariably, his orders were followed. The kid came back to Dolly and tried even harder.

‘Over the years, a few young teachers at Laradon would buy Dolly’s methods—up to a point—and then try to improve on them. Those teachers never got anywhere. They flubbed every opportunity they had in the special ed field.

‘Many educators and psychologists have visited Laradon. Some would say Dolly’s system is ‘busy work.’ ‘It’s not really teaching the kids. It’s just a testing system.’

‘But those who really studied Dolly’s work realized he was doing amazing things. Some federal officials from HEW heard about Dolly. I had shown some of his papers to their people. An assistant secretary visited Laradon. He wrote a report about Laradon and Dolly. That’s how we got a federal grant for a three-year study.

‘For several years, I had been trying to get someone to put Dolly’s system into a book. Nobody would do it. The HEW grant made it possible to get Dolly’s methods into one package. First, there was the guide, also financed by HEW, which was developed into the textbook, Functional Teaching of the Mentally Retarded. It took the authors five years to get it all together.

‘When McGlone developed an idea, he knew, instinctively, it would work. Nobody could change his mind. Sometimes, he’d come to me with an idea. Maybe I wasn’t 100 percent for it. He’d say, ‘To hell with Joe, I’ll go to Elizabeth.’

‘Invariably, Elizabeth backed Dolly’s ideas and projects. Somehow or other, Dolly and Elizabeth would get things done, no matter what I thought.

‘If Dolly couldn’t get money for materials, he’d use tin cans, barrels, boxes, used lumber, old tires, rope, oil drums, rubber hose—anything he could scrounge. He and the kids built the teaching aids in the original
Children using or displaying Dolly's gadgets.
"Garden of Hope."

"At one time, an attorney, whose son was a Laradon student, tried to get some of Dolly’s inventions patented or copyrighted, but it didn’t work out.

"Dolly started our vocational training program in 1952, the year after he joined us. He taught kids how to make charm bracelets and how to put key chains together. We sold them and the kids got most of the money.

"We had a contract with Samsonite Luggage. Dolly built a special device which the kids learned to use. It speeded up their job, threading string through tags. He made it simple for the kids. And they loved the work.

"We got a contract with Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. to box nails. Each had to contain one pound of nails. The kids couldn’t weigh anything on scales, so Dolly built a gadget. He drilled holes that would hold exactly one pound of nails. All the kids had to do was fill each hole with a nail. When the nails were dumped from the gadget into a box, presto, exactly one pound of nails.

"All these things were teaching the kids eye-and-hand coordination that helped them learn to do a lot of other things. Strictly because of Dolly’s work and ideas, we started the vocational workshop in 1959.

"There was only one Dolly. He loved to tackle the most difficult challenges. After everybody else gave up, he just kept working at the problem until he came up with the answer."

Still another tribute to this genius came from Barbara K. Given, a teacher-protege of the master. Because it was written in the present tense, while Dolly was alive, it is reproduced that way:

"Roy [Dolly] McGlone is a master teacher in every sense of the word. He is able to impart his basic creed for living to all who know him: 'Don’t do right for fear of punishment or hope of reward, but because it is the right thing to do.'

"He is a creator-innovator, a physical training expert, a skilled weaver, a geologist, a naturalist, an ecolo-
Diagram of Garden of Hope

Functional Teaching Guide, page xxii
“Swimming” tables in old Garden of Hope.

gist, and, above all, a man with deep love and understanding for children; especially children with problems. When a child has trouble learning, Dolly designs and builds a device to fit that child's needs. If the device requires extra hours to build, Dolly supplies them. If his school cannot afford the much-needed machinery for proper operation of a sheltered workshop, Dolly provides it. If a distraught parent seeks counsel, he can shed light in the seeming darkness.

“One would surely expect a person of this nature to be highly educated, reared in an atmosphere of love and understanding and fortunate to have family wealth. Such is not the case.”

McGlone tended to get nervous when colleagues or newspaper writers implied he was a saintly pixie just waiting for his halo. At such times, he went into his ordinary mortal act. He blustered. He injected bits of slightly sanitized profanity into his conversation. He even bragged that he fooled the Denver school brass
hats by secreting snuff in his mouth during his classes. Cackling like an aging Huckleberry Finn, he confessed, "And I chewed tobacco at the school lunch break. None of those other teachers could tell if I had snuff or tobacco in my mouth."

Today's teachers spend considerable time bargaining for more money, smaller classes and more free time. At age 87, McGlone taught from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily—11 months a year—and never argued about a paycheck.

McGlone was a teacher for more than 60 years—in boys' clubs, in the YMCA, at Byers, at Laradon and in his own home in the earlier years.

At Laradon, he worked with the most difficult students imaginable—the retarded. Nearing his 88th and final birthday, McGlone was still teaching.

As he hobbled around on crippled legs that once were the marvelously strong limbs of a champion athlete, he still carried his load as an instructor. He read lips because his hearing had deteriorated. He was handicapped by a quivering voice that once barked instructions in strong tones to boxers, athletes and students.

"I'd like to teach until they carry me out and put me away for good," McGlone said when he was 87. He came close to accomplishing that goal. He was still teaching until his brief fatal illness.

Dolly died November 11, 1974.

On October 1, 1975, slightly less than a year after his death, the Denver Board of Education dedicated a school in McGlone's honor.

The Roy (Dolly) McGlone Elementary School is in Montbello, a community with a rich ethnic mixture. Dolly would have liked having his name associated with such a school, because he was proud of his ability to live and communicate with youngsters of all national and racial heritages.

Tributes to McGlone would fill a volume. The following testimonials are samplings of the thousands of humans enriched by his magic:
Two views of new Garden of Hope.
Richard N. Qualls, former Byers student:

"Dolly dared to care for the fat boy, the skinny, the problem boy—not by being a buddy or pal, but by demanding daily examination of weaknesses, pushing him to release his frustrations.

"Boxing and wrestling tournaments, tumbling activities, and fitness challenges were conducted by Dolly in the days when competition at the junior high level was frowned upon. His physical education program applied strict discipline to his demand for excellence, but still it was fun and rewarding.

Lindsey D. Keeler, school principal and former War Eagle:

"Dolly was teaching slower learners back in 1922... Dolly was given a special schedule at Byers... The 'problem children' were put together and assigned to Dolly to 'control'... Dolly found things they could do, won their interest and their loyalty and they learned... He taught them... He didn't just 'police' them.

"He has probably influenced more persons' lives than any other classroom teacher... He raised each individual's standard of conduct, plus inspiring purpose and ambition."

Mrs. James E. Cameron, Defiance, Ohio:

"As the parent of a boy who has been a resident student at Laradon Hall for four years, I welcome this opportunity to tell what I know from first-hand experience of Mr. McGlone and his work.

"My husband and I had been searching for five years for a school for John, as it was obvious he needed more skilled training than we could give him at home. We traveled to many parts of the country and visited many schools and institutions. From the moment we found Laradon, we knew we were experiencing something unique."
"Since my husband is a physician, he could assess Dolly's program of functional teaching and evaluation. The medical experts, however, were so out of touch with the practical advances in the field, such as those made by Dolly McGlone, as to have them predict that John would never go to school, never be able to do gainful work, nor develop as a happy, socially acceptable individual.

"At Laradon, all these predictions were disproved. In four short years, John's social habits are a credit to any 10-year-old boy; he travels home alone by plane; he is happy and well adjusted, both with adults and his peers. He has a rapidly growing vocabulary reinforced by rich, ever-widening experiences.

"By means of Dolly's special aids, his concepts of sound, color, beauty, space, size and numbers and his physical capabilities are all growing and his life in our own family circle—with his brothers and sisters, as well as ourselves, is much enriched.

"As one would put glasses on a child with poor eyesight, or provide a hearing aid for a child with defective hearing, so Dolly McGlone, with his tremendous insight into the learning process, invents and builds those aids which help his children develop their potentials. He opens the door to individual dignity and purpose, which allows them to take a meaningful place in society and brings happiness to their lives."

What was Dolly McGlone really like?

That may seem a strange question, especially after all the anecdotes and descriptive material of the preceding pages, which actually are mere snapshots—not a complete portrait—of the man. His services to society, it seems, cannot be catalogued properly by biographers.

The recurring idea—in various phrasing—popped up many times in the course of various interviews: "There's no telling what Dolly could have achieved in other fields: In the scientific laboratory, or in an inventor's workshop, or in the executive suite of a corporation, or in the
There's little doubt Dolly could have accomplished almost any goal. His natural intellectual brilliance, inventive and innovative mind, his genius for understanding the normal and abnormal segments of society, and his tenacity in solving human problems would have qualified him for virtually any field of endeavor he might have chosen.

Dolly McGlone was determined to give his life to children, because he was cast adrift and virtually abandoned by his own mother and father. He seemed to have taken, perhaps subconsciously, an almost priestly vow to live as a salvager of outcasts, which was what he himself had been as a boy in a socially deprived Denver neighborhood.

Rags-to-riches stories are revered by admirers of American success sagas, because they can be gauged in material terms. Dolly McGlone, however, qualifies in another category of heroes. His achievements could not be reflected in social status or dollars. His freely shared wealth was love and compassion, neither of which can be measured by mortals.
With Dolly securely settled into a second successful vocation, Joe continued to seek a permanent financial base for Laradon.

Almost from the school’s launching in 1949, Calabrese had been lobbying state legislators for assistance, not only for his charges but for other organizations throughout Colorado that were diverting the handicapped from institutions. State government, Joe believed, should help subsidize such programs, rather than appropriate more and more funds that simply provided warehousing for the unfortunates.

“Shortly after World War II,” Joe explained, “the state passed a special education act. It was intended to assist young people with various mental and physical deficiencies. I thought it might help get my kids in public school. But it didn’t. They were barred by rules and regulations, adopted pursuant to statute. All school boards decided a kid had to have an I.Q. of at least 50 before he could be enrolled. Any youngster under that score was uneducable, they said. Mine, therefore, were not eligible.”
"I then asked, if they're not educable and if they're not the schools' responsibility, whose responsibility are they? I started lobbying, trying to get an answer to that question."

As often as the opportunity permitted, Joe reminded lawmakers that accommodations for persons sent to the State Hospital at Pueblo and to the Training Schools in Ridge and Grand Junction were already overcrowded. Financing future facilities, he contended, would be accompanied by never-ending demands for additional tax money, with slim prospect of rehabilitation for persons committed.

"No matter what we tried," Joe said, "we couldn't get any money. The state was paying for the education of everybody else, but not for mentally retarded kids," he continued. "Parents who sent their children to Laradon had to pay us from their own pockets for the education and training of their youngsters.

"The state said it couldn't give money to private schools," he added. "In order to help the parents, I told the state Laradon wasn't a school. I said it was a therapy center, but no one would buy that title."

Joe was not alone in his crusade. Others, including some state officials, recognized that alternatives had to be found. There was a groundswell of opinion, with Calabrese in the vanguard, to repeal the 19th century philosophy sentencing persons to state mental prisons masked under more acceptable names.

A few legislators recognized the challenge, but lacked the muscle to launch needed reforms.

Joe's clamoring for changes in the law did not go unnoticed. Fellow lobbyists, as well as persons in the State Education Department, suggested, at various times, that he run for a seat in the Legislature.

"If you really want to get support for your ideas," Calabrese was told, "get yourself elected. Then these guys who make the laws will have to listen to you."

"'Go in there,' they told me," Joe said. "'Get your bill passed and go on about your business.'"
At first, Calabrese ignored the suggestions he jump into politics. He had plenty to do, he knew, working for the Post Office and running his school.

He did not, however, completely ignore the suggestion. Gradually, Joe started warming up to the idea. He could not continue to overlook the rebuffs he suffered and the dead-end streets he kept entering. By 1954, fed to the eyebrows with failure, he made the decision that was to have long-time beneficial repercussions for the handicapped.

Calabrese announced that he would, indeed, be a candidate for the House of Representatives.

Even though he had basic knowledge of Denver politics, because of his service as a precinct committeeman, Joe knew he would need city-wide support in his new undertaking.

Once he declared for the race, he went to a long-time friend, Mike Pomponio, for advice. As Democratic captain for District X, which included much of the north side, Mike was credited with being one of the two or three most powerful men in the Denver branch of his party. He could, it was believed, deliver a large bloc of votes for any candidate he supported.

In the mid-1950's, first and second-generation Americans of Italian descent still dominated the north side population. They could identify with Pomponio and his precinct workers, many of whom spoke Italian. Thus they made Mike a factor to contend with in any election, because they also voted heavily, prizing the ballot box as one of the principal symbols of American democracy.

Joe explained to Pomponio why he wanted to run, then asked for support.

"Mike told me he would help," Calabrese said, "but then he dampened my hopes by adding:

"'Joe, you'll never get elected.'"

At that period in Denver's political history, candidates seeking seats in the Colorado Senate or House did not run in districts. The one-man, one-vote philosophy currently governing both local and national elections
was dormant. It existed in the State Constitution, but was winked at, in practice. A novice like Calabrese, consequently, faced a major challenge. He had to compete for votes on a city-wide basis against not only Republicans, but against Democrats, too, because 17 were to be elected.

"Mike suggested several things I should do," Joe said. "He urged me to go all over town and see and talk to as many captains, committee men and women, and delegates to the County Assembly as I could.

"Tell them your story, especially about why you're getting into politics," Mike said, 'then hope they'll remember you at the convention.' Most of the other candidates were doing the same thing I was," Calabrese continued, "so the precinct people were very popular.

"I actually saw hundreds of delegates and was generally well received. I figured to myself, I'm not going to have any trouble. I'll get elected.

"Once I decided I could win," Joe said, "I quit my job at the Post Office. That shows how naive I was. Even if elected, my legislative pay would be far less than my Post Office income. But I had to do one or the other—get out of the Post Office or give up the school. I had a bull by the tail."

Joe's big test came at the Democratic Assembly. Denver utilized voting machines on which candidates were listed horizontally, facing voters from left to right. The nearer an office-seeker could get to the left-hand side of the machine—especially in a primary election—the better the chance for victory. Almost as important as a position left of center was a candidate's inclusion on the top line.

In his first venture as a vote seeker, Calabrese displayed good political savvy. He had generated enough pre-assembly recognition by personal contact to muster good support. A total of 28 candidates was nominated in the noisy, cumbersome Democratic party process. When Assembly ballots were tabulated late in the day, Joe stood 11th on the list. That put him a little right of cen-
ter, but assured him top-line position in the September primary.

Calabrese continued his electioneering. He finished eighth among the 17 Democrats selected to take on the Republicans in November.

In 1954, Denver Democrats easily had the largest number of registered voters when compared with Republicans or so-called independents. The big edge held by Democrats, however, did not necessarily assure the party a sweep in the general election.

Even when balloting at large, Denverites have usually shown a high degree of election selectivity. Calabrese, however, had something special going for him.

The City Election Commission traditionally listed all candidates alphabetically, when two or more persons sought the same office. In the 1954 voting, all successful aspirants, including Joe, had names beginning with the letters A, B or C. If his name had started with “D,” he probably would not have made it, but the Laradon president finished seventh among the successful office seekers. That assured him of a legislative desk in Colorado’s golden-domed Capitol.

Joe learned quickly and the hard way that getting elected was the easiest part of his battle to aid the handicapped.

“When I was sworn in,” he recalled, “I didn’t even know where to sit. I had to learn everything from the floor up. Even though I had been around the Capitol as a lobbyist, I hadn’t paid much attention to the way the Legislature functioned. Once I mastered the rules, protocol and traditions, I felt more at ease with the formalities, but the art of legislating was a different matter.

“The first year I got a bill drawn up to provide educational help for trainable kids. That’s as far as it went. I couldn’t even get it out of committee, so it never got printed,” Joe said. “The Republicans were in control. They weren’t much interested in helping a freshman Democratic legislator.

“One of the big drawbacks in my bill was lack of
standards that would govern training of the children. I couldn’t find anyone interested enough to write standards.”

During Joe’s first term in the Legislature, the school managed to squeak by financially. Money problems, though not critical, always loomed in the background as a threat to the school’s future.

Late in 1955, the board decided Laradon should make its first broad-scale financial appeal to the general public. Headed by a long-time school booster, Denver County Judge David Brofman, who also appointed the “Lunacy Commissions” so detested by Calabrese, the campaign had a $100,000 goal. The money was to be used to build additional classrooms, a therapy pool and a vocational facility; to establish a fund for repairs, and to start a scholarship program.

Preceding the campaign, held for 15 days in November, Joe focused attention on the drive through a massive public relations campaign. A veteran at securing free newspaper space and time on radio and television, Calabrese saturated the media with frequent press releases that soon made Laradon a household word.

Some 140,000 letters were mailed to prospective donors throughout Metropolitan Denver.

In the material he sent the media, Calabrese did an outstanding job of educating the public to little-known facts about the persons to whom he was devoting his life and worldly goods.

“The problem of retarded children,” Joe said in one release, “is growing every year. The facts are that one of every hundred children born is mentally handicapped. In Denver alone,” he continued, “with a population of 500,000, about 5,000 youngsters face this condition.

“To compare that figure with those of other children’s diseases, it is way out front. In a 100,000 population, heart disease affects 200 youngsters; cerebral palsy, 15, and crippling polio, only 7.

“What can be done with these retarded children?” Joe asked. “They can be educated and trained to be use-
ful to themselves and to our society. They can be trained to take employment and become self-supporting.

"Out of the large number of retarded children, only five percent are true custodial cases," Joe explained. "Those never develop beyond a mental age of three years. They need to be in an institution where they will receive kindness, love and constant care.

"The other 95 percent have worlds of hope. They can be educated to live in our world. With education and special training, such as they receive at Laradon Hall, they can assume a normal place in society.

"The answer to this big problem," Joe concluded, "is not bigger institutions, where merely custodial care is given, but more community facilities to rescue the retarded child and supplant hopelessness with hope."

That basic message, the foundation of the first Laradon fund drive, was to be repeated by Calabrese scores of times in succeeding years in speeches under the capitol dome and at public meetings. Eventually, his persistence shattered legislative indifference, reached the public's heart, and slowly altered archaic prejudices toward the mentally handicapped.

The 1955 campaign, furthermore, vindicated the board in its decision to "go public" with Laradon's future. The direct-mail campaign, bolstered by liberal doses of media medicine, touched thousands of pocketbooks in the Denver area. The two-week solicitation effort netted only $34,000. Though the harvest was disappointing, in a sense, the campaign planted seeds that later became productive.

After completing his first term with little to show for efforts in behalf of the mentally retarded, Joe sought re-election, which was not a lead-pipe cinch by any means. President Dwight D. Eisenhower headed the ballot in 1956.

A Republican who attracted many Democratic and independent voters, Ike was extremely popular in Denver. His wife, Mamie, once lived in the Colorado capital and the President himself was a frequent visitor to the
city. A trout-fishing addict, he made Denver his summer base, so he could cast flies into the state’s mountain streams.

Colorado Republicans, including legislative candidates, expected to ride to victory on Ike’s coat-tails. The psychology worked, too, as GOP representatives swept most state offices. Calabrese, however, survived the landslide and was returned to the House.

“That next session,” Joe recalled, “I got a little smarter. The state’s own lawyer is the attorney general, so I went to see him. He was a fine gentleman named Duke Dunbar, who was also an Elk. He had little knowledge of Laradon’s program or of mentally handicapped children’s problems generally, so I invited him out to the school.

“Duke, who was a Republican, became deeply interested and eventually joined our board as a trustee. One day,” Joe said, “he called me to his office and introduced me to Sam Freeman, one of his deputies. The Attorney General explained my problem to Sam, who was a bright young man, and requested him to draft a bill that I could introduce. I gave Freeman all the information I could and he worked up the bill.

[Freeman recalled that one of his problems was circumventing Calabrese’s dual roles as legislator and Laradon president, creating a possible conflict of interest. “Once we got around that political question,” Sam said, “the rest was relatively simple.” Calabrese was unaware of any potential conflict.]

“After Freeman completed his work,” Joe said, “I took it to Clair Sippel, then in charge of the Legislative Reference Bureau. She put the finishing touches to it,” he continued, “and I was ready for the battle.

“I thought it was a good bill and so did other members of the House. They joined in co-sponsoring it, so we passed it unanimously.

“The Senate wasn’t ready,” Joe lamented, “It died over there.”

Elected again in 1958, Calabrese was determined to
get some action in the Senate.

"Early in 1959," he said, "I finally learned the real reason I kept getting beat in the upper chamber. State senators shied away from any bill requiring additional taxes directly on the people."

"If you find a way to have a special-interest group foot the bill," Joe was told, "your proposal will have a much better chance to pass."

"Trying to raise money without increasing general taxes is a neat trick," Calabrese said, "but it had been done before, so I began looking for a way to do it. Not long afterward, I found a source I innocently believed no one could quarrel with."

"At the time, trading stamps were popular all over Colorado. The big companies, like S & H and Gold Bond, had large staffs and potent public relations firms pushing their products. New companies were being started locally or moving in from other areas to capitalize on the bonanza.

"Most important to me," Joe added, "there was little or no state regulation, so they looked vulnerable. Legislatures, you know, want everything regulated, so I thought I'd give them another opportunity to exercise that prerogative.

"I had done some checking," he continued, "and found that thousands and thousands of dollars in stamps were not being redeemed. Customers were given the stamps at food markets, gasoline stations and other retail outlets. The cost was hidden in the price charged for goods and services.

"Some persons systematically saved and cashed the stamps for premiums. Others, and there were tens of thousands of them, didn't bother. They either dropped the stamps in drawers at home, tossed them in the glove compartment of the car, or simply threw them away. An unredeemed stamp was money in the bank for the company that printed and sold it.

"I had a bill developed to regulate the stamp industry," Joe explained. "It provided for the licensing of
each company, placed a $1.50 percent tax on gross income and escheated to the state the face value of stamps not redeemed within two years after issuance.

"That last clause got the industry all steamed up. It meant the companies would have to keep and report accurate records on all stamps issued. Once a stamp was two years old and unredeemed, the money it represented would have to be escheated—or remitted—to the state treasury, instead of remaining in the issuing company's bank account."

Although not specified in the measure, because tax earmarking was frowned upon by the Legislature, it was generally understood by the lawmakers that proceeds generated, if the stamp bill passed, would provide educational funds for the retarded.

"I thought the bill was fair and would make it easier for the Senate to pass the mentally handicapped aid proposal," Calabrese said.

"Quite frankly," he continued, "I had no idea that I was stirring up the biggest fight of the legislative session. I never received so much hate mail in my life.

"One day I went to the Capitol and three sacks of letters were waiting for me. All that I read—and I didn't try to read too many—called me a variety of names. Each had about the same message: 'Please, please don't take my stamps away!'

"The stamp industry had ordered their big public relations guns to start shooting at the bill," Joe chuckled, "and indirectly I was being sniped at from all over the state.

"The P.R. boys claimed if the escheat bill passed, the stamps would disappear," Calabrese said. "They also claimed the stamps were good for 20 years, which was true. As long as they weren't redeemed or escheated, however, the companies benefitted, not the stamp owners.

"It was an interesting and hard-fought battle. The House galleries were loaded during the floor fight. You can bet I didn't have many friends among the specta-
tors," he recalled.
   "Despite that kind of opposition," Joe added, "I got
the bill passed by one vote, 33 to 32. Then it went to the
Senate. That was the last I saw of it.
   "Bob (Robert L.) Knous was lieutenant governor
and presiding officer in the upper chamber," Calabrese
said. "His authority included assigning bills to com-
mittees. He buried mine, so deep it hasn't been found
yet."

Actually, Knous assigned the bill to the Committee
on Local Government, chaired by Senator James E.
Donnelly of Trinidad. He simply ordered the bill indefi-
nitely postponed in committee and Joe's plan was dead.
   "The stamp companies won that battle, but I think
it helped our side win the war . . . eventually," Calabrese
said.

It would be several years before Joe was able to get
his plan translated into action. In the interim, his incum-
bency in the House of Representatives was confronted
by a threat outside the political process.

In seeking a fourth term in 1960, Calabrese sensed
*The Denver Post* might be hostile to his re-election.
Openly courting the newspaper's endorsement, Joe was
interviewed by Mort Stern, boss of the *Post*'s editorial
page.

Stern quizzed Joe closely about the latter's interest
in the handicapped, almost to the exclusion of queries
about Calabrese's other legislative functions.

Leaving the session with the uneasy feeling he was
regarded by the newsman as a "single-issue" legislator,
the Laradon president was disturbed. Cautiously, he re-
sponded to Stern's probing questions by drafting a dip-
ломatic letter, which read in part:

   Dear Mr. Stern:
   As you requested, I am writing in regard to my candi-
dacy for re-election to the House of Representatives.
   I sincerely believe I have voted at all times . . . for the
welfare of all the people and never with special interests.
   It has been said that my efforts have centered around
mental health. It is true that this is my primary reason for being in politics. I would, however, like you to review my record which includes the following:

1. I strongly supported and voted for the sales ratio, local option and retail sales tax, Colorado Fair Housing Act, civil service for state employees and the Governor's Cabinet.

2. I was the prime sponsor of a bill for a state authority to control air pollution. This did not pass. If re-elected, however, I intend to introduce a similar bill, because we must have clean air.

3. I was the main sponsor of a bill setting standards for and licensing of physical therapists, also an act regarding the payment and collection of small wage claims.

4. I voted for increased benefits for the unemployed and for workman's compensation amendments.

5. I have supported all major legislation concerning public schools, junior colleges and colleges and universities, including bills relating to special education.

It is probably my interest in mental health that has caused some people to feel I am more concerned with it than other legislation. It is true I sponsored an act setting up a pilot project for the training of trainable children, also that I co-sponsored and voted for the reorganization of the Department of Institutions and the Division of Rehabilitation. I do not feel this legislation is in any sense narrow, but rather that it provides for the rehabilitation of all the handicapped, so that many may become useful citizens, rather than remain a burden of the taxpayers.

At present, I am Vice Chairman of House Services and a member of the Committees on Health and Welfare, Highways, and State Institutions. For the past six years, I have been a member of the Committee on Laws Relating to Children. This group made a study of the statutes and has helped pass several laws raising standards for children's welfare in the state.

I see many pressing problems facing our next legislature and would like very much to have a part in working toward their solution.

I hope I can enlist the support of *The Denver Post* in my re-election effort. I am confident my record shows
that I deserve such backing.

Sincerely

Joseph V. Calabrese

On the basis of that letter, the Post grudgingly endorsed Joe—along with 20 other candidates for the 18 Denver seats at stake in the November election.

The paper editorially conceded Calabrese was "experienced and acceptable"—faint praise at best. Voters, however, viewed Joe's past service differently. Still running at large and not from a district, Calabrese placed sixth among the successful 18. He was a few thousand votes behind John F. Kennedy, who narrowly defeated Richard M. Nixon for the presidency in the Denver balloting.

Joe's 1960 triumph assured him of a place in the Legislature for as long as he wanted to help make policy for the state of Colorado. Reassured by the solid endorsement by the electorate, Calabrese continued his dogged campaign to modernize statutes governing mental health.

The 43d General Assembly, meeting in 1961-62, was non-productive for Joe. He was disappointed, but not discouraged.

Since his freshman term in 1955-56, Calabrese had watched, first with curiosity and later with satisfaction, a growing awareness of the state's mental health law deficiencies. The public, lawmakers and the bureaucrats had all become more concerned with the archaic policies governing activities of the retarded and were ready for change.

Recognizing that fact, Joe felt confident that with patience and pressure, he could help bring about those changes. Even with his self-assurance, however, it was lonely at times for Calabrese, because of legislative indifference. He learned that pioneering can be frustrating, but he persevered and at long last found the answer he had been seeking.

After his re-election in 1962, Joe conferred early in 1963 with David Hamil, Director of the Department of
Institutions. Calabrese summarized for the director his thus-far futile efforts for legislation to improve the status of the mentally ill and handicapped. Hamil, who had lost the Republican nomination for governor to John A. Love in the primary election a few months before, had been chief of Institutions a short time, but he shared Calabrese's concern.

"At our meeting," Joe recalled, "Mr. Hamil said: 'I want to help get your bill passed. I think we need new legislation, too. If you are willing to let a Republican carry it, I believe we can get the job done.'"

"I told him," Calabrese continued, "that I didn't care who introduced the bill. I wanted action, as soon as I could get it. I assured Hamil I'd be happy to get clear off the legislation, if that would help."

Using his influence with the GOP, Hamil induced Representative Catherine Littler, a Greeley Republican, to be prime sponsor of House Bill 121 in the 44th General Assembly. As described in the title, the bill was:

AN ACT relating to community centers for mentally retarded and for seriously handicapped persons; providing for a study program and for pilot demonstration projects.

It was not exactly what Joe had in mind, but it was a start.

The proposed legislation had among its objectives:

To alleviate the need for constant expansion of state institutions for the mentally retarded and for seriously handicapped and for long-term custodial care of patients in such institutions.

It also mandated the Director of Institutions to "make a comprehensive study of the needs of mentally retarded . . . and the ways in which these needs may be met on the community level."

Of particular interest to Laradon's supporters was a provision in the proposed study to recommend "methods of financing the community center program through state and local government funds, federal grants and
donations and the feasibility of creating local districts and of giving counties, municipalities, and school districts taxing powers for this purpose.”

Laradon, Joe was assured, would qualify as a community center. Thus, it would be eligible for public financial support, if the study so recommended and the Legislature approved.

The bill, in addition, authorized creation of a nine-member, governor-appointed State Coordinating Advisory Board (SCAB) to oversee the pilot program and to help develop new approaches that could be tested in the study.

To assure competent staffing for the project, $60,000 was to be appropriated upon passage of the act.

The approach outlined in HB 121 proved highly popular with the legislators. By the time the bill was assigned to committee, it had 68 sponsors—48 in the House and 20 in the Senate. Because of that formidable support, approval was a foregone conclusion. Despite that fact, the bill was one of the last pieces of legislation approved before the Legislature adjourned Sunday, April 7, 1963. Four days later, it was signed by Governor Love and became effective immediately.

The law limited the pilot demonstration to two areas. Boulder County and the San Juan Basin in southwestern Colorado were selected. By July 1, work on the project had been started in both locales. Not only were mental health professionals and volunteers delighted with the opportunity presented, they were aware of a deadline in the law, so they wasted no time.

The Act directed the head of the Institutions Department to report to the Legislature on results of the study. The reporting time was immediately after the Assembly reconvened in January, 1964.

Prior to the opening of the Legislature, the Advisory Board submitted to Hamil a report based on six months’ experience with the program.

The summary and recommendations from Boulder County contained, among other pertinent observations,
the following:

"A project of this type requires at least a year of operation upon which to base a definitive and comprehensive evaluation and report. The Boulder Council, however, is confident, within the limitation of its short experience, that the community-interagency approach is sound. It establishes a cooperative method for providing total community support for the retarded and seriously handicapped person. Indications are that this method does have certain advantages for both the handicapped and the citizens who are trying to help them."

Calabrese was overjoyed by that phase of the report. It vindicated the years he had devoted to the development of Laradon Hall and, furthermore, gave real meaning to his legislative efforts.

Another portion of the Boulder commentary pleasing to Joe was the recommendation "that remedial action be taken, as soon as possible, to establish more flexibility in I.Q. ranges determining eligibility for both the educable and the trainable programs and increase the minimum I.Q. for trainable from 30 to 40. This would encourage more school districts to establish trainable programs and would stimulate the development of more sheltered workshop programs for children with I.Q.'s below 40."

The San Juan portion of the report concluded with this wish:

"We sincerely hope the Legislature will continue and expand these Pilot Projects to provide opportunity for further demonstration of the value of services in local communities to meet needs of the mentally retarded and seriously handicapped citizens."

Welcome as were these endorsements from persons actually working with the mentally handicapped, the Advisory Board's recommendations were even sweeter music to Calabrese. The board urged:

1. Continuing and expanding the 'Community Center' program to provide an integrated program of state and local services for the mentally retarded and seriously
handicapped.

2. Public, private and voluntary agencies to review their roles in the community and be encouraged to participate actively in the community center program making their services available to those retarded in need of them.

3. All communities be encouraged to continue their cooperative planning efforts to achieve the maximum benefits for mentally retarded and for seriously handicapped persons through more effective use of local and state resources.

4. Sufficient funds be made available to participating state agencies, in order that they may continue to implement and expand those services relating to the 'Continuum of Care' for mentally retarded and seriously handicapped persons.

Participants in the Boulder and San Juan experiments feared that a half-year study was too brief a test to support long-term commitments. The demonstrations were intended to show that handicapped could be guided into the mainstream of community life once various segments of society understood the problem and indicated a desire to help solve it. Despite the Boulder and San Juan recommendations that additional time was necessary, the Legislature plunged ahead, intent on developing a permanent program.

In 1964, during the second half of the 44th Assembly, Representative Littler introduced, with Calabrese as the second-named sponsor, a sequel to HB 121. Identified as House Bill 1090 and destined to become the foundation for operation of community centers like Laradon, the legislation was entitled:

AN ACT relating to Community Centers for mentally retarded and for seriously handicapped persons, and providing for the administration of the act by the Department of Institutions.

Joe always believed the program should be operated by the Education Department, but he knew that it would be capably administered by Institutions as long as
Hamil was director. Unlike HB 121, the new bill was not intended to test anything. It dictated a plan of action in its first section, Declaration of Purpose, reading as follows:

The General Assembly, in recognition of the wide and varied needs of the mentally retarded and of seriously handicapped persons of this state and of the desirability of meeting these needs on the community level to the fullest extent possible, and in order to reduce the need for custodial care in state institutions, establishes by this act a community-centered program through interagency cooperation and coordination of the local agencies that offer services for mentally retarded and for seriously handicapped persons, and establishes a program to purchase services through community incorporated boards.

The very last provision eventually brought about the creation of the Denver Board for the Mentally Retarded and Seriously Handicapped, Inc. It was the vehicle through which the state funneled money to Laradon and other community centers. Eventually, 21 other community boards were established throughout the state.

Other provisions of HB 1090 included:

1. Authorization for the Institutions Department to purchase training services for the handicapped from community centers, like Laradon. Payment for services would be made from state funds, but could not exceed one-half the annual cost per trainee. The maximum amount to be paid was pegged at $500 per person.


3. Establishment of a permanent nine-member State Coordinating Advisory Board to include persons representing the Departments of Institutions, Health, Welfare, Education and Rehabilitation, as well as “four persons . . . who have demonstrated interest and leadership in the care and treatment of the mentally retarded and seriously handicapped.”

4. Endorsed the acceptance of federal grants.
Solidly supported by 46 members of the House and 16 Senators as co-sponsors, HB 1090 was easily approved, signed by the governor March 27, 1964, and became law the following July 1.

Calabrese, naturally, was ecstatic. It had taken almost 10 years, but the objective that catapulted him into politics was now within sight. Joe's 15 years' experience as Laradon president told him that state recognition of his cause and the initial funding were important milestones. He knew, however, there was still a long road ahead with more milestones to be reached and passed.

The first state appropriation, for example, was $200,000. At a maximum disbursement of $500 per trainee, that fund would assist only 400 of the thousands of individuals needing subsidies. The money, consequently, was spread thinly. It was, of course, extremely helpful to the community center programs, but was insufficient to accomplish the "Declaration of Purpose" in HB 1090.

Securing additional revenue at each succeeding legislative session was to become an annual chore for those trying to make the programs match the need.

Concurrently with the progressive developments in Colorado, exciting action in the mental health field was occurring nationally. Early in his brief administration, President John F. Kennedy appointed a blue-ribbon "Panel on Mental Retardation."

Having helped care for an older sister who was retarded, the president had a personal stake in the work of the panel. He urged the latter to gather factual information about the problem and to develop recommendations on how to find the handicapped, how to train them, and how to utilize their services once they were trained.

In October, 1962, the Kennedy task force released its report. With shocking clarity, it exposed the magnitude of the problem. Nearly $5\frac{1}{2}$ million Americans were found to be afflicted with varying degrees of mental retardation. Additionally, some 15 million others—
mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and other close relatives—were experiencing the trauma of daily relationship with the retardees.

In what amounted to an emancipation proclamation for the handicapped, the panel emphasized:

"It must be clearly and specifically understood that mentally retarded persons are entitled to receive freely and wholeheartedly all the rights, privileges, and benefits which are available to all citizens of the United States."

The report to Mr. Kennedy spurred Congress, during President Lyndon Johnson's administration, to provide federal funds to the states, so that the handicapped could be helped.

When the startling national figures on retardation were translated into comparable statistics for Colorado, it was found that more than 60,000 state residents were mentally retarded and 150,000 family members affected.

This realization, plus the work going on in the Legislature and in various state departments, prompted Governor Love to name a Planning Task Force in Mental Retardation. Its assignment was a statewide inventory of the problem in Colorado.

After more than a year of intensive work, the group submitted its report to Mr. Hamil, who relayed it to the governor and the Legislature. In his covering letter, dated September 29, 1965, Mr. Hamil wrote:

It is recognized that this report does not answer conclusively every question raised relating to mental retardation in Colorado, as this is a very complex and changing subject. It is felt, however, that if the principles in this report are accepted, and its recommendations adopted, the state of Colorado will have taken substantial steps toward meeting the needs of its retarded citizens and their families. It is further recognized that the state cannot implement this report at one time, so priorities will have to be established. It is felt that the document offers guidelines which can provide new hope and lead to more effective and humane services to the mentally retarded and other handicapped citizens of this state.
The report, entitled *These Truths Are Evident*, gave assurance the problem was not overwhelming, despite the large number of persons affected, as mentioned earlier.

"Because most mentally retarded persons (85%) have only a mild degree of impairment," the document related, "it has been established that with adequate special education, guidance, and other needed services, this great proportion can achieve a high degree of independence and become useful and self-sufficient members of their communities.

"Another 11 percent are moderately retarded and can fill positions in our society, but will require a sheltered environment in which to work and live.

"A much smaller number, three percent, are severely retarded. Members of this group, with adequate training, are capable of learning the rudiments of self-care, but will require lifetime supervision and guidance.

"The smallest group, one percent, are the profoundly retarded who will need total institutional care all their lives. As do all human beings, they need love, attention and comfort, and they respond by experiencing joy and happiness, or sorrow and unhappiness."

The report made these dozen recommendations:

"1. Legislation be enacted to provide for the alleviation and prevention of environmentally produced mental retardation.

"2. A commission under the executive department be a permanent part of state government, composed of public and private agencies and knowledgeable citizens which would be the recognized state group charged with the responsibility of coping with the problem of mental retardation in Colorado.

"3. More emphasis be placed on the needs of children in families receiving aid to dependent children, i.e., legislation, fundings, studies, etc.

"4. More emphasis be placed on the needs of families and individuals receiving such public assistance as aid to the needy and disabled, aid to the blind, old-age pension,
5. State agencies which provide services and facilities for mentally retarded persons be furnished with the financial means to greatly augment present programs. These programs must provide complete coverage for urban and rural areas.

6. State agencies which provide services and facilities for the mentally retarded be furnished with funds to augment present staffs to assure adequacy of services and facilities.

7. Legislative action be taken to provide additional funds for staff augmentation so that appropriate existing state agencies can explore and develop to its fullest, gainful employment opportunity in industry for the mentally retarded who qualify.

8. Community residential facilities be developed to coincide with the present trend toward localization as opposed to the distant custodial concept. These facilities should house not more than 40 to 60 individuals in groups of 5 to 15 each.

9. Legislation be provided to facilitate guardianship needs of mentally retarded citizens as they progress through life.

10. The responsibility for the education and training of all school-age mental retardates, capable of self-care, be under the supervision of the Department of Education.

11. Criminal and civil laws, jurisdiction, and places of confinement in relation to the mentally retarded be clarified and implemented.

12. A research council be formed, charged with the responsibility of coordinating research throughout the state, supervising the prompt flow and exchange of new developments in this field, and of pursuing to its fullest extent the availability of grants to stimulate further research in mental retardation."

Stripped of their redundancy and bureaucratic gobbledygook, those 12 suggestions constituted the strongest case yet presented for continued and ex-
panded support for schools like Laradon.

Recognizing that preventive steps might reduce the frequency of retardation among the new-born, the task force also commented:

"1. Particular attention should be focused on the hazards of pregnancy among women with any type of medical complication, nutritional problem, or emotional disturbance.

"2. There should be a vigorous, informative campaign to stress the importance of immunizations and health supervision beginning in early infancy.

"3. There is need for increased attention to women during pre-natal and early post-natal periods where emotional problems exist.

"4. Medical and nursing care should be intensified for all premature infants and new-born, who, after screening and diagnostic tests, are suspected of having deficiencies that could cause mental retardation.

"5. Emphasis should be placed on the field of mental retardation in curricula of medical schools, nursing schools, and institutions for the training of all auxiliary medical personnel."

The report further suggested that educators, members of the judiciary, and parents become more conversant with problems of the retarded. Such self-education, the report said, would provide an understanding of "the basic phenomena of mental retardation, so that each group may more properly carry out duties in dealing with retardees."

Coming after the 1963-64 legislative successes, the initial funding of community centers, and federal awareness and financial assistance, the report added impetus to Calabrese's efforts. He now had strong support from members of both parties, so he pushed ahead with additional legislation.

The funding for centers increased gradually and made possible enlargement of services to Laradon students. In the second year following passage of HB 1090, the Legislature increased the appropriation to $300,000.
The following fiscal year, 1966-67, the amount was boosted to $500,000, but the maximum per trainee was decreased to $400 annually per client.

As the community centers, Institutions Department and the Legislature gained experience with the program, funding changes and individual allocations were made almost annually.

In 1967, for example, the Assembly changed the ratio of the state's payments from 50 percent to 60 percent and appropriated $700,000. The following year, $981,150 was approved for a caseload of 1,500 trainees, at an estimated support of $654 each.

In 1969, basic support payments increased from 60 to 75 percent and the appropriation topped $1 million for the first time. The caseload was boosted to 1,750, at a cost of $647 each.

Federal funding, which was to be a key factor in financing programs for the retarded throughout the 1970's, first became available for the center programs in 1971. Welcome though it was, the federal money created confusion in what had been an orderly disbursement of state aid.

The United States dollars were funneled through the Department of Social Services, rather than Institutions. Using federal guidelines, rules and regulations, Social Services established a new payment plan, a daily rate to be paid to community-centered boards. There was, unfortunately, no correlation between the two state departments. The local boards, therefore, were being paid federal money under one set of rules and state funds under another.

The 1972-73 fiscal year grants totaled $2,251,695, of which $1,021,361 was federal. The money was spent on 2,103 trainees at costs varying from $800 to $1,116 each.

The combination of federal and state assistance was buttressed in the mid-1970's when school district and local funds became available because of new state legislation.

The dramatic growth of community-centered board
programs throughout the state is illustrated here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Money Available</th>
<th>Persons Aided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>$ 3,465,956</td>
<td>2,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>4,616,374</td>
<td>2,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>9,127,483</td>
<td>3,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>10,680,336</td>
<td>3,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>12,434,900</td>
<td>3,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>17,479,086</td>
<td>4,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>22,314,101</td>
<td>4,214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What good has come of this immense outlay of public funds? Stanley C. Welichko, coordinator of the Denver Board for the Mentally Retarded and Seriously Handicapped, answered that question in a 1977 memo in this way:

"There are about 4,000 human beings in the state of Colorado being served to one degree or another in programs less restrictive than those in institutions. They are making progress, to the best of their ability, toward becoming a part of our society. This program has dramatically decreased the population in state institutions."

New laws strengthening the program were passed, usually without difficulty. These included:

1. Senate Bill 313, effective July 1, 1971, providing that payment to community centers be made on the basis of average daily enrollment, rather than daily attendance. This amendment recognized that mentally retarded persons were more susceptible to illness than public school pupils and allowances should be made accordingly.

2. House Bill 1068, effective January 1, 1972, which made it mandatory that school districts levy a tax to help pay the expenses of students trained at centers like Laradon. The amount to be paid had to at least equal money spent to educate youngsters in the district's own schools.
3. House Bill 1164, passed in 1973, making school districts responsible for education of handicapped children. (Unfortunately, the bill did not include a definition of what constitutes education or training. Some school districts provided the training themselves, others did not.)

4. House Bill 1018, effective July 1, 1974, made funding available to community-centered programs on the basis of five percent local money and 95 percent state financing, less federal and other state funds, and revenue from the local school levy. This legislation, designed to provide more help for trainees, caused several problems, including giving the Legislature authority to disperse local money over which the lawmakers had no control, and no definition of what services were to be figured in the average cost per trainee.

5. House Bill 1243, effective July 1, 1976, authorizing school districts to purchase special education services from community centers. This helped clarify the schools' obligations left undefined in HB 1164.

6. House Bill 1190, effective July 1, 1976, authorizing schools to pay community centers pre-determined revenue per pupil instead of by mill levy. This permitted students to be counted for state funds allocated by the Public School Finance Act. It also increased money available to schools and community centers and helped make trainees eligible for additional federal assistance.

Except for the last two acts, passed after he left the Legislature, Calabrese had a major role in all legislation discussed above, as well as in bills that strengthened other mental health laws.

Joe had no difficulty being reelected every two years (1964, 1966, and 1968, the last-named from a district for the first time), but in 1970 he made a major decision. He chose to run for the Senate, because, he said, the biennial campaigns for the House were taking too much time.

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Through legislative reapportionment, a new senatorial district, with a four-year term, had been created in North Denver. Because of the demographic composition of the area, politicians assumed a Democrat would be elected. Joe recognized that probability and expected to have strong opposition in the primary election.

“Tony Sanchez ran against me,” Calabrese said. “He was a brother of County Judge John Sanchez. John was very popular in our area. I had an uneasy feeling I was going to lose,” Joe continued, “because there was a large Spanish-surnamed population in the district.

“Fortunately for me, not too many of them voted. In one precinct, for example, with more than 300 voters, virtually all of Spanish or Mexican heritage, I lost by one vote—19 to 18.

“I defeated Sanchez rather handily, so I was able to finish my legislative career in the Senate.”

At the conclusion of his 20 years as a lawmaker, Joe could look back with satisfaction on a career matched by few others in the House or Senate.

Besides his work for the handicapped, he championed several other causes. In 1964, aided by two Denver officials, Joe Antonio of the Building Department and Assistant Chief Murray Wolz of the Fire Department, Joe introduced and steered through to approval the state’s first air-pollution control act. Long before it was fashionable to protect the environment, Joe convinced his legislative peers that “we must have clean air.”

“It really didn’t do too much,” Joe said, “because it was aimed primarily at stationary polluting sources. Public Service Co., for example, didn’t like it. The important thing, however, was that it represented recognition of a problem and gave us a starting point.”

Even though Joe had bitter memories of his early encounters with school officials, he was a constant advocate of a better educational system and championed much legislation in that field.

“I also introduced a bill,” he recalled, “that persons
didn’t have to go before a Lunacy Commission before entering a state institution. The act made possible voluntary admissions. The ‘Lunacy Commission’ term—a holdover from the 19th century—was also eliminated, making me very happy,” Joe said.

Those changes were reconfirmed as part of an omnibus mental health act passed in 1975. The bill, two years in the making, was approved after Calabrese left the Legislature, but portions of the law resulted directly from his experiences and recommendations.

One significant amendment was adoption of a new term, “the Developmentally Disabled,” to replace “Mentally Retarded and Seriously Handicapped Persons.” Calabrese has never quite mastered that lexical switch, but it hasn’t affected his efficiency as an administrator.

Among the hallmark bills inspired by Joe was one to change the job qualifications for directors of the Ridge and Grand Junction training schools.

“From their very beginning,” Joe said, “each school had to be under the direction of a medical doctor. I felt such a qualification was too narrow, so I introduced a bill eliminating the M.D. requirement. It was difficult to get approval, because of medical doctors’ opposition, but it finally passed. Recruiting of qualified director-applicants is now much simpler.

“Another bill that got me in trouble with the medical people,” Calabrese added, “was one requiring PKU tests for the newly born. PKU is the abbreviation for phenylketonuria—an inherited metabolic disease that can cause severe mental deficiency. Early diagnosis and proper treatment help prevent retardation in youngsters.

“The doctors put up such a fuss about the mandatory testing, we, by law, directed hospitals, not the M.D.’s, to check PKU potential in infants.

“I introduced and got passed a small wage claims bill,” Joe recounted. “Suppose you go to work for me and you’re on the job one or two days and you either quit or I fire you. Let’s say I don’t pay you. In the past, you would have had to take me to court, perhaps even hire an
attorney, to get your wages.

"Now, all you must do is file a claim with the Employment Department, prove you were on the job, and I'd be ordered to pay you the proper amount. No lawyer is necessary. You can handle it alone."

Joe Calabrese's decision not to seek a second senatorial term in 1974 was prompted by several factors—age, health considerations, and recognition that his political career had served its original purpose. Above all, however, was a desire to devote as much time as possible in his remaining years to the continued development of Laradon Hall.

Joe's two decades as a Colorado lawmaker coincided with sweeping, innovative steps toward intelligent help for the handicapped. His legislative career and the enactment of a long series of beneficial laws are so closely intertwined, it is impossible to separate them. Whether the programs adopted by the Legislature would have occurred without Joe's presence is moot.

Professionals in mental health activities give due credit to Joe for Colorado's well-deserved national reputation for helping the handicapped. Dr. Kayo Sunada, director of the State Home and Training School in Wheat Ridge, a giant among those specializing in the care and training of the retarded, commented succinctly on Calabrese's career:

"Joe was the one person in the Legislature we sought out when we had problems. He was a frequent visitor to our school, so he knew our needs. He helped us meet them. Whenever we were in trouble, we turned to Joe. He never let us down."

It's obvious that Calabrese was a member of the General Assembly at exactly the right time, when the state's and nation's attention was focused on mental health law improvements. He provided the Legislature with a conscience that produced correct decisions for the retarded.

Joe had one advantage over his fellow legislators—and the bureaucrats. He had already dedicated his life to
the cause five years before he cast his first vote in the General Assembly. He was so far ahead, it took more than a decade for the others to catch up.
6
Queen For A Day
... And Longer!

In its first ten years—a decade that spanned most of what Madison Avenue called the "Fabulous Fifties"—Laradon found its existence far from fabled. Frantic was a more accurate term.

True, the Elks had given the school substantial aid and three major assets—the main building, gym and vocational center—but day-to-day budgeting and the Calabreses’ self-education were continuing challenges.

Joe’s dogged pursuit of legislative financial help was matched by Elizabeth’s persistence in providing housing, food, clothing and nursing care for her numerous charges—all within the limits of a thin cash flow. Between them, the dedicated couple shepherded Laradon through dozens of difficult times, through physical and mental crises.

Stubbornly, however, they refused to concede they had major problems or even a chance for failure. Somehow, the untrained founders created a balanced program, including an innovative and utilitarian curriculum, based largely on McGlone’s theories and inven-
tions. Supplementing it was a vocational training experiment, begun in 1959, which matured into one of the nation's most successful sheltered workshops.

Supporting both academic and practical elements of the school's agenda were unique contributions by Mrs. Calabrese. Like her husband, she was an unlikely candidate to establish and develop an educational venture destined for world-wide acclaim.

Elizabeth did not finish high school. She came from a broken home when such a tragedy carried a social stigma. As noted earlier, she was bewildered by the fate that made her mother of two retarded boys.

Although she brought few specialized skills to the task, she endowed Laradon with vital and priceless personal assets: Stamina, tidiness, orderliness, eagerness to learn, and, above all, common sense.

In reviewing the early days, she says, matter of factly, that possible failure of the school was never a consideration.

"We never thought about such a thing," Elizabeth recalled. "I was so busy, I didn't have time to fret about failure. We started with three youngsters and almost immediately had a dozen. People started coming to the school to help, in any way they could. Certainly, it was difficult. Many times it was frustrating, but we couldn't get mad and run out, which we felt like doing . . . sometimes.

"Keeping that school going was a thing we had to do, so we just did it."

Joe shares that feeling. "People used to laugh at us," he says now with a wry grin. "They were the professionals, the psychologists, who tested the kids. We knew what the youngsters could do and couldn't do. We'd tell the pros: 'This kid can do such-and-such. We've done it with him. We've watched him do it.' But who were we?

"More than once I was told by the doubters: 'Don't get too overjoyed. You're out peddling mail and Elizabeth's just a housewife. You've got a lot to learn.'"

The fact she was "just a housewife" may have been
Mrs. Calabrese's biggest asset.

She has a simple answer to such questions as: "How did you organize the management and housekeeping schedules? Did you establish a daily routine? If so, was it rigid or flexible?"

With eyes sparkling, she replies: "I run the school like I run my home. Everything has to be clean . . . immaculate. No child ever lies in a dirty bed, or a wet bed, because I never let my own boys do it. I always wanted it nice and clean for them, even though we didn't have much money.

"School beds were freshly made every morning," she continued. "All sheets were stripped and put in the washing machine in the basement. They were dried outside on the clothes lines, weather permitting, along with pajamas, etc. In those first days, I put the kids in a clean bed every night, because that's the way I did it at home."

Both Joe and Elizabeth concede their original students were extremely retarded, more so than later, which made her job even more demanding. "Practically all those first kids were bed-wetters," she said, but the clean-sheet rule was never broken.

As for daily routine, Elizabeth said she didn't bother with a check list or written schedule. "There are certain things you know you'll do at home. You have to cook, to wash dishes, to clean, to make beds. And you have to do the laundry and scrub.

"So you simply do them. That's all."

She repeatedly demonstrated such perseverance, even in technical areas. Undaunted by her lack of academic or laboratory training, she improvised answers to problems thrust upon her. When Laradon's first chef became ill and was forced to resign, she assumed cooking responsibilities, which naturally included some knowledge of diet and nutrition for her handicapped charges.

"That's when I had my first dealings with the health department," she said. "The inspectors came in one day while I was fixing lunch. They identified themselves and
started looking around. One opened the refrigerator and then checked something else.

"I went about my business. I finished making a salad and placed a towel over the bowl. Everything had to be that way—protected and clean.

"The other man asked what I was doing.

"'Cooking,' I told him.

"'What are you cooking?'

"I told him whatever it was.

"Then he asked: 'Do you know anything about diets?'

"'No,' I said.

"'How do you work up a balanced meal, then?'

"'I have a book that I use,' I said.

"'May I see it?'

"I gave it to him and he looked through it for awhile, then said: 'This is the best book [of its kind] I have ever seen. Where did you get it?'

"I always looked for help when I run into things I know nothing about. 'In this case,' I told him, 'I was listening to a nutritionist on the radio. She was promoting books that contained recipes and tips on nutrition, so I sent for them, and got them. They give directions for full, well-balanced meals.'

"I still use those books for myself and if I have to do anything for the school.'"

When Laradon was moved from Federal Boulevard to its present site, Elizabeth was faced with greater responsibility, because of expanded enrollment. The number of youngsters increased almost immediately to 30 and then to 50 by 1952.

Despite the added work load, Mrs. Calabrese resisted the idea of a schedule.

"I don't think I ever organized anything. I just did it. I'd do the same thing over and over and I do it yet. In the morning, when I started working, I'd go to the basement and begin the laundry. Then I'd go upstairs and get the kids up and dressed. I would help our first house mother—Mrs. Scholtz—with that job. She stayed all
night with the children.

"After that, I would do whatever was necessary. We had a lot of flunky cooks who'd come and go. Sometimes they wouldn't show up, so I'd be called at home. 'There's nobody in the kitchen,' I'd be told. 'Will you come and cook for the kids?'

"I did. It was my responsibility."

Although Elizabeth permitted some of the more competent youngsters to help wash and dry dishes occasionally, she opposed regular work for them.

"No," she said, "when the kids were in school, they were there to study and learn—not to work. Sometimes, I would give them little chores, like shaking out a rug, but that was not a regular thing."

Proving that she was not inflexible, Elizabeth confessed the no-work rule could be bent, if a child could be helped.

"The first boy who started helping me on a regular basis was from Iowa," she said. "It seems the teachers couldn't do anything more with him in classes, because he had lost interest. He was always looking out the window. There wasn't much to see, but occasionally girls would walk by and he'd keep busy looking for them or watching them.

"He also had trouble sleeping at night. Some thought was given to sending him home . . . for good. His teacher finally said: 'I can't do any more with him.'

"'Let me have him,' I said, 'because he can carry my clothes baskets up and down stairs and I'll keep him busy.'

"So I put him to work in the laundry. He was pretty good, because he had helped his mother with the washing back home. Maybe I worked him too hard, because a few weeks after he was on the job, he said to me one day: 'I want to go back to class. I'm tired when I get through here every day.'

"He was fine after that. He had a certain amount of the Old Nick in him, but hard work took care of that. He was able to sleep, too.
“My next helper,” she continued, “was Hughie, from Colorado Springs. He was running all the time. He had a terrible speech problem, which finally got the best of our speech therapist.

“The more I work with him,” she said, ‘the worse he gets.’ Hughie stuttered very badly and had a terrible mental block about it.

“The therapist recommended we let him go home. I said, ‘Not yet. Let me have him. I always was a glutton for punishment. He can run errands for me and do other chores.’

“At that time,” she recalled, “I was doing all the laundry, the nursing, the cleaning and the housework upstairs. We didn’t have carpeting, so I had to use the dust mop every day. I was also taking care of smaller children who needed naps. I’d take them upstairs, put them to bed, get them up and bring them back downstairs. If somebody was needed in recreation, I’d help out there. I knew I could use an assistant.

“So I had Hughie with me a couple or three years. I had a time with him, at first. I’d send him down to shake a rug and pretty soon he’d be clear out on the prairie. I’d go get him and we’d start over. That went on and on, but he became more dependable.

“I’d hang the laundry and things on the line and Hughie would help to get them on, off and upstairs. Then we’d put the fresh linen on the beds.

“One day, I said to him, ‘Hughie, I have to stay here with Donald [her son, who had been injured] and help him get well. Will you get the dry clothes off the line for me?’

“He must have felt that I needed more help than usual, because he said:

“‘I got them all off.’

“I said: ‘We’ll have to put clean night clothes around for the kids.’

“‘I got all that done,’ he said.

“‘Fine,’ I told him, ‘But I better check them.’

“He was agreeable and I soon found everything he
had done was just about perfect. He’d taken the sheets, pillow cases and pajamas from the line, folded them all, and put them on the beds where they belonged.

“From that time on, that was one of his regular jobs and he did it well.

“One day,” Elizabeth said rather wistfully, “the speech therapist asked: ‘Have you noticed anything different about Hughie?’

“‘No,’ I told her, ‘I just give him a job and he does it. He goes one way and I go another, until there’s a new job to do.’

“‘He doesn’t stutter any more,’ she told me. ‘But don’t say anything to him. Just go along as you have been doing. I’ve been watching you and Hughie. He loves to work with you. He has responded to your help.’

“After that, I did notice that he was talking right along like any other youngster. He was not stuttering any more. He probably had had too much pressure on him before. People were trying to force him to talk right and it caused the block.

“When we were working together, I never ‘got on’ him. If he did something wrong, I’d say, as gently as I could: ‘Hughie, don’t do it that way. Do it this way.’ Then he’d do it over and over by himself until he got it right. When he was working with me, he was doing what he liked and he simply quit stuttering.”

After three years of helping Mrs. Calabrese, Hughie, who never returned to the academic side of the school, was hired by a laundry.

“He worked there,” Elizabeth said, “about three or four years. When he quit that place on his own—to take a better job—the people at the laundry actually wept. He was called their ‘right-hand man,’ because he could do just about everything, and with a smile, too.

“He went to work in a public hospital and is now in charge of the laundry there. He also is married and is part owner of a boarding house.

“And then I had Paul,” she continued. “I trained him, like I did Hughie, and he was given a job by an
office furniture company. The owner claimed he sold more furniture than ever before, because Paul was so good at cleaning and dusting the merchandise. He was a good polisher and he kept the bathrooms and office immaculate.

"Then he was given a chance to help on the company truck, making deliveries, but that didn't work out. I'm not sure what happened, but Paul became dissatisfied and eventually quit. He's now doing janitorial and maintenance work for a church... and is happy again."

Elizabeth's main problem area was food service. Many would-be cooks give that vocation a bad name, because of their gypsy-like tendencies. Laradon had at least its share of such transients, but there were some exceptions.

"Eddie Smith was an excellent cook," Joe said, "but he also would sweet-talk Elizabeth into doing his work, so he could go to the yard and play ball with the children. He was very good at both."

"Yes. I cooked for Eddie quite often," Mrs. Calabrese added, "because he was almost like a recreation counselor. After he left, I had to take over the kitchen again. We had a couple more men who claimed to be cooks, but weren't. Finally, I couldn't take that any longer, so we got rid of them, because they messed up the kitchen. I cleaned it up, the way I liked it, and I said: 'Well, I guess I'll do the cooking again.'

"I had to do the other [laundry, cleaning, etc.], too, but someone had to do it.

"A man came along," she said, "who claimed he was a cook somewhere. Joe hired him and he came out to the kitchen. I already had my roast and baked potatoes and everything in the oven. I told the man to keep an eye on things—that I had to leave.

"I had to go home to watch my peach tree. The kids on their way home from public school would swipe the peaches, if I didn't watch them. When I got back to the kitchen, I went to the stove to look at my roast. The new man walked over and kicked the oven door shut.
"'Now listen here,' he said, 'I'm the cook. You just go on about your business.'

"So I did. But the man got his own dinner first, went to a table in the diningroom and started eating. Meanwhile, the kids were standing in line, waiting to be fed, but their food wasn’t ready. Someone started putting the meal out for the youngsters and that made the man angry," Elizabeth said.

"He laid down on the diningroom floor and complained loudly he was having a heart attack. Nobody paid any attention to him, so he finally got up, took off his apron, put on his hat and coat and left. Never saw him again, thank heavens.

"So there I was back in the kitchen again, doing the cooking. One day I had to run home again and when I got back, Joe said:

"'Elizabeth, I just hired two of the nicest cooks. Wait till you see them. Boy, will you be happy.'

"After all the other experiences, I had my doubts about any cook Joe would hire. But this one turned out better than I hoped. The two women were Alice (Mrs. Alice Thomas) and another lady who stayed only a couple of months.

"I met with them the next morning before breakfast. I had everything prepared from the night before, because I always had breakfast ready to cook as soon as I got in the kitchen.

"Alice assured me she could do the job. 'I know what you're planning to do,' she said, 'and I can carry it out.' And she did. From that point on, I had few worries about the food program—except at Christmas time that year."

Elizabeth explained that late in 1953, Alice said:

"'Mrs. Calabrese, you know what I have to do?'

"'I don't know,' I said.

"'I have to go back to Waco, Texas, at Christmas and pick up some things.

"'I turned around and looked at her and said: 'Are you coming back?'"
‘Sure, I’m coming back . . . Why?’
‘Because I’m tired of coming in here and picking up the odds and ends and cleaning up every time someone quits,’ I told her. ‘So, if you’re not coming back, I want to know now.’

‘My clothes are in there,’ Alice said.
‘That doesn’t mean anything,’ I replied.
Alice laughed and laughed . . . She always laughed.
‘Well,’ she said, ‘you cook for me while I’m gone. I’ll be away only a little while.’

‘And she did come back,’ Mrs. Calabrese remarked, with a sigh of relief.

Mrs. Thomas not only returned, but remained in charge of the kitchen for 26 years, retiring in 1979. Her presence and reliability freed Elizabeth for other duties, which were many and varied . . . and unending.

One of Mrs. Calabrese’s major concerns was guaranteeing that children who lived in were properly supervised during the night. At first, matrons hired for the chore worked from 3 to 11 p.m., when another shift took over and stayed until 7 a.m. Elizabeth was never happy with that arrangement and looked for a better system.

She saw an opportunity when a recreation aide quit. She urged Joe not to replace him. Instead, she argued, money budgeted for his salary could be used to hire house mothers.

“I will get three women,” she explained, “and put them in the dormitories. They’ll stay there all night, live in all the time, and then get the kids up and take them to breakfast.” Up to then, Elizabeth had been performing that task.

After Joe agreed to the plan, Elizabeth hired the three women, who were delighted with the job and its security. Not only did the arrangement ease Mrs. Calabrese’s pre-breakfast duties, it reduced her laundry load substantially.

“The house mothers were light sleepers,” Joe explained. “They taught the kids to come up with dry beds. Once a youngster wet at night, the house mother
would check the time. If she thought a kid was going to have an accident at 2 a.m., she'd get the child up earlier and take him to the bathroom. They gradually weaned them off that habit. Elizabeth, therefore, didn’t have so many sheets and p-j’s to wash.”

Mental retardees can be just as difficult to discipline as other children, the Calabreses learned. But to the question: Over the years, which gave you the most problems, boys or girls? Elizabeth responded:

“I never looked at any of them as serious problems. There can be a girl problem, or a boy problem, so there are problems, but none is hardly serious.

“We had one little kid whose folks wanted him in and some of us on the staff said: ‘Oh boy, is he going to be something!’

“We sorta hoped he wouldn’t come, because he was sure to be upsetting, we thought. But he did come. The first day when he went upstairs, he was like a bull. He pulled a door open, marched right up to his house mother and started cussing.

“She grabbed him, took him into another room and gave him a little shaking.

“She said, ‘Do you know who I am?’ He said, ‘No.’

“‘I’m your house mother. And who are you?’

“‘Oh, I’m the new student.’

“‘Okay,’ she said, ‘I will respect you and you respect me. You get out there and sit down with the rest of them.’ And that was that.

“Later, when she was off duty, I was helping get the kids up and he started cussing me. I said, ‘Oh no you don’t!’

“‘You get out in that hallway and sit down.’ When we got ready to go to breakfast, I said to him: ‘Come with me.’ He did, but when we were in the dining room, he told me: ‘I’m going to sit with—’

“‘Uh, uh,’ I said, ‘you’re going to sit with me.’ He did. So when we came back upstairs again, he was beginning to get the idea. I never allowed the children to cuss me . . . That isn’t what they’re here for. They may have
been doing it at home, but their folks sent them here, so we could help them—using our rules.

"So the little boy was with me all morning. When lunch time came, we went down to the diningroom. I never deprived them of food. And he sat with me again. We went back upstairs again after lunch and he sat alongside me as I went on working.

"By 3 o'clock, he said: 'Could I talk to you?'

"'Of course,' I said, 'if you want to talk about the right thing.'

"'I'm sorry,' he whispered, 'I won't do it again.'

"'And I said, 'Not to anyone else either!'

"'No, I won't.'

"'All right, then.' We talked a little bit about it. 'You won't cuss us again, okay? We are here to help you, but you must listen to us. Understand?'

"'Okay.'

"'Now you can go downstairs to recreation,' I told him.

"On the same day," Elizabeth added, "our doctor came in and gave a physical to the youngster. During the examination, the boy said:

"'Doctor, don't ever do the tango with Mrs. Calabrese.'

"The doctor asked: 'Tango?'

"The boy said, 'Don't ever tango with her ... she's tough.'

"'Okay,' the doctor said, 'I'll never tango with her.'

"But, frankly," Elizabeth added, "I never looked at children as problems. If they were troubled, we had to find out what it was about and then correct it."

Although her responsibilities were wide-ranging and touched on almost every facet of Laradon's existence, she regards the quality of the school's residential facilities as perhaps her most important contribution. Indeed, there is a dramatic contrast between the drab and unimaginative accommodations in many handicapped centers and the neat-and-tidy, brightly colored, gaily decorated surroundings provided by the Calabreses.
"We keep a good residence," Elizabeth readily concedes. "I think all our children are happy most of the time, because the school is their home. They appreciate the fact that it is tidy, clean and pretty.

"I remind them constantly that because this is truly their home, they must take care of it. They're the ones who have to keep it nice. The pictures on the walls are there to look at, not to be torn down. They respond well and help us keep the place attractive."

Elizabeth is proud of the swimming pool, which became a reality at a time when she thought it was the most impossible of all dreams . . . But that was before Pieter Hondius appeared.

"On Saturdays and Sundays during the summer, when Joe and I were alone with the children," Elizabeth said, "I used to take them swimming at Globeville Park. On other days, I would fill a tub with water and let them play in it.

"One day, I casually said to Joe: 'It sure would be nice if we could have our own swimming pool. But that's out of the question.' Joe didn't say anything, but he must have kept the idea in the back of his mind.

"Shortly after that, a man walked in on a Saturday, out of the clear blue sky, and offered to do volunteer work, or help in other ways. Joe sat with him and they talked. Finally, he asked, 'Is there anything you need?'

"Joe suggested some small things he could do, but the man said: 'How about something bigger . . . Something real large?'

Never one to pass up such an opportunity, Joe decided he would go for broke.

"I told him," Joe related, "his name was Pieter Hondius and he was in real estate—I told him that we really needed a swimming pool and had just the place for it at the far end of the gymnasium. He looked a little startled, but he told us he would see what he could do for us.

"Later, he came back with a retired contractor and looked over the site," Joe continued.
Swimming pool structure, a project developed by Pieter Hondius.

"'I think I can get it done for you,' he said. And he did."

"Before the pool was completed," Joe explained, "Mr. Hondius had all kinds of people and companies involved. He got Art Fattor, a fine engineer, to build it. Many individuals and organizations made donations, but it cost Pieter Hondius $16,000 out of his own pocket. That was a tremendous gift from a single individual."

Elizabeth was also instrumental in helping the school get one of its first busses.

"A man from a radio station—Joe Finan—came out and I took him through the school," she said. "He thought it was one of the cleanest places he'd ever been in. He was particularly pleased that there was no smell of urine. Mr. Finan and his wife had a mentally retarded daughter. They had to put her in a home and eventually she died, but they were familiar with institutions for the handicapped."
“He was very impressed with the cleanliness of our school and liked the way we treated the children. He asked what we needed. I mentioned that we could use a new bus.”

Joe described Finan’s efforts as “heroic.” As disc jockey and manager of station KTLN, he arranged for a series of broadcasts from one of the main windows in Montgomery Ward’s South Broadway store.

“He did one of those disc jockey shows for a few hours at a time over several days,” Calabrese explained. “He encouraged listener participation and got it. The winner received a $1,500 shopping spree in the Ward store and Finan raised $7,000, which bought the bus.”

Along with the exhilaration of achieving success with the youngsters and of being helped by persons like Hondius and Finan, Elizabeth also experienced the somber side of caring for the handicapped.

“I had one boy that I really loved,” she recalled. “Little Stevie. He had epileptic seizures very hard, but he was a sweet thing, like an angel. All the kids were nice, but he was one I especially liked.

“He couldn’t talk and when I’d say, ‘Stevie, I’m going to take you home,’ he’d shake his head and form the word, ‘No.’

“One night, I gave him some medication, I am a licensed practical nurse [a skill she studied for and acquired in her spare time].

“I was in the medicine room until about 8:30. I was just getting ready to go home. Only the exit lights were on in the hallway when Stevie came out of his room to put his robe away in the locker. I said:

‘Stevie, what are you doing?’

‘He kept looking at me and I said, ‘You hang your robe up.’ So he did and then he got up against the door and just stood there, staring at me.

‘You go back in your room,’ I told him and then realized that he wanted some special attention.

‘Aw, come on over here.’ I told him and then said, ‘Give me a hug and a kiss.’
“So he came over and put his arms around my neck and hugged me. ‘All right,’ I said, ‘go to bed now.’ For a split second in my mind, I said to myself, ‘Stevie, you’re all right now, but what will happen to you later in life?’

“He was so sweet and so cute. He just hung right on to me. I finally said, ‘All right, that’s enough. Go back to your house mother.’

“He started off all right, but he turned around and stood there looking at me again.

‘Okay,’ I said, ‘I’ll see you tomorrow.’

“But at 5 o’clock in the morning, he had a real hard seizure and passed away.

“Then,” Elizabeth continued, “there was Harriet. We raised her from her late teens into adulthood. She was with us a long time, and was frequently hospitalized, because of some kind of heart trouble.

“One night she was having a bad time in the dining-room. She was one we had to watch carefully, because she’d sit down on the floor and was difficult to pick up. That night she refused to get up for anyone but Joe. ‘I want Mr. Calabrese to pick me up,’ she said.

“The nurse was called and she asked one of the recreation workers to carry Harriet across to the girls’ dorm, next to the gym. By the time he got her to her bed, she had turned absolutely blue. The doctor was called, but she had passed away by the time he arrived.”

The Calabreses also discovered their young charges reacted to stress in strange ways. Elizabeth recounted one episode that demonstrated rather sharply the need for alertness and understanding by the school’s staff.

“A few years ago, we had a young fellow named Jim who devised a work program for some of the boys. He took them out in the yard and gave them little jobs to do—digging in the earth, moving soil, etc. I always watched the kids very closely, and the people working with them, especially a young one like Jim, because sometimes they overlook the obvious.

“The sun was hot that day, so I went to Jim and said: ‘Don’t keep the boys out too long at a stretch. We
don't want someone to suffer sunstroke. Bring them over in the shade now, and I'll fix some cold drinks.

"He agreed and they took a break and cooled off. Even at that, they were outside much of the day with their little jobs.

"That night," Elizabeth said, "the house mother called me at home.

"'Mrs. Calabrese,' she asked, 'would you please come over? I'm having a terrible time with Tommy. He's got the radio on too loud; he turns the television up loud, and now he's poking the other kids with a pencil.'

"I went over and found that all the boys were excited. They wanted to tell their stories about what had happened. I was very firm with them, so I sat down and said:

"'Now, everybody quiet down! Just sit there!' They all did as I asked. I knew each one wanted to talk real bad, but I insisted on silence. Then I turned to Tommy.

"'You can talk,' I told him. 'What's the matter?'

"'Mrs. Casey (the house mother) won't let me play my radio,' he said. He liked to listen to the baseball games.

"Mrs. Casey had already told me she had let him play the radio, but he insisted on playing it as loud as possible, which annoyed the others.

"'Tommy,' I coaxed, 'Mrs. Casey really did let you have your radio didn't she? And you played it too loud?'

"'Yes,' he replied.

"'Why didn't you just sit in the room there and listen to your ball game?'

"'Because,' he said, 'Bobby pulled my flower out of the ground today!'

"Then Bobby said: 'Mrs. Calabrese, let me tell my story. I didn't know it was a flower. I thought it was a weed. And we were pulling weeds.'

"'All right,' I said, 'now we'll all tell our stories.'

"So Bobby began: 'We were working out there and Tommy planted this thing ... I thought it was a weed, but it was a flower.'
"That's all right," I replied, 'we can put another flower in.'

"We already did," Tommy answered.

'By that time, I thought I knew what had caused the flare-up. I called Mrs. Casey aside and whispered: 'I'll tell you what's wrong with him.'

'All right,' she said, 'I did give him back the radio, but I won't let him play it, because he didn't do what he was supposed to do.'

'I calmed her down some, then said: 'Those boys were out in that sun today working and it was terribly hot. And it's awful hot in here right now. This heat is what's wrong with them.'

'So I said, 'let me handle it. All right now, Tommy, you come here. Mrs. Casey said you could listen to the radio. Now take a pillow, lay it on the floor and listen to the game. I'm going to be back in a half-hour. You tell me what you heard.'

'I did come back later and looked in. He was sound asleep on the pillow.

'I tell that story because people have to understand that what a kid does during the day may cause him to act up at night. It's either because they're tired, it's too hot, or something else is wrong. You have to be able to identify the cause, before you can work on the problem.'

As supervisor of housekeeping and maintenance, Elizabeth paid particular attention to fire department regulations, especially fire prevention. Despite care and alertness, she sometimes upset the investigators who regularly inspected the school. In order to add variety to the surroundings, she often moved furniture around, changed decorations, and did minor remodeling.

'I had a touchy incident with a fire captain several years ago,' she said. 'I was always trying to get more room for the kids and I worked around one door, so I could space out the beds better. There was plenty of room for the kids to get out, in case of fire, because I watched that. But there was one little doorway, which didn't seem to me to amount to much, I put a small panel
across the top part of it. It could be taken down easily, if
the fire department didn’t approve.

“When two firemen inspected, we asked about the
door. They said they weren’t sure, but they didn’t think
we could have the panel, but we’d have to ask their boss.

“And when the chief [Captain W. W. Lindsey of the
Fire Prevention Bureau] came out, he immediately got
angry. He was often mad at me.

“‘What are you doing with that panel there?’ he al-
most shouted.

“‘I wanted more room for the kids’ beds,’ I told him,
very softly.

“‘Don’t you know you’re blocking a doorway?’ he
scolded.

“‘But the kids have plenty of room to get out, if they
have to,’ I said. ‘They can walk under the panel. But
you’re the boss, I’ll take it down. It really doesn’t block
off the doorway.’

“So then he said, ‘I’ll tell you what. Take that panel
down and the rest is okay.’

“I agreed to it and then I reminded him: ‘I prevent
fires. I don’t start them. I don’t have wastepaper
baskets all around; I don’t have filth all over.’

“‘No, you sure don’t,’ he said. ‘It’s one of the
cleanest damn places I’ve ever been in. But if you don’t
do one thing to irritate me, you do another.’”

Joe explained that remark by saying: “The hallway
upstairs in the school building is big and long. I remem-
ber one time when Elizabeth placed couches and chairs
on both sides of it—to break up the monotony.

“When Captain Lindsey came the next time, Oh,
boy! He came down to my office and told me about it. ‘I
don’t know what I’m going to do with that wife of
yours!’ he said.

“But then Elizabeth talked with him and they
finally agreed that if she’d keep all the couches and
chairs and tables on one side of the hall, he would ap-
prove.

“She also had placed flowers and other decorations
on the staircase, which is a great big thing. He complained about that and threatened to make her take them out.

"'If they were permanently installed, I could allow them,' he said.

"So she went ahead and made everything permanent. When he came the next time, he grudgingly agreed that the decorations could stay, but he admitted he didn't think she was going to do anything about it.

"'You're always doing things around here without getting proper permits,' he warned. And he was right," Joe said, "she would tear out a wall and change things around. Each time he inspected he would see that the building was different than before and he pretended to be upset by it. They argued a lot, but really got along fine."

When Elizabeth bent city regulations slightly to provide a more comfortable setting for the students, it was not out of character. Doing the unorthodox was almost a way of life for her and Joe. They frequently experimented with very simple things to make life more pleasant for the kids. They found that innovation often could replace money to improve surroundings.

"In the 1950's," Joe explained, "the psychologists criticized us for using bright colors in the classrooms and the dormitory. We were told we had to use soothing colors, like pastels. Otherwise, it was believed, the children would be 'fired up,' made excitable or nervous.

"Instead, we found the kids responded well to the loud colors. Now, bright decorations and tones are widely accepted as therapeutic aids."

Elizabeth's personal contributions to Laradon's genuine attractiveness were summarized beautifully in a Rocky Mountain News article. Marjorie Barrett, feature writer for the paper, in an article titled "Portrait of a Lady," reported:

... Mrs. Calabrese has transformed the social and living areas into cozy corners for her charges.  
She softened the harsh bare look of public school hall-
ways with carpeting, paint and little touches that only a homemaker would recognize as important to children.

There are flowers on window sills, eye-arresting plaques and pretty bedspreads. Each dormitory has been furnished with loving care.

Not only do the youngsters have clean clothing daily, but shirts and dresses have been crisply starched. Each little girl's hair is curled nightly.

Mrs. Calabrese has a capable staff of housemothers, dieticians, cooks and nurses, yet she oversees everywhere. She pitches in where help is shorthanded.

To be of greater help to the school, she took a course in practical nursing.

Mrs. Calabrese is a quiet person, proud of the school and the miracles wrought by her husband and staff . . .

Elizabeth and Joe early in his Legislative career.
Never too fond of social events, because they tend to interfere with school responsibilities, Elizabeth has not avoided such activity entirely. When sharing a special function with Joe, she dresses smartly, in contrast with the practical every-day garb she wears. That transformation completely confused one important international visitor.

“Our Dr. Robert Collett, who served as medical adviser for so long, went to Japan in 1965, for a big meeting,” she recalled. “While there, he not only presented a paper on the school, he talked to many persons individually about Laradon and our program. That was his thing, as the kids say, telling others about the school.

“One of the persons he met was a doctor from Brazil. Dr. Collett must have made a big impression. The man changed his whole vacation trip, so he could come to Denver. He was director of institutions for the retarded in Brazil.

“Even though he planned to stay with us for just a day,” she added, “he was here for three or four. Dr. (F. William) Happ was director of education. He took the visitor all over, through all his departments, and then gave him to me. We went through the entire school that day. We visited the medicine room; went through the dormitories; I showed him everything. I was with him for several hours.

“Joe talked to the visitor by phone and invited him and his wife to go out that night for dinner, because they were so far from home and knew no one in Denver but people at Laradon. They were delighted to accept, so we took them to Mario’s, with those fine singers.

“Joe didn’t meet the man until we arrived at the restaurant, because the Legislature was in session and Joe had been busy all day up at the Capitol. While we were having dinner, our visitor told Joe everything he had learned about the school. He said:

“I’ll tell you one thing, don’t get rid of that lady you’ve got out there.’

“What lady?” Joe asked.
"The lady I was with most of the day,' he said. 'I don't know her name.'

'Well,' Joe said, 'I don't know who you mean.'

'You must,' he said, 'she took me all over the place today.'

'It finally dawned on Joe he was talking about me, so Joe pointed to me and said: 'That lady . . . there . . . is my wife!'

'He realized he hadn't recognized me, but didn't try to cover up. 'Oh, my God!' he said, 'Okay, so she's your wife! Don't get rid of her for any reason. Your school is the most beautiful place in the world. I wish my wife could see it. Dolls on the beds; spreads on the beds; flowers all over. It's absolutely great! In my country, we have one hundred people to a room. We can't do anything else,' he told us.'

On another occasion, Elizabeth recalled, two women professionals, who had already visited several centers for the retarded, arrived at Laradon for an inspection. Dr. Happ's assistant, Helen Powhida, offered to show them the residential units.

'Don't bother,' they said, 'we've seen enough of them; we want no more dormitories.'

'But Miss Powhida didn't give up. 'I think you should see where our children live and sleep,' she told them. 'The residences really are nice.'

'They weren't too happy about it,' Elizabeth added, 'but one of them finally said: 'If you insist, we'll go.'

'When they came back downstairs about a half-hour later, they said: 'My, it's beautiful and so orderly. It's better than any other residence we've seen.

'In the others,' one of them explained, 'we didn't understand how they got the children up, dressed and ready for school. It was even hard to tell how they got the kids' clothes on. Everything seemed to be confused.

'But here,' she continued, 'it's all so organized. No wonder your children seem so happy. They have everything they need.'

'Naturally,' Elizabeth said, 'I was happy to get the
compliments. We’ve always tried to make Laradon a real home, so it was fun having visitors say that we had succeeded."

Elizabeth insisted on good housekeeping, as shown here.

As the years passed and the Legislature took more and more of Joe’s time, placing greater administrative duties on Elizabeth, the Calabreses shifted responsibilities, so that neither was overburdened.

Elizabeth rarely visited the statehouse, and then only on extra-special occasions. “I don’t believe she went to the Capitol a dozen times in the 20 years I was there,” Joe said. Conversely, Joe, despite, or perhaps because of,
his law-making responsibilities, was at Laradon as frequently as his schedule permitted.

"He would always advise us in advance," Elizabeth said, "if he was bringing guests. When he came for lunch, which was quite frequent, he would come in style. Dr. Happ insisted that when Joe brought visitors, or other legislators, everything had to be in tip-top shape. He never allowed a bit of dust anywhere, and neither did I.

"Joe was always selling our program to other legislators. First, they would have lunch, then Joe would take them upstairs to the living area and all through the place, so they could understand what the school was about," she said.

Joe emphasized that most of his peers at the Capitol had little or no knowledge of mental retardation. "Selling our program was tough," he commented. "The ignorance was unbelievable.

"Many legislators doubted our sanity for even trying to help the children. They refused to believe," he continued, "that anything could be done for them. Some senators and representatives had seen only the terribly retarded at Ridge and Pueblo. They put all handicapped in the same category.

"Their thinking was: 'How can we keep those poor youngsters happy?'

"That's all they were concerned about. They didn’t know that the best way to keep them happy, if they had any ability at all, was teaching them how to work. By trial and error, we had learned that that was the most useful therapy.

"I used to tell them [the legislators] that, and they’d look at me like I was crazy. So then I’d take them out to the school and show them. It was the best way to sell the program, not only for Laradon, but for all groups helping the retarded," he said.

Through such lobbying and other promotions, the story of Laradon gradually attracted attention, first locally and then nationally, which sometimes resulted in
financial or other assistance. Scrapbooks at the school contain numerous pictures of celebrities, like Jack Benny, Eva Gabor and others, presenting cash, checks, or other gifts, to Elizabeth and Joe, or both.

Welcome as such events were, however, none could match the public relations coup achieved by Elizabeth, with Joe's conniving help, in June of 1959.

Two years earlier, Denver councilmen and state legislators had decreed creation of a program commemorating arrival in 1858 of pioneers at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, site of the capitol city's first permanent settlement.

Called the "Rush to the Rockies" Centennial, the event began late in 1958 and extended through much of the next year. Rather than spend millions of tax dollars in recognition of the celebration, directors of the program located and produced dozens of events costing city and state little or nothing. Despite such thrift, Denver and Colorado received tremendous national recognition.

The premiere, for example, called "Mile High Milestone" and hailing Denver as "The Summit City of the Space Age," was a country-wide television feature. Presented before an overflow crowd of 10,000 at the Denver Coliseum, the program featured a Durango woman in a live video production of "This Is Your Life." The latter, at that time, was a tremendously popular show high in the Nielsen ratings.

There were, in addition, addresses (not telecast) by Denver's two top journalists, Jack Foster, editor of the Rocky Mountain News, recalling past history of the city and state, and Palmer Hoyt, editor and publisher of The Denver Post. Hoyt predicted what the 21st century would bring to the area.

That event, featuring all the pomp of a Hollywood opening, including darting exterior Klieg lights, alerted the nation to Denver's first-century celebration. It remained, however, for another TV program, a morning favorite, called "Queen For a Day," to focus even greater attention on the city for five consecutive days.
One of the many celebrities who helped Laradon, Actress Joan Fontaine presents check to Joe and Elizabeth, as civic leader Bob R. Baker approves.

Jack Bailey, a radio personality who successfully transferred his production to television, brought his entourage to Denver early in June of 1959. With great local fanfare, sponsored in part by Safeway Stores, women in the metropolitan area were invited, even urged, to seek the title as Queen For a Day. Winning the designation carried with it a wide assortment of prizes worth thousands of dollars.

The format of the show was simple. Bailey, who moved from city to city—hired the biggest hall in town, in Denver's case the Auditorium Theater seating 2,500—and then invited all the women in the area to be his guests and to vie for the title, with its attendant loot.

Daily, thousands of the fairer sex arrived early, formed long lines around the facility and waited patiently for the doors to open. Those admitted received cards requesting vital information—name, address, age,
etc. Space was provided for each aspirant to explain why she wanted to be “Queen For a Day.”

Joe decided the program offered a great opportunity for Elizabeth to participate and get for Laradon much-needed equipment and other assets.

“When we heard the show was coming,” Joe said, “I got as much information as possible, so we could figure some strategy. We wanted Elizabeth to take part, but knew it might be a hassle.

“Each woman,” he added, “was given a official entry card and the staff of the show had to look at several hundred cards in a very brief time, so they could pick possible contestants. We knew that whatever was written on the card had to be dramatic enough to attract attention, or she wouldn’t stand a chance.

“When we got down to the Auditorium and saw the line that went clear round the block—there must have been 5,000 women present—I said to myself, Elizabeth will never make it—not with this big a mob. But she got in line, along with Alice, the cook.

“After she got her card,” he continued, “she filled it out until she got to the part that read, ‘If I was queen for a day, I would . . . ,’ and then I took over. I asked her to fill in the blank lines by writing:

‘If I was Queen For a Day, I’d want some beds for my 40 children!’

“That must have caught somebody’s eye, because ten women were called out of that mob for further consideration. One of them was Elizabeth. Then, from the ten, they narrowed it down to three, and she was in the finals.

“Each of the three explained to Bailey and the big audience, as well as the TV cameras, why they wanted to be queen. It was then up to the audience to pick the winner.”

Despite the fact that Mrs. Calabrese is a very private person and had never been exposed to the limelight or big audiences, she overcame stage and camera fright so she could help the kids. Matter-of-factly, but dramati-
cally, she told about Laradon’s program and how it helped the least fortunate of youngsters. As Joe says:

“Elizabeth won. She got the 40 beds for the school, plus a leisure home and lots at Shadow Mountain Lake, and a motor boat. In all, she was awarded about $8,000 in prizes.

“The only things she got for herself were a refrigerator, an outdoor swing—which we still have—and a diamond wristwatch. That was a beautiful day . . . and night, because we got the use of a Cadillac and we had a big time on the town—dinner, champagne, the works,” he recalled, with a wink.

On the Sunday following Mrs. Calabrese’s victory, Safeway Stores took full-page ads in the daily papers. The copy read in part:

Dear Friends: Safeway is grateful to all of you who helped bring ‘Queen for a Day’ to Denver last week, as a national salute to the ‘Rush to the Rockies’ Centennial . . . There was a national viewing audience of 12 million persons daily . . .

In addition, capacity audiences of more than 12,000 people saw the live show in the Denver Auditorium . . .

Elizabeth and Laradon Hall thus received widespread local and national recognition, because she convinced a big audience that she really did need beds for her “40 children.”

Mrs. Calabrese concedes that in the 30 years she has devoted to the school, she has considered retiring at least twice.

“After I lost Donald in September, 1962, I really planned to leave, but something happened. I get ideas like that,” she said. “After Donald’s death, we lost him in September, I was away for a long time. Dr. Collett asked me how I was feeling. Not too good, I told him, and said I was thinking of leaving.

‘You are?’ he asked. ‘Even though you’ve lost Donald,’ he said, ‘don’t forget you’ve got 40 other children. Are you going to go off and leave them alone?’

‘No,’ I admitted, ‘I guess I can’t.’
‘Why don’t you come back then?’

‘And I did. I had been gone only two months, but I found the school in real bad shape, especially the girls’ dorm. There were several things that people had sloughed off on. I spent most of Christmas vacation straightening out the girls’ residence.

‘Then, just as I got it finished, we had to let a house mother go. The nurse came to my office and told me she was leaving, too.

‘That settled it. I had to stay until we could get another house mother and nurse. Even after we got them, I decided I had better stay on.

‘Not too long ago,’ she continued, ‘I again decided I was going to leave, but before I could wrap things up, I fell and broke my hand. While it was healing, I got a little rest, so I went back on the job. But one of these days . . .’

Many, many words of praise have been directed toward the blue-eyed Mrs. Calabrese, but perhaps the most meaningful tributes have come from Laradon staff members, with whom she has worked through the years. Their loyalty to Elizabeth and their longevity on the job quietly proclaim their admiration for her. House mothers, who lived daily with their sometimes difficult charges, have been on the job 13, 14, 15 years. Alice, the legendary cook, stayed 26 years. Others have had shorter, but extremely sincere, tenure.

Almost all, however, in times of high personnel turnover, were content to remain at work, because of Elizabeth’s devotion and dedication to and compassion for the thousands of children—and adults—to whom she had been more, much more than a surrogate mother.

She has, indeed, always been a queen . . . and not just for a day!
7

Harvesting The Garden

When Joe Calabrese and Dr. Allan Murphy launched their pioneering venture, they had neither a guiding chart nor a specific goal. They opened the school on schedule, but from then on, nearly every accomplishment was impromptu, often imaginative, frequently impressive.

Devoting as much time as he could spare from regular duties, Murphy gave Laradon sorely needed professionalism in its early days. Consulting often—usually daily—with Joe and Elizabeth, he helped recruit others to the cause. Students, volunteers, psychologists, other professionals, on a part-time basis, lent their skills, which the Calabreses themselves would eventually acquire through trial and error.

Allan had invited Elvern Garber, a Denver University graduate scholar, to be a part of the school's initial staff, which was heavily dependent on student volunteers. Joe, in turn, convinced Garber to remain as director of education, a post he filled with distinction. Dr. Murphy also helped on personnel and curriculum—matters foreign to the Calabreses at the time.

Valuable as was his varied and continuing help, Allan's greatest single contribution was convincing Dolly McGlone to devote the last two decades of his life
Although always ready to assist, Murphy never dominated. After McGlone enlisted in the cause and began his innovations, Allan did not try to influence the great teacher. Neither did he attempt to impose his theories on the several education directors employed by Joe.

Following Garber’s resignation in 1951, the academic side of the program was successively directed by:


Each made a unique contribution to the school, but none held the directorship long enough to indelibly mark Laradon’s character. The latter was being developed by the Calabreses, with Murphy always in the background and available when needed.

As the years rolled by, McGlone’s theories and practices attracted greater and greater attention from educators and the families of the retarded. Grateful for and humble about the role in which fate had cast them, the Calabreses sought ways to share their knowledge and discoveries with others. Space and staff availability limited the school’s enrollment. Another avenue—home teaching—offered possibilities, but there were roadblocks. One was lack of easily understood how-to-do-it books that could be used by parents of retardees. By now old hands at trail blazing, the Calabreses decided to fill that void.

In 1958, descriptions of 31 McGlone exercises were compiled into Laradon’s first textbook publication. Entitled *Helpful Hints for Handicaps*, the booklet, by any standard, was amateurish. With the text by McGlone and pen-and-ink illustrations by F. F. Lucero, it was a mimeographed, 51-page paperback guide for home teaching that captured immediate attention. It faithfully explained step-by-step exercises successfully incorporated into the school’s ambitious program.
In his introduction, McGlone cautioned users of the guide as follows:

Without the power of concentration or the span of attention (by retardees), any effort spent teaching academic subjects is practically time wasted. Once we accepted this premise, we sought ways and means of developing and toughening these traits where they existed, even in the slightest degree in our children. This was our first step toward academic thought and reasoning ability. We decided that the sense of feeling was the most vivid and concrete and that the pupil's attention and thought could best be caught and held through this sense. Experience seemed to favor this decision and led us to include the training of other senses as well . . .

In laying out our course, we found little in published works. Some of this we used outright and some we improved upon and used . . . The rest of this course is original with the school . . .

Since the object of our efforts is to cause prolonged thought and concentration, nothing will be lost and much can be gained by frequent reviews. The children enjoy the success they meet at such times . . .

We contend that one who has successfully finished the course will be able to think more clearly and logically. What he thinks about is up to his future teachers. We further contend that he will be able to think in fields other than reading. When one is taught to walk, he is able to walk in any direction, or to run, to skip, and to jump. When his mental powers have been developed, he will be able to walk, to run, and to jump in a mental sense. He will be able to see the relation of things and events about him—hence more able to cope with life and to be a more apt pupil.

We do not contend, nor would we have a parent believe, that our method will be successful with every child, but we do believe, in view of overwhelming evidence, that, if a child is able to be brought to reading readiness, this method will do it if properly presented.

Such a simplistic explanation seems elementary today, because great strides have been made in elevat-
ing the I.Q. levels of the handicapped. When written, however, those words were as revolutionary, in an educational vein, as was Tom Paine's *Common Sense*, politically speaking. The Calabreses and their star teacher were indeed blazing trails.

The success of *Helpful Hints* encouraged the school to print a more professional booklet in 1959. Using the same title, the second McGlone work was edited more carefully, tightened up rhetorically, and featured photographs rather than sketches.

The description of each exercise was in two parts—*materials* and *procedure*. *Materials* included such common items as a pocket or hand mirror, a dish pan, beads, keys, feathers, spoons, shoelaces, roller skates, colored yarn, mustard jars, etc. The *procedure* for using each was simply but carefully explained, so the teacher could employ the exercises to challenge all five senses, except taste.

The activities described zeroed in on four objectives: Improvement of motor coordination, manual dexterity, attention span, and reasoning ability.

McGlone's monograph convincingly made those goals attainable, so the document soon became "must" reading for educators, vocational rehabilitation workers, psychologists, occupational therapists, and others interested in mental retardees. In addition, visitors to Dolly's classes were amazed at the application of the imaginative methods he had developed.

Among those exposed to both the booklet and the McGlone teaching techniques was Dr. Maurice P. Smith, a Colorado University psychologist.

He was convinced the objectives of *Helpful Hints* should not be limited to home training or reference material for institutions. Rather, he reasoned, the entire McGlone concept should be incorporated in a full-fledged teaching book. Recognizing that development of such a text would be a monumental chore, Dr. Smith proposed the first step should be a thorough, systematic study.
With approval of the Calabreses and his university, Smith sought and secured from the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) a grant to finance the task.

As sometimes happens, the ultimate benefits from a research project can produce spin-off dividends even richer than the goal originally sought. Such was the case with Smith’s study.

It brought together McGlone, the C.U. professor, and Max G. Frankel, director of education at Laradon. They were later joined by Drs. F. William Happ and Minnie S. Behrens. The latter served as secretary for the study. These five comprised an unlikely team, considering the variations in their personalities and backgrounds. Their combined efforts, nonetheless, produced long-term benefits for the school.

A native of Shawnee, Oklahoma, Frankel was 39 when he became chief administrator in 1960. Highly qualified, he had served three years as a teacher in the Jefferson County, Colorado, school system and one year at the State Training Center (for the retarded) in Grand Junction, Colorado. At Laradon, he was distressed to find that McGlone’s techniques were almost ignored.

“Unfortunately,” Frankel recalled, “the previous administrator had not encouraged Dolly’s program. In fact, he had tried to submerge it.”

Frankel said his chief reason for seeking employment was to work with McGlone.

“Somehow or other,” he explained, “I got into a dialogue with Dolly about his theories for training the retarded. He convinced me I should go to Laradon. I’m sure he personally had nothing to do with my appointment, but I made the effort because I was very impressed with what he was doing. I felt it had great potential.

“After I got there,” Frankel said, “I encouraged Dolly to step up his program. I guess we rescued him from what you might call the chicken coop.”

Early in his tenure, Frankel learned from Calabrese
that Smith had received approval for the study. Realizing the Boulder educator’s time, because of professional duties, would be limited, Frankel took charge of the research. “Somebody had to drive it forward,” he said, “so I did it.”

He welcomed Happ’s arrival as a project participant in 1961. Neither knew it at the time, but Happ eventually would succeed Frankel and would be credited by the latter with making Dolly’s program flourish. Together, Frankel and Happ provided the daily continuity Smith’s project needed.

Before the report was published March 15, 1963, Frankel resigned to accept a college teaching position and to pursue a doctor’s degree. Most of the research had been completed by the time he departed, but Happ, assisted by Dr. Behrens, put the finishing touches on the Smith document and supervised its printing.

Of the 250 copies produced, HEW asked for and received 200, rather than the 75 called for by contract. This request surprised Smith and Happ, who correctly interpreted it as complimentary.

Entitled *A Guide for Functional Teaching of Mentally Retarded Children*, the publication was a fitting showcase for Dolly’s devices and techniques totaling an amazing 178. They were systematically described and catalogued, so they became recognizable as a unified educational tool.

In discussing the contents, the guide’s “Introduction” made several interesting observations, including these:

Most of the exercises were developed by McGlone in working at Laradon Hall with brain-damaged children of the ‘trainable’ level. Some . . . may also be useful for lower level children. Many exercises would be appropriate for ‘educable’ mentally retarded.

It is our conviction that education of the retarded must take a form quite different from what is often referred to as a ‘watered-down’ or slowed-down version of instruction of normal children. We believe that an educa-
tional program must be devised that is sensitive to developmental, behavioral deficiencies. These convictions, when followed through, may commend programs like McGlone’s—a program that was developed out of careful observation of the child’s behavior and with efforts then made to correct the observed deficiencies.

The teaching program described here is called ‘functional’ since the general aim of every exercise is to develop knowledge, skills, or attitudes that are important to function in many life situations.

Each exercise is related to every other exercise insofar as the whole plan is to teach the child to be a better learner, a more effective individual.

The introduction also warned those planning to use the system that the instructor’s traditional role would necessarily be altered. Because of the pupil’s concentration on the materials and techniques used, the teacher would have to become, the study suggested, “a keen and skilled observer of the retarded learner and not so much, perhaps, a communicator of knowledge.”

Regarding characteristics of the retarded, the book pointed out:

Every individual is different from every other individual. This is a truism sometimes overlooked in teaching . . . brain-damaged children. The teacher will find it necessary to vary details of the exercise, such as length of time or degree of proficiency demanded, in light of some of the individual traits of the children.

Educators were alerted to watch for and adjust to children who had some or all of the following deficiencies:

Apathy or its converse, hyperactivity.

Impulsiveness—lack of behavior control.

Emotional instability—irritability, fluctuation of mood.

Distractibility.

Low stamina—easily fatigued.
Motor disabilities—spasticity, palsy, crippling.
Over-dependence on others.
Sensory impairments—defective sight, hearing, etc.
Disorders of perception—attention span, figure & ground confusion, attention to irrelevant features.
Disorders in concept formation—lowered reasoning ability.
Language disorders—speech difficulties, limited vocabulary.
Social incompetence—difficulty relating to others, lack of social amenities, lack of social opportunities.

"The cause of these deficiencies," the study cautioned, "may lie in the specific nature of the brain damage. Or the cause may be traced to lack of training or improper training. The instructional programs outlined in this manual have been planned to work, regardless of the source of the deficiencies which the child exhibits."

In the book's "Preface," written by Dr. Smith, he disclosed that the "authors of this guide are also working on a manuscript which will deal in some detail with the philosophy of education which McGlone's approach exemplifies. . . . The later publication," Dr. Smith promised, "will present some of the results in our study of McGlone's teaching."

Issuance of the guide added lustre to Laradon's international reputation. More than that, it contributed to maturing the school's own curriculum, because of the skills provided by those participating in the book's preparation.

Frankel, teaching at South Dakota State in Minot, and Smith, back in Boulder following a heart attack and a sabbatical in England, would make additional contri-
butions to the school through the promised textbook. Firmly established as Laradon’s chief standard bearer in academic and professional circles, however, was Dr. Happ.

Before he reached Laradon, Dr. Happ had already experienced a varied and fascinating life, marked by both fruitfulness and frustration.

Born in Germany May 24, 1901, he received a Ph.D. in Social Sciences from the University of Frankfurt/Main. Two years later, he earned a diploma in Vocational Guidance. Both degrees were magna cum laude efforts. He financed his studies by teaching at the Municipal Business School of Frankfurt/Main. This offered him an exceptional experience in education.

During a post-doctorate course, Happ interned at a large mental hospital caring for 4,000 patients in Idar-Oberstein, Germany.

“It was there,” he recalls, “I wondered: Can these people be employed at all? There were paranoids and schizophrenics and microcephalics, but then I noticed there were some who were different. They were the brain-injured mentally retarded.

“I got permission to try to find work for them. I was lucky. Some could be employed in the large agronomy of the hospital. It was there I learned something that really amazed me . . . the love and care the mentally retarded offered to animals.”

“I had been able to put some retarded patients working with hogs—helping clean the pens, feeding them, that type of thing. One of the young men, named Karl, was a nice guy, but one day he disappeared. He had run away. The police were alerted that an inmate was on the loose. I was terribly saddened and worried.

“The next day,” he continued, “when I went to the farm, I asked:

‘What happened to Karl?’

‘Oh, he came back in the evening,’ I was told.

“Nobody seemed very excited about his disappearance once he was back. He had run away a couple of days
before Christmas," Happ said. "He returned with a small spruce which he had pulled out of the ground in the forest—with his bare hands. He wanted to decorate it, so the hogs could have a Christmas tree.

"Another time," Happ added, "a mother hog began having a litter late in the day. Karl sat there all night with the animal’s head in his lap, petting her, comforting her, as she bore the piglets. I was very touched by that...

"A second area of employment I discovered," he said, "was in reforesting. In Germany, when trees are felled, seedlings are immediately planted in the cleared area. It was customary for farmers’ wives and daughters to do the work, but at times, especially around harvest, the women couldn’t be spared from their own farm chores, because they were busy with the crops. I felt some of the mentally retarded could do the work.

"If they can do one simple thing, I reasoned, perhaps they can do two or three. The forestry people agreed, so we started. We devised a pointed stick with a crossbar a few inches above the point. One person would push the stick in the soil to the depth of the crossbar, making a hole; a second person would place a seedling in the hole and keep following up.

"It was a routine job," Happ added, "but the retardees did it well, at least as well as the farmers’ wives and daughters. The handicapped appreciated the opportunity, too, because they worked for a goal, earned money and were in the fresh air—much better than sitting around in the institution, where there was no diversion.

"But I couldn’t keep doing that kind of work," Happ lamented. "As a state employee, I couldn’t have made half the money available in the business world. So, being young and adventurous, I completed my study at the hospital and went on to something else. I think, however, I felt, perhaps subconsciously, that I had left those poor guys in the lurch. But later, in this country, I again took up ‘that kind of work.’"
From 1927 to 1945, Happ was employed by a printing and publishing company that operated two plants in Frankfurt/Main and Berlin. His specialties were personnel, labor and public relations.

In the 1930’s, as the Third Reich grew in power and gradually brought more and more functions under government control, Happ and his wife, Irmgard, grew restive.

“In 1938,” Happ recalled, “Hitler went absolutely crazy and began his massacres of the Jews. We lost many Jewish friends, who just disappeared. We didn’t know where. We had no inkling.

‘I told my wife I didn’t want any more of that. ‘We have friends in America,’ I said to her, ‘Let’s go.’

“I applied at the end of 1938 for papers to go to the United States, but there was so much red tape, we didn’t receive approval to leave in due time. When the war broke out in September, 1939, we were at the Swiss border. Our friends in Switzerland—we had friends all over Europe—had told us: ‘If anything happens, if there’s a war, come live with us.’

“So we started out to reach them, but we found police all along the border, as well as the S.S. and S.A. (the dreaded storm troopers) every hundred yards or so. We knew we could not get out. If we tried, we knew what would happen. So we gave up.’

The Happs lived out the conflict like millions of other civilians on both sides—in fear, deprivation and patience.

Although physically unharmed by Allied bombings of Berlin and Frankfurt, the Happs were economic victims.

“We lost our home, furnishings, clothing, everything! . . . After 18 years of marriage, we had to start anew,” Happ said. “When the war was over we still wanted to go to the United States. A friend from the United States urged us to apply again and offered us a place to stay, but I was told in 1949 by the consul general we would have to wait, like others, before we
could leave.

"In the fall of 1951, I got a card that said we could get our visas to enter the United States. In the years after the war, however, I had built up my practice as a self-employed industrial psychologist and efficiency expert. I had clients not only in Germany, but in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe. We had a very comfortable income. After we received the notice from the American Consulate, my wife and I pondered day and night, for a week, about whether we should go. Finally, we made our decision and in May, 1952, we took the boat at Bremerhaven and left for the United States. We never regretted it."

From 1952 to 1962, Happ worked first with the Alliance Rubber Co. in Arkansas and Louisiana, then as a free-lance industrial psychologist, and finally as a consultant to Colorado Landscape and Nursery Co. After arriving in Colorado in 1955, he sought teaching positions at Denver and Colorado Universities, but found out that fund shortages at both institutions prevented any staff expansion.

Unlike Dolly's introduction to Laradon, which was sponsored by Dr. Murphy, Happ's arrival at the school was pure coincidence.

"I had become acquainted with the director of the Cerebral Palsy Center in Denver," Happ related. "By chance, we talked about my previous work and interest in helping the handicapped. On one of my visits, he suggested I go to Laradon Hall to inquire about a research project. I knew nothing about Laradon, or even where it was located," he said.

Happ's natural curiosity, however, led him to investigate the history and objectives of the school and then he decided to visit it. Since he had no one to introduce him, he entered the building like any other would-be employee and completed an application form.

"If you ask Joe how he got me," Happ said with a chuckle, "he will tell you: —Happ just walked in the door and started talking.' And that was the way I first met
Joe Calabrese and Dr. Happ confer.
Laradon Hall. That was August 23, 1961."

Always hampered by budget limitations in hiring skilled educators, Calabrese wasted little time coming to terms with the psychologist. Beginning September 1, 1961, the latter agreed to work from 5 to 9 p.m., five days a week on the federally funded research and study project begun by Dr. Smith.

In short order, Laradon's staff psychologist resigned to seek his doctorate, so Happ assumed this job temporarily; the principal, Max Frankel, took a leave of absence to further his schooling, creating another vacancy. Joe and the Board of Directors offered the position as director of education to Happ, who was then faced with a major career decision.

"My wife and I had a long talk about the proposal," he said. "I hated to give up my private consulting practice, because it had been quite successful and lucrative; yet the Laradon challenge intrigued me. My wife's attitude was: 'If you want this position, if it really interests you, take it. We can handle the money part, just as we did in the past.' Then, I terminated all my contracts with industrial firms in the course of the following weeks."

In making the transition from part-time researcher to full-time educational director, Happ discovered Laradon would place heavy and multiple demands on his time. He continued to labor on Dr. Smith's project, but devoted most of his efforts to the establishment of specific educational goals. This meant revising the classroom program and carrying it out with the aid of cooperative instructors.

"Before I agreed to take the position," Happ said, "I told Joe I had to have a free hand. That meant I did not want interference in the educational area. Once I started working, I did what I always had done as an industrial psychologist: I would observe and think. Before I moved a pinky, I wanted to know what was going on. Some people, though, thought I was just goofing off.

"So there I was, every day, sitting and watching Dolly: One or two hours in the morning and at least one
hour in the afternoon. I had to learn what took place . . . negatively or positively . . . so I could make suggestions. As a Montessori disciple I was highly interested in the way Dolly worked. He was a genius, an absolute genius—inventive, intuitive, and always with the goal of helping the child. Through constant observation, I became intimate with Dolly’s methods and his philosophy, which was:

“Don’t teach anything the child cannot understand . . . When you start, use only his abilities to function.’

“‘Can the child do anything?’ he would ask. ‘Can he not even pick his nose? He can pick his nose? Ah ha! That’s where we start.”

Excited as he was about Dolly’s program, Happ found no clear-cut curriculum when he took over. Surprisingly, also, he did not detect widespread acceptance of the master teacher’s ideas among other faculty members.

“Dolly was teaching motor training in the ‘Garden of Hope,’ which he had designed and constructed,” Happ said. “He was also giving sensory training, and crafts, weaving, singing, etc. One male and one female teacher had adopted a few of his techniques. The others did pretty much as they pleased—to the chagrin of Dolly, who complained bitterly that the instructors either did not or could not understand his ideas and principles.

“Joe and Dolly told me,” he continued, “that previous education directors, with the exception of Max Frankel, of course, did not comprehend the system, or merely laughed at it. Joe strongly supported Dolly,” Happ emphasized, “but I think he was the only one at the school who recognized the uniqueness and value of the program.”

After carefully reviewing the capability of faculty members and the potential for a systematized program of functional teaching, Happ began a gradual reorganization, of both instructors and curriculum. The latter eventually consisted of elements totaling 90 percent of
Dolly's methods, which were refined and catalogued so that any competent teacher could use them.

"Frankly," Happ said, "my insistence on incorporating the program in all educational aspects was, in the beginning, resisted by almost the entire staff. I had many talks with Joe about implementation and the opposition I was getting. He always backed me. Many teachers found it difficult to change and some left.

"Others I had to fire. I tried to make it as easy as possible. I told those who were dismissed that even though they did not fit as team-members at Laradon, they might be excellent elsewhere. I assured them they were good teachers, but simply not for us. I gave good recommendations and even urged other employers to hire them, where I knew they would fit in.

"Anyhow," he continued, "I had to hire and fire, not at all to my liking, but we needed a staff of devoted, skillful and team-conscious teachers and therapists to insure success."

Although Happ was a firm disciplinarian, in the sense that he insisted on accuracy of performance and appropriate behavior concerning both students and staff, he never felt he forced teachers to conform rigidly to his philosophy.

"I told them," he said, "we have a framework, which is our Program of Functional Teaching. Within this frame, you have freedom to express yourself. I don't want to put a straitjacket on you. You are different from me, Johnny is different from Jane. Do it your way, but do not leave the frame.

"It is possible to train severely retarded children," Happ explained. "But you must develop a method, as Dolly did, to work with the undamaged part of the brain to stimulate new pathways in the cells when you have a brain-damaged child. The mongoloid child presents a different problem. Such a youngster's brain is not injured but it is not fully developed, so the developed part must be utilized.

"In creating new pathways or interconnections," he
said, "you must use sight, hearing and touch, so the child can react in several ways to stimulations. Such teaching must be done in systematic sequence, however, not according to a teacher's whims, assumptions, or imagination."

For that reason, all faculty members, even those with master's degrees, were required to continue sharpening their skills in regular in-service sessions.

"Through such training," Happ said, "they learned how other instructors worked. They visited the other classrooms; they observed; they reacted. They became part of a team. Afterward, I might ask a teacher to explain what he or she experienced, to comment on the program. Through such training, eventually I got efficient teachers."

To his amazement, Happ discovered that other new staff members were unaware of basic definitions applicable to mental retardation.

"Some," he said sadly, "believed a mental handicap was a disease. I asked them: 'Is it really a disease? You wear glasses. Are you sick because of your glasses? Or is it a deficiency?' Once that misunderstanding was corrected, the teachers handled assignments with a better understanding and attitude."

Once a staff member met his criteria, Happ monitored the person's work frequently, but never commented during class activities in the presence of pupils.

"Later, privately, I would explain to the teacher: 'You don't go step by step, rung by rung; you jump from the first rung to the third or fourth and then the child fails.' I emphasized the necessity for repeating assignments or changing teaching approaches until the child understood.

"The child had often been told by his parents: 'This you can not do.' Within our framework, we showed them what they could achieve . . . by example.

"'Can you tie your shoe?' we would ask. 'Oh, you cannot! Let me show you.' We gave all kinds of related tasks as pre-steps and finally they were able to tie the
shoe. Then the parents came and when they saw their youngsters tying the shoe, they would ask in amazement: 'What did you do? How did you teach him?' Then we would explain.

"Gradually, the system showed amazing results. Maybe we could not teach them arithmetic, but we could teach them a workable knowledge. Some parents would tell us when we got the child: 'Oh, yes, he can count... one, two, three, four, etc.'

"Sure he could count," Happ explained, "like a parrot. His folks thought he could count, but he really couldn't, except by rote. We had to show the children that 3 is more than 2 and 5 is more than 4. This was where Dolly's program was so helpful. It could teach the value of numbers.

"Some children had a nice word knowledge, but didn't know how to apply it," he said. "Pointing at a picture, we would say: 'This is a cow. What is the cow doing? The cow is grazing in the meadow.'

"We had to teach them the meaning of each word, step by step. That had never been done before. Joe wanted it done and Dolly did it," Happ recalled.

The principle of repetition and the practice of individual attention initiated by McGlone had satisfying results, he said. In contrast, he recalled an incident during a visit he made to another center for the retarded.

"A physical education teacher there," Happ said, "was frustrated by one of the children. The school had a balance beam and the instructor complained to me: 'Balance is so important, but I cannot get this child to walk on the beam.' He asked if I would help.

"I agreed and told the child: 'Show me how you walk.' But he just pushed his feet forward.

"I said to the teacher, 'The child cannot walk. He is like Charlie Chaplin, he just shuffles. How can you expect him to go on the beam? He cannot balance. He must first learn to walk.'

"Then I explained Laradon's technique, which we got from Dolly. It was simple. We just said to the child:
'Lift this leg. Hold it. Put it down. Lift the other leg. Hold it. Put it down.' And there we were. We actually had to teach such a fundamental movement as walking.

"Most brain-damaged children," Happ disclosed, "have a shuffle gait. In order to correct it, so the child would eventually walk on the balance beam, Dolly had footprints painted on the floor. First he taught them, with an aide helping, to lift the legs, and put their shoes down—exactly on the footprints. When that was mastered, the child would learn to walk on two and eventually on only one line. Next, the youngster would be able to go on the balance beam. This may seem a simple thing, but it was part of Dolly’s program to build confidence in the child. With confidence came happiness. ‘Happiness,’ Dolly would say, ‘rests on doing something; being somebody. If the child does not know he is somebody, he will never be happy. He will be lost.’

“Sometimes we had visitors, among them physicians who would notice that none of our children had a shuffle gait,” Happ said. “More than once, some visitor would say: ‘Your students are not brain damaged, because they have no shuffle gait and they’re happy, too.’

“We explained how the McGlone technique worked—and more important, the fact it never failed—and they would go away satisfied.

“You must never worry about what the child cannot do,” Happ cautioned, “and blame it on the child. You must find out what he can do and help him develop that skill and build on it. Then the child responds. He says, ‘Ah, I can do something!’

“But everything must be taught step by step,” he emphasized, “otherwise the retarded cannot make progress. If a normal child misses a step in his development, eventually he will learn it by watching other children and imitating them.

“But with the retarded, if he has a gap, because of his injured or partially undeveloped brain, the gap will remain all his life, unless it is filled by careful training. Such a child cannot learn simply by watching and copy-
Proper eating habits observed by Dr. Happ.

As Happ continued translating his theories into practice, he did not ignore the pledge made in the *Guide for Functional Teaching*, promising a textbook presenting “some of the results in our study of McGlone’s teaching.”

Before that volume was completed, however, Happ’s attention was diverted by an ill-fated research project launched under the direction of Dr. Louis Fliegler, then director of Denver University’s Psychology Department. HEW allocated $250,000 to D.U. and Laradon so that McGlone’s techniques could be evaluated.
Fliegler, who had studied Smith’s Guide, believed Dolly’s methods were too time-consuming. He felt acceptable results could be obtained through short cuts. In effect, he set out to debunk the McGlone mystique and assembled a staff to assist him.

The project itself was never completed, despite excellent financing, for reasons not pertinent here. Although a bust, academically speaking, it did produce welcome benefits for Laradon. Among those employed to help Fliegler were Robert H. Crosson and Robert H. Law.

When the proposed “exposé” was terminated by a cut-off in federal funds, Messrs. Crosson and Law remained at the school and became loyal and valuable instructors. Currently, they are still staff members and their seniority is junior only to the Calabreses and a very few others.

In tackling the textbook project, Happ assumed a difficult assignment. His co-authors were miles apart, not only geographically but philosophically. Smith was in Boulder and Frankel was, first in Minot, then St. Louis, and finally in Washington before the manuscript was finished.

Using material from the guide and other data furnished by Dolly, Happ drew up an outline, then supplemented it with text. The objective, he explained, was to produce a book with “valuable and candid insights that would help improve basic skills both perceptual and motor, for all children, where such learning must be deliberate.”

The book was intended to fill an educational void. “There were a hundred or more volumes on the retarded,” Happ said, “but none contained a systematic teaching program.

“So we worked hard on it—nights, Sundays, holidays. I soon became the man in the middle. I would send parts of the manuscript to Frankel and Smith and they would edit it, or rewrite it, and return it to me.

“Frankel, the educator, wanted explicit details,”
Happ said, "but Smith, the psychologist, hated every word he thought was even a tiny bit superfluous. Smith drastically cut down almost everything Max wrote. They fought long distance ... back and forth, through me. Maurice wouldn’t accept what Max designed, even though he (Smith) wrote very few lines. He tried to become only the censor of what Max had written.

"Finally, I decided we had to have a showdown. Over the phone to Maury, I said: 'I'm leaving the project. Do what you want. I won't write and fight any more. I have enough to do of my own.' And to Max, I told him on tape: 'I'm stepping out. What you do about the book, I don't care.'

"At last," he continued, "they gave in to my compromise suggestions and we all agreed on the final manuscript. Then came the printing. Max had previously done business with the well-known publisher, Charles Thomas in Springfield, Illinois, so we decided to use him, if he would accept the manuscript, which he did—somewhat reluctantly.

"But then came another fight," Happ said. "Thomas wanted to use high-quality slick paper. That way, the book would cost $9.95 ... in 1964! A fairly high price.

"So they (Joe, Frankel and Smith) said: 'Who can pay that?' 'Who will pay that?'

"I told them if the book is good in its content and illustrations, it will sell. From my previous market research and work with a publishing company, I had a good idea of what would go. But Maury said, 'The price is crazy! Crazy!' But, in the end, I won.

"We were all happy, of course, when the book came out in 1966. It made no difference what the book cost, because it was good and it did sell. But we made one mistake—in the title. It is called Functional Teaching of the Mentally Retarded. I wanted to call it 'Functional Teaching of the Trainable Retarded,' because nothing had yet been published up to this time to help those who really were trainable."
“In the end,” he conceded, “I agreed to the title, but I still contend by using the word ‘trainable’ we would have had something unique that would have attracted even more attention.”

One reason for the book’s acceptance was that it accomplished its principal objectives, which were described in the introduction as follows:

The educational program for mentally retarded children must have as its aim the development of skills and attitudes which will enable the child to participate more fully in activities in his home, institution and community. Any such program must be concerned not only with specific bits of knowledge but also, and perhaps more important, with skills and attitudes which will be helpful in the ever-changing circumstances of his life. This will require that the program do all it can to improve the child's ability to learn, to increase his awareness of his environment, to teach him what he can and cannot do, to develop a reasonable degree of self-discipline, and to help him become sensitive to the needs and rights of others.

The educational goals for trainable children are often described with such categories as self-care, socialization, and expression. These categories overlap, but indeed attention must be paid to (a) developing adequate habits of moving about, taking care of one’s safety and health; (b) interacting with other people; behaving toward others in acceptable ways, and (c) developing ways of enjoyment, such as participation in games, music, etc. . . . The overall goal of this teaching program is to help the child develop toward normality. The extent to which each will be helped is often unpredictable. All we propose is that this program can be a help in realizing a more satisfactory life for the mentally defective child.

Because the book lived up to the introduction, it sold well, got excellent reviews, and presently is in its second edition and fifth printing. In 1977, it was translated into Japanese and is being used by teachers throughout the world.

Proud as he was of the school’s growing reputation for excellence, Joe was not one to condone stagnation.
He constantly sought ways to improve the program. With the book out of the way, he approached Happ with a suggestion that a “platooning” system be considered for installation.

“I was always impressed with Joe’s experience and practical knowledge,” Happ said. “I thought over his idea and decided it was excellent, even though Laradon had tried a similar plan, with poor results, some years earlier. Until we accepted and implemented Joe’s suggestion, the children had the same teacher all day long. They took different subjects, but the teacher did not change.

“Under the platooning system, we had specialists in the various areas of the program: Basic motor training, advanced motor training, reading and writing, crafts, perceptual training, speech therapy and so on,” he explained. “The children started with their home teacher, then we moved them, under supervision, to other activities throughout the school day.

“The plan had advantages for both the children and the instructors,” Happ said. “It gave the youngsters a chance for new experiences with various teachers and helped prepare them for the mobility of the outside world. For the instructors and therapists,” he added, “instead of seeing the same faces all day long, they had young children, older children, the more advanced, the less advanced. They were challenged to sharpen their skills.

“At first, we expected and got difficulty from some of the teachers, who had trouble making adjustments. Eventually, it worked out. It was no problem for the children, though, because each class was a new adventure, once they were sure they could achieve—once they had confidence.

“Roller skating was one of the great confidence builders,” he said. “It took time and patience, but it paid off.”

In the Laradon roller-skating technique, he explained, a child wearing skates was placed on a rug and
Roller skating teaches balance.
told to walk. Helped by a teacher and an aide, if necessary, the youngster walked just on the rug until the exercise was mastered. Then the rug was removed.

"Now it was time," Happ said, "to have the child walk on the gym floor. Someone held the youngster, usually from the back, and the child would move arms slowly back and forth and walk, walk, walk. Soon he would be able to walk without help, then he would slide a little bit, then move and finally become a skilled skater. Then the child would happily smile, because he was confident and secure."

During the years in which the curriculum was forming and flourishing, Calabrese did not neglect his role as Laradon’s public relations director. He encouraged any legitimate effort to widen public awareness of the school. He also utilized every communications outlet available, including, of course, the book, appearances by staff members at meetings and conventions, radio, television and films.

The school’s first movie, developed in the fall of 1957, was, in reality, a kinescope of a live television program staged at Laradon. It was written and narrated by Gene Amole, a talented Denver TV pioneer, who, as a Byers Junior High student, had taken physical education classes from Dolly. Amole’s presentation, featured on the Channel 7 “Panorama” series, won the prestigious national Peabody Award, with Laradon sharing in the reflected glory.

McG lone was the key actor in the production, which caused some concern for Amole. The latter was aware of Dolly’s propensity for purple prose. He need not have been concerned. The gifted teacher’s narration was unblemished by profanity, a remarkable achievement, because McG lone thought it was a rehearsal, rather than the real show.

Other movies produced included “Teaching of Reading and Writing,” “Teaching of Numbers” and “Aids for Teaching the Mentally Retarded.” All featured and explained Dolly’s educational techniques and gadgets.
Many prints were made of each, so requests for showing the movies from across the country could be filled without delay.

The books, speeches and films inspired many specialists in the field of mental retardation to make personal pilgrimages to the school. Most were from the United States and Canada, but Happ recalled that foreign visitors were no novelty, either.

"They even came from behind the Iron Curtain," he said, "from Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest, but not from Russia. We also had people from Japan, Taiwan, Africa, Lebanon, South America. One man from Brazil planned to stop by for a few hours and stayed three or four days."

The largest number of visitors in a two-day period, Happ said, included some 300 delegates to the 1967 convention of the American Association for Mental Deficiency. Six busses were required to transport the conventioneers from downtown Denver to the school. Interest by the group, which included nearly every ranking professional in the country, had been generated by Happ's participation in the association's activities. He spoke at annual meetings in 1963 and 1965 and presented two papers at the Denver gathering in 1967.

His identification with and acceptance by the national organization (he is a Fellow of the American Association on Mental Deficiency), plus the prestige he shared with Laradon, brought Happ numerous invitations to lecture university and seminar groups all over the country. He accepted as many as his schedule would accommodate, but loyalty to the school was his No. 1 priority.

Among the messages he carried to his listeners were two commanding universal attention. One was what he called the "disciplinary approach . . . to the needs of the retarded child and adolescent." The other was emphasis on physical fitness for the retardees. Referring to the latter, he told a national audience:
When we examine curricula for the mentally retarded, we find that physical activities play an insignificant part. They are frequently used as stopgaps, more or less randomly applied at recreation time, but seldom comprehensively organized as an integral part of the educational program. The result is that many of these children are weak, unfit, overweight, or underweight, and unable to enjoy the fun derived from play and sports.

Physical activities are considered important for developing and improving physical strength and the intellectual and social abilities of normal children and adolescents. Such activities are much more essential for the mentally handicapped, who often display additional physical deficiencies causing added impairment of their motor functions.

Exercises, therefore, should be provided that strengthen the trainable student's muscle tone and stamina and improve his locomotion and rhythm; that help him to orient himself in space; to acquire and maintain balance, and to perform gross and fine movements with relative ease and accuracy.

We should also be aware that the trainable's attention span, his period of interest, is shorter than that of normal and educable children. A change of play activities within shorter intervals is, therefore, indicated. Group play, competitive games and solitary occupations should alternate.

If recreation activities are properly organized, there is strong evidence the trainable retarded child will enjoy the same benefits from them as the educable and normal child, namely, pleasure, success experience, and self-assurance.

In his seminars and workshops, Happ explained the word, "discipline" (from Latin discipulus = learner), meant "teaching, instructing, tutoring towards an expected objective" and not just restrictions or enforcement of rules. With that definition as a point of reference, he advised his audiences of disciplinary approaches, as he saw them. Some samples:

1. We have to make sure that our requests are fully understood. Mentally retardates sometimes pretend they
comprehend, although they do not.

2. In order to assure the child’s understanding, we should tell in simple, brief words what we expect. Long explanations are often confusing. Even better is the demonstration what we want and how we want it done. This has to be repeated again and again until we are certain our demands have been fully grasped. As a principle: We have to teach routine actions with patience and repetition until the desired result is gained.

A few examples: In order to teach adequate table manners we have to show, step by step, how to use spoon, fork and knife; how to sit correctly; how to cut meat and vegetables; which dish to eat first, etc. We cannot explain in general terms, but have to break down each procedure in simple and small phases that can be easily perceived. If, for instance, the child is unusually awkward with spoon, knife or fork, we have to teach him separately from the eating process how to hold and manipulate these instruments. Initially, let him eat alone, so that you can give your undivided attention. Other examples: We have to instruct gradually and in detail how to cross a street, that is, to wait on the sidewalk, look for oncoming traffic—first to the left, then to the right—or for the green light, if there is one, or to walk with signal, then cross over in a straight line, etc. How to wash hands, needs persistent and detailed demonstration; when to wash hands, namely after using the toilet, before and after a meal, requires continual watching and reminding.

3. There has to be consistency and persistency in our demands. Even normal individuals become irritated when they are permitted to do something one day and denied the opportunity of doing the same thing another day. For the retarded, it is completely inconceivable that an action is allowed on Monday, but prohibited on Tuesday. In other words, a “No!” for now must be a “No!” in the future, within the same or a similar situation.

4. Those in charge of guidance cannot display disagreement about disciplinary measures in front of the disciplined. Even trainables at a low IQ level quickly sense dissension and take advantage of it. If there is discord (and this is inevitable), it must be worked out when the disciplined child is absent.
It is obvious from the preceding that Happ's philosophy made discipline and common sense virtually synonymous.

During his dozen years as director of education, retiring in 1974, Happ firmly established the Program of Functional Teaching that became Laradon's hallmark in the educational world. He acknowledges that he was executor of the scholastic system that raised the institution to world-wide acclaim, but he insists his role was secondary.

"Never forget," he lectures, "that the real characters in the Laradon Hall story are Joe and Elizabeth Calabrese as founders of the school and preservers of its ideals and Dolly McGlone as originator of the functional teaching program."

Perhaps it was his Prussian background filtering through the more recently acquired American demeanor, but discipline, by whatever definition, was Happ's strongest characteristic. It motivated his actions and thinking. It asserted itself in many ways, but never more forcefully than in the concluding sentence of one lecture.

"Let me remind you," he stressed, "that discipline without love is tyranny, but love without discipline is sentimentality."
Near the end of Laradon's first decade, Joe and Elizabeth realized that classroom education alone would not prepare their charges for the outside world. Mental ability had to be supplemented by physical dexterity. Even Mrs. Calabrese retreated from her earlier stand: "When the kids were in school, they were there to study and learn—not work."

With the approval of the board in 1958, Joe decided teaching the children how to work, to receive and spend money, to use public transportation, were as vital as the three R's.

Some enrollees had been in the classroom for several years and were in their late teens. It appeared they had acquired all the schooling they could handle, which prompted the Calabreses to ask: "Where do we go from here?"

Possibilities were examined. Industrial training emerged as the most promising alternative. The school had precedent for such a program, because, for years, Dolly had been stressing classroom work that helped
prepare youngsters for every-day living. In addition to small piecework projects which he directed, the children were taught to count money; to use a "bank" operated by the school; to spend their own money for sundry items offered at the Laradon "store."

Once the vocational training decision was made, several problems remained: Space, type of faculty, scope of program, etc. The first obstacle was locating housing. All usable areas were already committed, but, once again, the Elks came to the rescue—in an unusual way.

John R. Coen of Sterling, an early champion and consistent supporter, died in 1958. Because he had been National Grand Exalted Ruler, the Elks' Grand Lodge offered up to $10,000 for an imposing graveside memorial, if the family desired.

His widow, Ada, recalled instructions Coen had given before his death. She relayed to the school and to national Elks officials a request from her husband that any memorial money be spent philanthropically, with some going to Laradon. A small, ground-level plaque was the only marker he wanted near his grave, Mrs. Coen said.

Acknowledging Coen's wishes, the national foundation appropriated to the school $5,000 toward the industrial training structure. Colorado Elks and friends of the deceased gave the balance of the $47,000 needed for construction. Because of Laradon's policy requiring cash on hand before a structure is started, the facility was rather spartan. Known as the John R. Coen Vocational Trades Building, it was the first of the sections ultimately comprising the workshop.

At its opening in March, 1959, under the direction of Robert Sexton, the center was governed by the philosophy that a person learns to "work by working." A comprehensive curriculum built around that theme was gradually adopted.

"There is no substitute for experience," Calabrese explained. "You can look at hundreds of people learning
to ride a bicycle and have lectures on the technique, but until you yourself grab hold of it, mount it, and try to make it do what you want it to do, you can't learn to ride.

"Until we started this program for our youngsters—and the same can apply to most normal children—they had had everything provided for them, without too much effort on their part. They had no way of knowing what work was about.

"They knew little or nothing about money, about why they should want to earn it, and about how to save it. We had to teach them about the world of work as they were learning to work."

Aided by a research and demonstration grant from the U. S. Department of Labor, the program was designed to learn whether young retarded adults could be
trained to earn a living. Because of federal interest, every job had to be evaluated through time-and-motion studies. Production was measured against similar efforts by a normal worker to establish the pay rate, based on minimum wage requirements. Compensation had to be adjusted, so the handicapped would not compete unfairly with other workers, nor be subjected to sweat-shop income.

“Simply because we had a sheltered workshop, we could not get business by underbidding other contractors,” Calabrese said. “We competed as if we were privately owned. Whatever profit we made was absorbed by additional services we provided, including intensive supervision, meals, etc.”

When students applied for the program, they brought with them a full social history. It included where they were in school; how far they had progressed; their backgrounds; what problems they had. Psychological testing results indicated their work abilities.

“They appeared before a committee which decided whether they would be admitted,” Joe said. “At first, almost all were accepted, because we believed every one should have a chance. Known troublemakers were excluded. We decided not to spend time on a person who might cause more disruption than any possible benefits he would receive. About 98 percent of the kids evaluated were okayed. Almost half lived at the school, the others were from the community.”

During the first 12 weeks, the students were tested in hand-and-eye coordination; for cooperativeness; for their knowledge of the world of work; how they could read instructions; what their attention span was.

A specialist made sure students received “final exam” testing after completing training. The same supervisor reported to the evaluation committee the progress made by each person. If an individual was deficient, a training plan was developed. If a trainee didn’t know how to use the bus system, coaching was in order.

“If they didn’t know money-changing, or were math
poor, we worked on them," Joe said. "Many things our instructors do are not what the average person credits a teacher with doing. Attitude is important. We had to change some attitudes. Motivation, of course, was crucial. It required teamwork by vocational and classroom teachers. If a workshop supervisor used one approach and the student got a conflicting view in class, we had a confused kid. We tried not to let that happen."

Under Bob Sexton's direction, the program moved forward by trial-and-error. He was succeeded by Al Gallagher and by William M. Phillips.

Gallagher made several significant contributions to the school's development, after he became a staff member under rather unusual circumstances.

"One day," Calabrese recalled, "I was looking south across the street from my office. I watched this young man stroll out of the alley and into our building.

"He asked to see me. Pretty soon, we were having a lively discussion about the school, handicapped children and other things of mutual interest. Gallagher, who had lived in Chicago, impressed me with his sincerity and splendid mind. Finally," Joe said, "I offered him a job in recreation and he accepted."

Moving from that position to classroom teaching, Gallagher became a well-rounded, deeply motivated staff member. Appointed education director in 1958, he was not entirely happy with the position, though it was most prestigious.

"He was a restless soul," Joe said, "and was always looking for new things to do."

Basically an author, because of his excellent background in English, Gallagher had many other talents, physical and mental. When a vacancy occurred as chief of vocational training, he applied for the position. In effect, he took a demotion to accept it, but he was anxious to work with his hands and help others improve their manual skills.

Once on the job, he made radical improvements. He sought and got projects much more complex than had
An assembly line technique created by Al Gallagher.

previously occupied the trainees’ time.

“There’s no doubt about it,” said Ernest G. (Gil) Jackson, deputy director, “Gallagher took us from the era when our chief product was cloth potholders into a period when we became a true industrial training center.”

Calabrese agreed. He cited the imagination Gallagher showed in solving an extremely difficult testing problem.

“We had a contract to assemble and package half-a-million Rain Dial Sprinklers for Gates Rubber Co.,” Joe said. “We promised to test every unit before we boxed it. We started out by attaching the sprinkler to a hose, turning on the water, and making sure each one worked.

“It was not only a slow process,” he continued, “but it was ruining the school lawn, which was our testing area. Gallagher decided there had to be a better way. He
devised a system that utilized a washing machine, a
snap-on faucet and some other things. He and Maurice
(Buzz) Zehrung, one of the handiest men I've ever
known, built the tester. It worked beautifully."

The sprinkler contract, largest in Laradon's history
to then, produced two fascinating sidelights, one heart­
warming, the other humorous.

Gates delivered sprinkler parts in large barrels,
which were emptied systematically at a series of work
stations along an assembly line. Once everything was in
order, starting from scratch, the unit would move relent­
lessly down the line, with each individual—almost all re­
tardates—performing his or her simple task. In full
operation, the assemblers put together a completed
sprinkler at the rate of one every ten seconds.

Skeptics claimed the mentally handicapped could
never concentrate long enough to perform such a de­
manding chore. Laradon's successful system changed
their minds. Dozens of doubters came, watched the
operation, and went away believers. One was heard to
say: "It was great. It was just like Detroit."

After the sprinklers were tested, they were placed in
the sun, wiped dry, then boxed and shipped to Gates. In­
spectors at the rubber plant were alarmed to discover
too many units with a flaw making them unacceptable.
It puzzled the Gates people, because the defect was al­
most the same on each unit—a badly bent plastic handle.

Every possibility was checked by engineers, who
finally decided the bend was caused by the sun. They de­
duced the plastic became pliant when exposed to solar
heat, then, when packaged, the material cooled and froze
into the unacceptable crooked position.

To verify their theory, the engineers asked the
Laradon crew to place several hundred completed
sprinklers in an open field, in neat rows, for observation.
The inspectors let the sun do its work, then, on hands
and knees, patiently examined each unit.

Result: Nothing. Not a single plastic handle had
been affected by old sol's rays.
A careful survey of the assembly line, however, finally located the source of the flaw. One muscular retarded worker, noted for his astounding feats of strength, such as standing on his hands to ascend or descend a stairway, was the unwitting cause of the problem. He was detected bending the plastic with his strong right hand, either because of boredom or simply to test his muscles. The material, tough and unyielding as it was, remained bent because of his strength. The problem quickly vanished.

Eventually, Gallagher's itchy feet led him away from the Laradon campus. He, Sexton and Phillips all became state employees, but their interest in and support for the school's programs did not end with their resignations. Each took a position with the Vocational Rehabilitation Office of the State Department of Social Services. Each helped Laradon secure machinery, equipment and trucks needed for workshop programs.

"The state lured them away with more pay," Joe said, "but we have had a great relationship with Vocational Rehab because they were there."

Despite the dedication of the directors, recurring problems of contract flow plagued the training program. One thing the students had to have was sufficient work to keep them busy. In addition to Gates, Wright & McGill, fishing equipment manufacturer, became a regular customer. Substantial orders were received from those and other companies, but business was sporadic. At times, both students and supervisors had to work overtime, because there was much to do. Then there were days with little to occupy the group. That created problems of morale and discipline, especially in the winter. In nice weather, interesting field trips could always be arranged.

Late in 1967, Calabrese assumed full charge of the vocational program, because he had been unable to find a replacement for Phillips. With other duties, Joe directed the program and soon realized changes were needed. He had confidence in the technical staff—profes-
sionals helping change behavioral patterns and making youngsters more productive. Administration of the program, however, needed substantial improvement, he believed.

He began searching for a person with business experience to direct contract procurement, work scheduling, and establishment of a balance in type of products handled.

Joe found his man in a most unusual place—on Laradon's Board of Directors. The person he nominated for the position was affable Lew Kitts of Greeley, one of the school's charter supporters and among the first Elks named to the board.

In recounting the events leading to his appointment, Kitts said:

“In 1968, I came down for the Christmas program with my family. In front of my wife, Joe asked me again if I would take the job. Once or twice before, he had hinted he would like me to consider it.

“On the way home,” Lew continued, “my wife said: ‘You fellows had better get someone for that vocational job, because Joe might leave—he has so many other things to do—and you’d have a hard time replacing him.’

“Six weeks went by and I had a day off,” he said. “I thought to myself I’ll go down and talk to Joe, with no idea that I would take the job, nor even if I could handle it. At the time, I was selling automobiles, had a good clientele and no problems. At the beginning of each year, I knew just about what my income would be for the next 12 months. For me, it was a good, easy life.

“I got to Laradon about 9 a.m. and by 3 o’clock Joe had taken me all over the school, in every nook and cranny, not just in the vocational training section. He was so intense and so enthusiastic that I thought to myself: ‘If he thinks I can do the job, I’m going to give it a try.’

“Before I left for Greeley, I told him I was interested. I was 57 then. Not many men 57 get a chance to change careers and I liked the challenge. Joe took the
matter before the board. There was some skepticism from my fellow board members, so they didn’t act at the first meeting they considered it,” he said.

“I’d made up my mind it was something I wanted to try, so I spent three days lobbying every director individually. After that, I knew I had the votes. At the next meeting, they hired me on a probationary basis beginning in March, 1969. They set a salary and promised that if I got along all right for six months, there’d be an adjustment.

“Everybody thought that after I’d finished my probationary period I would move to Denver from Greeley, but I’d been driving the 100-mile round-trip for six months and found it was working, so I continued to live at home. I missed only one day in eight years because of bad weather, so I think I made the right decision.” By the time he quit in 1975, he had driven a quarter-million miles between home and work.

“Joe told me he wanted the program better organized,” Kitts explained, “so that’s what I set out to do. I took a rather soft approach. I didn’t think I should go in and turn everything upside down. I didn’t know enough about it to make drastic changes. So I looked and listened and started making little changes here and there over a fairly long period of time.”

Elements making Laradon’s training unusual, perhaps unique, Lew found, were the residential facilities and emphasis on development of skills useful in the competitive world, into which many of the trainees would graduate.

“Back in the early days,” he said, “we tried to be selective and take students with I.Q.’s in the range from 50 to 90—the educable group. It was believed that if the I.Q. were 50 or below, the person was considered trainable, but not supposed to be able to go out and work. We found the educables moved a little faster through the program, but we’ve had great results with trainables, as well.

“We got persons who not only were slow learners,
but also had physical or emotional problems . . . seizure problems. Many times, we weren't working with a single handicap, but with youngsters hampered by two or more impediments."

Although the students were the chief beneficiaries of the program, Laradon itself also profited. It has always been noted for its excellent housekeeping, clean kitchen and dining facilities, and shiny hallways. There's a good reason. After the vocational program began, enrollment increased and building space was expanded. The school then became an excellent laboratory for training the budding workers.

"We were handling all food service, except for cooking," Kitts said. "Our students served, cleaned, washed the dishes, mopped floors and received instructions in sanitation and courtesy that prepared them for restaurant work. Dozens of graduates have become bus boys, salad makers, dishwashers. Some are even cooks.

"Those physically capable were trained in janitorial and maintenance work—we call them 'environmental improvement specialists'—and had no difficulty getting outside employment.

"We've had our own laundry for a long time," Lew added. "At first, we processed only our own soiled linens and garments, but then we expanded. Once, we had 10 fire stations as customers. After the residential units were built, we tried putting individual laundries in them, under supervision of house mothers. We didn't have adequate equipment, the school was growing, and the number of residents increasing. As a result, we built a full-fledged laundry, which was and is an excellent facility for training kids, many of whom graduated to private industry.

"Getting employment for the retarded is a real art," he said. "Our placement officers worked within our team concept. We'd decide who was ready to go to work; who might have the best chance at a particular job.

"A placement supervisor would confer with company supervisors, telling them what to expect. The first
few days are critical, so the supervisor would lend all types of support. He would go with a kid to the job site the first day, might even call for him and bring him home, meanwhile showing him how to ride the bus and giving tips of other kinds.

"In some places, other workers might notice the retarded's inadequacies and make fun of a youngster, chase him out before we could get anything set up. We tried to guard against it, but it's complicated.

"One unexpected problem occurred at a laundry," Kitts recalled. "After a couple of our students got their first pay, their co-workers talked them into cashing the checks at a nearby tavern. Then, they conned our kids into buying several rounds of drinks until their cash was almost all gone. That rarely happened more than once, though, because we'd have the employer send the check to the school. Even then, we had some disappointments, but we had to expect them occasionally, so we repeated money-handling instructions over and over.

"We discovered some were capable of doing quite a bit of work for us, but, for whatever reason, could not make it in the community. Some functioned beautifully at school, but couldn't take outside pressures. When that happened, we'd bring them back to one of our workshops and find something they could do well, so they became part of a going program. It doesn't mean such a student will never leave our employment, but he or she will have to make substantial progress before we try to place them outside again," Lew said.

"These young people are usually willing to help one another, in a variety of ways," he reported. "Once we had a contract with an electrical supply company. We agreed to assemble for it a mounting bracket for a fluorescent fixture. It was fairly complicated. A few of our supervisors had difficulty learning how to put it together.

"Some of the kids, however, solved the technique rather quickly, but others had a heck of a time. Some instructors didn't know how to approach the problem, but
the more adept youngsters did. They took over and helped the others learn the knack. Before long, every kid could do it.

"One might produce only 20 a day and another could turn out 150. There was that much variation. The trainable were not supposed to be able to learn procedures like the assembly, but they caught on, too, even though it was complicated," he said.

"Some of our contracts were for group jobs. For example: We assembled and build plastic tents. We'd cut and reinforce and package and cut strings, etc. We produced a kind of pup tent for backpackers. It took a crew of eight to fabricate a tent.

"Some cut, some reinforced, some put holes in the materials. Others cut strings. Production was divided. If the eight produced 300 tents a day, they were paid a lump sum for the work done, which they divided among themselves.

"If somebody was lagging, talking too much, or not paying attention to instructions, the six or seven doing most of the work would straighten out the laggards—far quicker than the supervisor.

"That kind of peer pressure is good, if it's controlled.

"It's a thrilling thing," Kitts said with a grin, "to watch these youngsters flower. When we first start teaching about the world of work, we must relate our efforts to the money that will come back to them... and then how much that money will buy.

"At first, we paid by cash, rather than by check. We soon learned that some sensed right away that others were getting more money than they were and wanted to know why. We got over that hump by switching to checks, which also made it more personal with every trainee.

"I personally delivered each check while I was at the school," Kitts said. "We made payday a big day of celebration. I had a fair idea of what each was doing on an average, so if someone had a particularly big check, I'd go over and throw my arms around him and say: 'Look
what you did. You can do even better, if you keep it up.' It was a great chance to give them support.

"At my insistence, we used time cards, because, for the most part, the youngsters would be going to outside jobs that were mundane, routine and possibly monotonous. Most would be required to use time cards, so we made them part of their training.

"One of our professionals objected," Lew recalled, "and thought the cards were beneath the students' dignity. He prepared a long paper on the issue and presented it at a staff meeting. I commended him for the effort, but responded by saying we would continue using the cards for their practical value.

"The program was constantly changing because we were always evaluating, always trying to make something better. We wanted the staff to be more productive, so we had a sort of continuing education program for members. Classrooms were set up in apartments at the public housing project across Lincoln Street; we would have privacy and accessibility. We had physical and speech therapists, so we could improve the endurance and communication capabilities of the trainees. Such specialized instruction was funded by a federal agency.

"We wanted them to go as far as they possibly could," Kitts said, "so, with federal aid, we started providing housing for those needing it. Participants would live first in a dormitory, where they would be supervised by an adult couple. Then they were moved to semi-independent apartments, as they learned how to take care of themselves. Four lived together with a counselor. They started preparing their meals, buying groceries, and doing laundry. Some are now being trained to live entirely by themselves—in their own quarters, without supervision.

"They still have to have moral support," Kitts cautioned, "so if one gets in a jam, he or she will know how to get help. We have a follow-up program for that purpose. That can be expensive, too, because no agency, state or federal, will fund it. Laradon has the sole respon-
sibility for financing it, but it is money well spent. We re-
assure the students they can get help from us at any
time, day or night, if they need it.

“‘It’s a cold, hard-hearted world out there,’” Lew
observed, “‘and the kids have to be prepared for it. Some
find the outside world just too threatening, so we would
use peer pressure and peer example, without overdoing
it. Sometimes we literally had to kick them out of the
nest.

“We treat them like they were our own kids, but we
give them what they need—no more, no less.

“By and large,” he said, “the youngsters are abso-
lutely delightful. I’ve had people ask: ‘How can you work
with the retarded? They’d drive me crazy.’

“It’s really not difficult,” Kitts explained, “once
you accept the premise these persons are merely less gifted
from birth than normal people. What they lack in mental
or physical ability, they more than compensate for in
emotional reaction. Their responses to a wink, a smile, a
pat on the back, recognition of their achievements—how-
ever small or great, make it super-rewarding.

“I had the reputation of being a tough disci-
plinarian, which I really didn’t deserve,” Lew said. “By
the time a youngster was sent for correction to my office
by a teacher or shop supervisor, he or she was aware that
a showdown was coming. Even though I knew most
would be frightened, I tried to deal with them firmly.

“I’d tell them: ‘I really do like you, but I don’t like
what you’re doing.’ Then we would discuss a particular
problem of which they were a part. I found that kids—
our kids, anyway—really want discipline, even though
they may claim they don’t. I’d lay it on the line, as
simply and as gently as I could.

“One of the most effective punishments,” Kitts
said, “was to remove them from the program for one to
three days. ‘Until you learn to fit in with the others,’ I
would say, ‘and pull your own weight, we can’t use you.’
That straightened out about 90 percent of them, because
they really like to work and don’t want to be sidelined.’

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After Kitts had the program organized and functioning to his satisfaction, he was able to cope with other demands that multiplied because of the school's success.

"I spent about a third of my time showing visitors around the shop and school," he said. "Educators and vocational directors from all over the world came to get ideas for use in their own work programs."

"A fellow from New Zealand intended to spend three hours with us. Instead, he stayed two weeks. Many came to learn about the academic program and discovered the vocational division."

Conversely, Lew made it a practice to visit other centers, both in the United States and abroad. He wanted to acquire, by personal observation, knowledge that could be blended into the Laradon program.

"I inspected workshops in Australia and New Zealand, after corresponding with directors there," he said. "I learned it was their practice to purchase small businesses and then provide the retarded with employment. Our approach was and is virtually the opposite. We train them in our own trades and then try to help them get jobs on the outside. We have, however, never hesitated to adopt any technique that would prepare our people better or make our production more efficient."

In reviewing his career, Kitts said he drew satisfaction from achieving goals he and Joe had set: A more consistent tempo in the contract cycle; diversification of work accomplished; and the integration of more and more trainables—those with I.Q.'s of 50 or lower—in the school's own programs or in outside jobs.

"All the compensation I need now," Lew said gently, "is to look back and see how each youngster, each program, each building fell in place as part of the Laradon picture. You know the good Lord had his hand on our shoulder. We never knew how or if things would work out," he mused, "but they did. We had faith that all the pieces would fit; He didn't let us down."

Kitts completed his tour of duty in 1975, leaving the training center in excellent shape. He was succeeded
briefly by an interim appointee, who was followed by Jim Boydston of Boulder, Colorado, the incumbent director. The latter shares Kitts’ general philosophy, but has added personal variations to the program, as needs have changed.

Unlike the old days, most vocational trainees are not generated by the school itself. Any retarded teenager or young adult may apply to the Admissions Committee. There are no race or religious restrictions, nor any residential limitations. Essential steps to be taken are:

1. A parent contacts and, if possible, visits the school to obtain necessary information.
2. If parents wish to enter a child, an application blank is completed and returned to the school with $90.00, the fee for evaluation and processing.
3. If the applicant has been seen by a doctor, psychologist, or clinic, or has attended a school or held a job, release forms must be signed by a parent authorizing Laradon to obtain needed records from the physician, psychologist, etc., for completion of background information on individuals.
4. Speech and psychological evaluations are made and a social history, including birth date verification, is completed.
5. Review by the Admissions Committee, which meets weekly. It includes Laradon’s president, director of training, speech therapist, occupational therapist, psychiatrist, psychologist and social worker. If it is the committee’s consensus the applicant can be helped, acceptance is assured. Parents are informed of the decision in the week following the meeting.
6. When the applicant is admitted, parents sign a “Statement of Responsibility,” which averts later misunderstanding.

A resident trainee is isolated from parents or other relatives for periods varying from one week to one month, for adequate adjustment. Each goes through a two-month trial period. After that, a re-evaluation determines whether the person goes into the work program or is sent home.
Additional periodic mental, social and physical tests, medical attention, and entertainment are included in the regular routine. No charge is made, except for extraordinary items. Clothing is provided by parents or guardians.

Once accepted and integrated into the program, an applicant is en route to a regular job, either with Laradon Industries or in private business or government. Laradon Industries is an umbrella title given workshops operated on or near the school complex.

"The main emphasis of the vocational center," said Boydston, "is toward training, evaluation and getting a competitive job for the participant. After a person enters the program, we soon have a fair idea when the individual will be ready for outside employment—usually in from six months to a year. But if persons are significantly impaired, it's ridiculous to think they're going to be able to make it outside. We solve that by acting as their employer. We do the same for others who have tried private work one or more times and have been unsuccessful.

"We approach every applicant with the assumption we can be of service," Boydston explained. "To the extent possible, we will modify our programs to fit an individual. Our organization is dynamic, because we're constantly having people leave for good, positive jobs in the community. They, in turn, are replaced by new people coming in whom we must accommodate. Our mix of clients goes up and down according to community needs and according to what services are not provided by other centers.

"If we see a need, we'll fill it, especially if grant money is available. If funds are short or totally lacking, we'll still accept the challenge, however, because we feel our organization is strong enough to tackle special programs for any impaired individual who shows promise.

"Current participation," he continued, "is split about 50-50 between the sexes. We pretty much represent the social blend of the metropolitan area. When a
person is in our program, training is continuous and so are evaluations. The latter are not clinical—we do not believe in diagnostic tests. We do a two- or three-hour screening after persons apply, then we keep tabs on them.

“We get them to work, identify them with the help we can give them, and evaluate regularly. Some other agencies may use a ‘canned’ rating system, but we believe we get better, quicker and less expensive results by observing our trainees at work. We expect them to perform in a laboratory setting, in which they must get along with others in a work situation.

“We carefully note progress they’re making,” he said, “also the problems they are having. We write it up in an easy-to-read narrative. This enables persons involved with the trainee—parents, other agencies, the school, social workers—to recognize changes. Take hygiene, for example. Maybe it was a problem when the person first started, but it has disappeared as a problem. That’s important. It’s nothing we have to observe, but it’s something we have to communicate to others.”

Under Boydston’s direction, the center is divided into 15 shops—three generating proprietary products and the other 12 concerned with services to Laradon itself or items processed for private businesses through sub-contracts.

Ten “shops” function on the school’s campus, including food service, diningroom work, maintenance, laundry, warehousing, shipping, receiving, manufacturing or packaging, and job placement. Two other workshops occupy Laradon buildings located off-campus.

The three proprietary units are LADOCA, to be examined in the next chapter; Mrs. C. Sandwiches, an experiment in marketing packaged food products for consumption by employees on the premises of industry or business; and the Laradon Tile Works. The last-named is described by Boydston as the program’s “most dramatic” attempt to earn revenue that will pay for training individuals without financial resources or in-
eligible for state or federal assistance.

Laradon's uncanny knack for timeliness in program development helped establish the tile venture. Shortly after Boydston became director, the school cast about for an industrial product that would offer trainees and employees exposure to a total commercial cycle. It would take raw material and process it into a finished product, which would then be packaged, shipped and sold to the ultimate user—at a net profit.

Before Boydston joined the Laradon staff, he had remodeled his home near Boulder. After looking in vain for quality ceramic tile to install in a combination tub-shower, he was referred to the Brimstone Tile Works. It was operated by Garet Wohl in Lafayette, Colorado. She had created a formula that produced beautiful, unusual and rather expensive tile for both decorative and utilitarian purposes. Boydston not only bought what he needed for his remodeling, but referred several customers to Garet.

When originally contacted by the Laradon vocational director, she agreed to sub-contract to the school the making of blank tiles, which, in turn, she would decorate, glaze and sell. This arrangement provided work for Laradon's newly acquired kiln, which had been purchased from a bankrupt potter. Garet's prime interest, however, was not tile manufacturing. She had become so successful with her product that she was neglecting her real love—an art career. She wanted out. Laradon proved to be an eager conspirator to help her achieve her goal.

In addition to selling the Brimstone Tile rights, Garet also made available her top-secret basic materials mixtures. The latter were described in a "Design Progress Report," which also included these musings by Ms. Wohl about the transaction:

First Egypt, then China and Babylon... now Denver, Colorado. If ceramic tile-making is a process at least 12,000 years old, what can Laradon contribute in order to make it a viable enterprise in Colorado in 1978?
No matter how old or how simple the basic process is, time, place and circumstance will play the greatest roles in the success of any enterprise. Some considerations are:

- There is a lot of both commercial and residential construction in the Denver area at present.
- There are no other major tile manufacturers nearby.
- Interest in ecology among the American public is hinting at a trend toward use of renewable resources. The basic ingredient in ceramic tile is clay, or finely ground rock.
- There are many clay deposits along the front range of the Rocky Mountains.
- With the continuing devaluation of the dollar, nicer handmade imported tiles are expected to remain expensive—possibly increase in cost, thus creating a situation in which domestically made tile will be more price-competitive. Rising shipping costs will be a factor.
- Among U.S. tile manufacturers, there has been a trend toward the ‘rustic look’ and ‘earth tones.’ Many go so far as to imitate actual handmade tiles. The handsome stoneware which Laradon can now make will be a genuine contribution to this market.

She then delineated formulas for 11 colors and seven designs which she believed would give the Laradon product “character,” as she put it.

Financing for the tile project again reflected Laradon’s ability to attract providential assistance. A grant of some $9,000 by the State Vocational Rehab Office helped pay for Garet’s professional assistance and underwrote the printing of a beautiful full-color promotional brochure, which generated new business.

Of the original $100,000 invested in the manufacturing process and plant, $25,000 came from a single individual, Robert Gryzmala, president of an insulation company in the Denver area. On a fortunate day for the school, he stopped by and disclosed he would like to do something dramatic for Laradon that would help put retarded people to work. His visit occurred at a time when the tile project was being developed, so Gryzmala con-
Above, dropping clay into extruder; below, cutting clay into tiles.
Above, placing wet tiles into kiln; below, view of kiln.
tributed funds to buy most of the equipment. Shades of Pieter Hondius!

Despite the fact the project was started in August, 1978, it wasn't long before production capabilities had to be expanded.

"Fund raising efforts," Boydston said, "successfully permitted construction of a new building to house a larger kiln and provide space for warehousing and equipment repair. The plant now represents a $350,000 investment, which is paying off handsomely, both in cash and in training and employing many persons. It's already a good operation and has great potential for the future."

Boydston regards Laradon's success in vocational training as a factor in promoting greater opportunities for thousands of other handicapped. "As we have grown—from our first 38 enrollees to about 200 now," he said, "we have encouraged other centers to start up. In the Denver area, there are now eight or nine others, including Hope Center, Good Will, Cerebral Palsy. In the state itself, there are nearly 40. As those numbers have grown dramatically, we have not had to respond to all calls for help, because other agencies have been geared up. That's good, too, because in our business, we need cooperation, not competition."
Although it has a promising future, Laradon Tile will find it difficult to match the record set by LADOCA, a fascinating enterprise begun in 1963 by Calabrese and Dr. Happ. The latter conceived the idea.

With the directors' approval, Joe encouraged Happ to incorporate LADOCA, which would generate money for research and classroom equipment—money that could be spent without the governing body's approval and with no adverse effect on other income.

"Every time we needed cash for research or a project a little out of the ordinary, we either didn't have the money or we had to beg for it," Calabrese said. "We were part of United Fund and were receiving allotments from State Social Services. Both organizations frowned on spending for anything other than routine operations," he added. "We desperately needed a revenue source that would give us program and research flexibility. LADOCA provided that potential."

The LADOCA acronym was derived from the names, LArry and DOnald CAlabrese. Described in the
Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Colorado as a "Project and Publishing Foundation," the new entity was established, among other reasons, to:

Promote and to conduct charitable, social and public welfare and relief work for educational, vocational, charitable, and other eleemosynary purposes and to use its monies and the monies received from donors and contributors for such purposes, with the stipulation that all financial proceeds are determined for the support of Laradon Hall Society for Exceptional Children, Inc.

The incorporators were Dolly McGlone, Dr. Happ and William C. Murray, Jr., a Denver County Court judge. The three, plus Calabrese and Frankel, were members of LADOCA's first board of directors.

The LADOCA concept evolved from other ventures that had proved beneficial by giving the school and its students experience in assembling, packaging and marketing its own products. The first sales effort, in the late 1950's, was the printing and distribution of McGlone's *Helpful Hints*, which found a receptive, but limited, audience.

A teaching tool that generated healthy cash inflow was the *Laradon-hp Basic Reading Kit*, for mentally handicapped children.

Conceived by the talented Al Gallagher, who developed it as the result of classroom experience, the kit was designed with simplicity and flexibility as prime objectives. Simplicity was needed so the retarded could easily accept it. Flexibility made possible quick adaptation by teachers, who tailored their methods to fit the needs of the children, either singly or in groups.

The kit achieved success by:

1. Employing an attractive "fun" challenge to motivate children.
2. Establishing vivid connections between words and their meanings.
3. Helping in the construction and introduction of simple, but useful, sentences.
4. Protecting the child from failure, often experienced by the slow learner in conventional schools.

Use of the Gallagher kit produced stimulating results. Children who had known little but failure found themselves “winning” consistently, thus gaining stability and confidence. This success resulted in academic progress, as well as substantial behavioral change.

In the pamphlet of instruction, educators were advised:

“It is the purpose of this kit to assist not only the children, but teachers faced with spending numerous hours making and constructing basic teaching materials. Such time might better be utilized in developing new methods or gaining additional insight into the personality and behavior problems of the child.”

So successful it sold more than 4,000 units at $21.50 each, the kit was bulky and heavy—weighing about 11 pounds—but it was also effective. It consisted of four 9-by-12-inch tagboard picture books, each containing 25 carefully chosen but simple words important to everyday living; one 9-by-12-inch book displaying the same 100 words, arranged in groups of five per page; one set, each, of letter and word cards; two wooden bases, and an instruction manual.

As outlined in the manual, the goals were three-fold: First, to teach reading in the easiest, most enjoyable manner possible, so the child would be encouraged to continue the learning process. Secondly, to prepare the youngster for future reading in grade school primers. Finally, to provide experiences that would help the pupil read for information and protection in real-life situations.

Gallagher’s was a pioneering effort and obviously well received, judging by total sales. Improvements in techniques by others in the field eventually made the reading kit obsolete, so it was phased out.

Experience gained in those early commercial ven-
A student uses the Gallagher reading kit.

tures and the net proceeds from marketing the kit were utilized in 1963, when LADOCA began distributing and selling several teaching aids invented by McGlone. His devices never achieved the large sales volume they deserved, although they did win critical acclaim. The items were not patentable, so could be commercially duplicated—without fear of penalty.

A major manufacturer of toys for tots did just that. The company sent to Laradon a representative who took extensive notes about the McGlone creations. The firm’s representative also carried away samples to serve as models for the corporation’s designer. The items developed became national best sellers, but Laradon never received a penny from the profits.
In its first six years, LADOCA served the school well, if not sensationaly. From the start, Dr. Happ guided the foundation as executive director. He supervised sales of available Laradon items, but kept seeking a money-maker that would have dramatic and popular acceptance.

In 1967, he found the product that would eventually create business and provide a healthy income for the LADOCA treasury.

Among persons he had met during his Colorado residency, Happ shared friendship and professional confidence with a talented pediatrician, William K. Frankenburg, M.D. The latter was a member of the University of Colorado Medical School and later became director of the John F. Kennedy Child Development Center in Denver. Each man was a native of Germany. Both were deeply interested in helping mental retardees overcome handicaps limiting their capability to function as normally as possible in a complex 20th century world. In short, they made an excellent team benefitting Laradon and, eventually, thousands of children and parents throughout the world.

Frankenburg had joined the C.U. medical teaching staff in 1964. In the middle 60's, he and Dr. Josiah B. Dodds, a psychologist and fellow professor, collaborated in creating a system to identify very young children who were potential retardates. Financed by a grant from the National Center for Health Services Research and Development, the project was called the Denver Developmental Screening Test (DDST).

At first, the developers of the test toyed with the idea of marketing the materials themselves. When that seemed impractical, they sought a mechanism that would relieve them of that major responsibility. LADOCA thus became a possible ally.

"My previous acquaintance with Laradon had been through Dr. Bill Happ," Frankenburg said. "I had known him for a couple of years because of our mutual interest in the handicapped. In discussing our test distri-
bution with him, Bill said he had an excellent vehicle in LADOCA, because the foundation was already filling orders for teaching materials.

"We thought it made sense," he continued, "for re­tardees in the Laradon sheltered workshop to assemble, package and mail our product, thus giving them gainful employment. At the same time, they would be helping prevent mental impairment of others, because the test was designed to promote early diagnosis to facilitate treatment to cure or ameliorate retardation."

With distribution arranged, steps were taken to publicize the screening concept among professionals in the field.

The usefulness and availability of the test were communicated to the nation's children's specialists in two ways: Publication of "The Denver Developmental Screening Test" in the August, 1967, issue of The Journal of Pediatrics, and presentation of a paper by Frankenburg the same year at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Another factor in publicizing the testing process was the cooperation of a large pharmaceutical company. Mead Johnson & Co. agreed to distribute the materials as courtesy items. The firm had a sales force calling on 25,000 physicians annually. It made the test available to them at no charge, as well as to all medical students. Thus, Mead Johnson became one of LADOCA's best customers. Other large sales were made to Head Start programs nationwide, public health clinics and foreign users.

The DDST established a scale against which to measure a child's ability to perform certain elementary functions usually expected of a normal youngster. Although simple to administer, the test is not a do-it-at-home exercise.

"One must know what to look for," Dr. Frankenburg explained. "The individual administering the test must be able to interpret and understand its meaning. We urge the mother, or father, if possible, to be present, so
parent-child interaction can be observed. We also want to know whether the youngster's responses are typical."

The test, which is copyrighted, checks on four areas, including: Personal-Social—such as playing pat-a-cake or with a ball, for example; Fine Motor-Adaptive—Grasping a rattle, reaching for an object; Language—turns to voice, laughs, etc.; Gross Motor—sits with support, stands momentarily.

"Normal children," said Dr. Frankenburg, "will usually have varying successes and failures, but generally they will perform as consistently as others in their age group.

"Failure in a given area may be due to a variety of factors, such as mental retardation, hearing loss, or the effects of an untreated disease, such as measles. It can also be caused by slower development, perhaps because of prematurity. A third possibility for failure can simply be fatigue or fright.

"A new screening can detect temporary failures," he continued, "but if abnormal reaction extends through successive testing, precise diagnosis and possible treatment are recommended."

Doctors Frankenburg and Dodds standardized the DDST by evaluating results from tests given to more than a thousand normal Denver children between ages two weeks and 6½ years. Drawn from a variety of social and economic backgrounds, the screening supplied data indicating that differences between ages at which the sexes perform individual acts were not so great as anticipated.

Boys, for example, can kick, throw and catch a ball earlier than girls. The latter can name pictures earlier. Overall, variances between normal boys and girls were not considered significant.

During the first two years of children’s lives, there is little variance in their development, regardless of social or economic setting. After age two, however, significant differences seem to emerge within the language section of the test. Youngsters from lower-income groups were
less able to cope with language challenges than those from more affluent homes.

Once established, the validity of the screening process assured widespread use of the DDST and created a market demand for the test continuing indefinitely.

Neither Frankenburg nor Laradon had any indication at the outset what response the testing program would generate. No specific financial arrangements were made, but it was agreed the foundation would keep all proceeds until the project was operating in the black.

"Eventually," Frankenburg recalled, "Laradon gave us, the University Medical Center, a small compensation from sales to further research in developmental screening.

"For the first four years after we started," he continued, "Mead Johnson distributed about 10,000 sets annually. In the meantime, LADOCA was servicing other physicians and health-care providers who wanted larger quantities, not only in the United States, but abroad.

"About 1971, though, the pharmaceutical firm decided the project had grown so large and become so expensive, Mead Johnson had to discontinue giving materials at no charge. From then on, physicians, medical and nursing schools, and other users placed orders directly with LADOCA.

"In addition, we had developed other tests—to screen for hearing, vision and articulation. LADOCA handled distribution of those," he added.

"We also produced motion pictures that taught administration of tests and helped check proficiency. The foundation set up distribution patterns for that, as well as establishing a review program to check training materials returned after rental. All films had to be free of flaws before they were re-rented.

"The test has been translated into numerous foreign languages," Frankenburg said. "LADOCA provides it in English, French and Spanish and we know it has been adapted for use in countries on all the world's conti-
nents. Among nations where it is being utilized are New Zealand, Australia, Egypt, Chile, Argentina, Brazil (in Portuguese), Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, Poland, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand. Interest has also been expressed in Russia.

"The Chinese have advised us they have translated and re-standardized the test.

"It is evident the DDST enjoys widespread international popularity. The reasons are: It fills a need [early identification]; it is simple, economical, accurate, graphic and appealing to children, their families and professionals," Frankenburg explained. "It's unique in that it's the only developmental test that has been standardized on a large number of individuals. Furthermore, it has been thoroughly studied to determine its accuracy in identifying handicapped children.

"Its chief drawback is the 15 to 20 minutes it takes to test a child. To overcome that, we developed a pre-screening questionnaire, which the parent answers. It uses 105 test items transcribed into questions the parent is asked. This determines whether the child is able to do each of ten age-appropriate tasks.

"We found the procedure works very well, if the parents have at least a high-school education. For them, we recommend the use of the Pre-screening Developmental Questionnaire, known as PDQ. If the child is suspect on that, we screen it again two or three weeks later with a second PDQ. If the youngster is still questionable, we recommend a thorough diagnostic evaluation, to pinpoint the problem as accurately as possible," he said. "Other tests given children have been described as racially biased, but the DDST has not been accused of that.

"For children whose parents have less than high school education, we recommend use of an abbreviated DDST. If the child is suspect, the entire test is given to determine whether a complete diagnosis is necessary.

"In tabulating the screening participants—the
latest survey involved some 10,000 children tested in private physicians' offices and health clinics—we found an amazingly large number with significant developmental problems. These included severe to border-line retardation, childhood schizophrenia, autism, and children with marginal motor delays and behavior disorders who had not previously been identified by health-care providers.

"The reasons are varied. One is that physicians, after the child reaches a certain age, tend to see their young patients only when the latter are ill," he observed. "All too frequently, their parents don't take them regularly for a well-child check-up. Another reason is that physicians are so busy just treating acute illnesses, they haven't looked systematically for signs of abnormality. The chief reason physicians give for not doing routine screening, however, is the time factor. They're concerned parents might not value it enough to pay for the time and effort required. We believe, nevertheless, the situation is changing. Many more physicians are now doing or encouraging screening throughout the world," he said.

To overcome the physicians' objections about the time element, Dr. Frankenburg and his cohorts developed the training films. By their use and application of the techniques they explain, most any adult, particularly nurses, paraprofessionals and college students, can master the art of giving the DDST and related screens.

Use of the films as instruction devices requires much more than casual review by onlookers. The basic DDST color and sound films (or video tapes) and the accompanying Proficiency Test movie require viewers' attention for more than two hours. But the visual aids result in development of skilled test administrators at a time when screening is growing in world-wide attention.

"We have seen legislation approved in numerous foreign countries," Dr. Frankenburg said, "requiring efforts toward early identification of children with developmental problems. Many such programs now rely on our screenings and procedures, or similar tests. In
Germany, all children below the age of four receive rout­
ing testing of various types, including developmental screening.

“In the United States, the Early Periodic Screening,
Diagnosis and Treatment Program (EPSDT) is part of Medicaid. It requires that all youngsters in programs to
aid the disadvantaged be tested.

“We were lucky to have available a procedure
unique in filling a major need. It came at a time when
there was almost universal recognition of the importance
of identifying potentially handicapped children.

“Theoretically, one can screen any time after birth,
but we don’t recommend using the test below three
months.

“Interestingly enough,” he observed, “the money
LADOCA gives us is used for furthering research. This
is really critical for us, because federal funds available in
the past are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, as
congressional appropriations decrease, especially in re­
gard to child health care.

“After working in this field for more than 10 years,”
Dr. Frankenburg said, “we still adhere to the view that
the DDST is simply a screening test. As such, it gener­
ates errors and over- and under-referral to physicians,
but it is still filling a great need. We are, however, more
and more concerned there isn’t greater competition with
our materials, to see if it is not possible to develop a so­
called ‘better mouse trap.’

“To that end, about six years ago we started holding
international meetings for people working with the
DDST. We wanted to share experiences and to encour­
age additional research—even competition.

“The last, held in Santa Fe [New Mexico] was very
successful,” he said. “It resulted in several tangible,
positive benefits, such as locating money for Israeli par­
ticipants to do a re-standardization of the DDST in their
country. Other progress reported included duplication of
some of our research studies, such as the PDQ, abroad
and assistance to foreign professionals in planning their
research.

"Funds to conduct these important international sessions come from the contributions made by LADOCA," Frankenburg said.

Recently, there has been a change in focus from the original goal of the DDST—identifying of retardates—to discovery of children who could be high risks to fail when they start school.

"If we can spot these youngsters when they're quite young," the doctor said, "specific remediation efforts can be undertaken early, when treatment would be most efficacious.

"Currently, we are engaged in a research project in which we use a double screen—the first mirrors the child's developmental status. It indicates the individual's biological integrity and reflects experiences in the past. A second screen, involving home environment, answers such questions as: Do the parents read to the child? How much verbalization goes on in the home? What do the parents do to foster the youngster's learning?

"We feel," he added, "by combining the two, we should be able to predict more accurately the child's future school performance, since a major factor affecting ability to learn is home environment during the tender years.

"Past studies have shown about 89 percent of children abnormal on the DDST failed in school five to six years later. Of those with borderline development problems, 63 percent failed at a later time. We believe that through use of the environmental screen, we'll be able to determine more accurately which children with questionable or borderline developmental status will outgrow their disability and which will regress and therefore be handicapped when they start school," Dr. Frankenburg concluded.

LADOCA no longer exists as a separate non-profit corporation, yet it remains a key part of the school's income-producing machinery. Its independent identity
was eliminated to avoid conflict with federal internal revenue laws.

Profits from the operation are diverted to the Laradon Foundation, which Joe hopes will be endowed sufficiently in his lifetime to guarantee the institution's future, regardless of who directs the program.

Chief reasons for the continued existence of LADOCA are to help train youngsters assemble and package the mail order materials—its only function as a workshop—and to provide revenue for the foundation and for more research under the guidance of Dr. Frankenburg. The latter continues to maintain a keen interest in and association with Laradon. As a member of the board of directors, he is one of only two non-Elks on that policy-making body.

Dr. Frankenburg's generosity—granting the school rights to produce and market tests and other materials and to harvest the profits—could be regarded as the biggest single contribution to Laradon. Net earnings have already passed the half-million-dollar mark. They are running at an annual rate of $100,000.

In the beginning, no one could foresee how profitable the test project would be. Its monetary success, however, causes no concern nor regret for the developer. The German-born pediatrician does not measure his gesture in dollars and cents. His satisfaction comes from benefits accruing to Laradon, plus realization that tens of thousands of potentially abnormal children have been identified for remedial assistance.

For their part, the Calabreses, who lived through the precarious days of impoverishment, are humbly grateful for the fate that put them in the testing business. To them, it naturally reflects their original motivation: Any kind of help for Larry and Donald and all other retarded dates they could reach.
Students prepare the testing material for mailing in the LADOC workshop.
Above, a little one takes the DDST, helped by parent and administrator.

The DDST kit (below), with its simple but useful elements.
General view of Laradon residences.
Another Beginning

When it opened in 1949, Laradon was unique. Now, more than 30 years later, it still is the only institution of its kind in Colorado. There are, in fact, few similar to it elsewhere in the world. For the most part, they, wittingly or accidentally, are modeled after Laradon.

The first three-member "student body" at the Federal Boulevard school has increased more than a hundred fold. At the end of 1979, the academic site had 134 enrolled. The vocational training center was preparing 190 for productive jobs. Residential accommodations were provided 143. A paid staff of 171—a ratio of one employee to every two enrollees—provided a variety of services: Teaching, counseling, work and vocational guidance, housekeeping, property management, administration and numerous other elements vital to a complete habilitation program.

In the early 1950's, shortly after the first Elks joined Laradon's board of trustees, the new members were startled by the casual manner in which a $72,000 annual budget was adopted, with little discussion and no dissension. The 1979-80 budget of $2,700,000 (37 times larger) was approved by the Elks-dominated board with
Typical cottage bedroom.

Dormitory reception area.
little discussion and no dissension, showing great confidence in the administration's competence.

Difficult to pinpoint precisely, the number of individuals assisted by enrollment in the school is vast. At least 3,000 retardees who were potential "closet prisoners," have found varying degrees of freedom in the outside world. Such emancipation from mental disability has in turn brought rays of hope and happiness to tens of thousands of their family members and friends.

Records substantiating those successes defy compilation for several reasons. Laradon's original goal was simple: Academic training. Achievement was partially measured by the number of "graduates" prepared to become regular students in public and private schools.

From 1959 on, however, vocational development assumed a more prominent role. Eventually, two divisions—educational and occupational—shared equal status in the institutional structure. Consequently, some enrollees receive academic guidance only; others are limited to vocational training, while many benefit from both divisions. Because of this balanced concept, re-
markable progress is being made in job placement. In the last eight-year period, for example, about 50 trainees have been placed annually in gainful employment.

From an experimental program housed in the skeleton of a surplus school building bought at a bargain, Laradon has become a solid educational adventure served by a well-equipped, well-balanced facility.

On its nearly nine acres, the physical plant, valued at several million dollars, includes excellent classroom and vocational buildings. They are supported by a dining area capable of feeding about 250 at a single meal; a gym and swimming pool; a new "Garden of Hope," and landscaped open space.

The original residential accommodations, adequate but primitive, have been replaced by a functional and attractive complex on the northern portion of the campus. More than 130 can be housed in six cottages, 12 beds in each; two dormitories, with a 36-person capacity, and two adult units providing apartment facilities for 24. Live-in staff members provide supervision.

Other quarters capable of sheltering an additional 40 are located off-campus—in adjacent public housing or in Capitol Hill area apartments.

By any standard, Laradon has achieved a tradition of excellence in special education that invites emulation, but rarely finds it.

In the beginning, the school survived because of the sacrifices, persistence and dedication of the Calabreses and their loyal friends and co-workers. At the appropriate time, the State Elks Association pumped financial lifeblood into Joe and Elizabeth's anemic creation.

Gradually, state and federal legislation made funds available to assure slightly better than hand-to-mouth existence. Extreme reliance on public money was never a preference. If available and clearly intended for support of students or school programs, such revenue was welcomed and well used.

To insure against too heavy a dependency on tax-generated income, Joe relentlessly pursued gifts from
such private sources as foundations, fraternal groups in addition to the Elks, grateful and affluent parents, and the annual Christmas "Red Stocking" campaign for small contributions. Tuition payments from non-indigent parents have always been collected on a business-like basis.

For the past few years, it has been Joe's goal to establish an endowment fund assuring Laradon's continued availability for the retarded. As a former lawmaker, he is realistic about public support for private institutions.

"In the past 20 years," he commented, "we have seen generous but spasmodic support in funding programs for the disadvantaged. The federal government, particularly, has authorized money for a variety of experimental projects. Some that seemed to be fruitful died when initial appropriations ran out. Others would have expired, if state or local governments had not assumed financial responsibility, usually at a starvation spending rate.

"Then, too," Joe emphasized, "there is always the threat of dictation, interference or even punishment from public officials holding purse strings. Maybe it can't happen, but if I were granted one last wish, it would be that Laradon would become totally self-supporting, which would mean complete independence."

His aversion to bureaucratic pressure is not unfounded. Because of its wide-ranging programs, the school has benefitted from funding by U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Defense and HEW; from state grants available through the Departments of Social Services, Education and Institutions; payments by county and local governments, and money channeled through the Community-Centered Boards.

Each entity has rules, regulations, foibles and fancies. The booby traps are there waiting to be sprung, if insensitive or power-conscious public servants wish to pull strings. Usually, it doesn't happen. When it does, the results can be harrowing.
Laradon experienced such a trauma through much of 1979. It began officially January 24, when two representatives—John Haynes, vice chairman of the board, and Deputy Director Gil Jackson—were summoned to a meeting with six government representatives.

Prior to the meeting, Jackson said, his first hint of impending trouble came in December, 1978. A caseworker from the Child Abuse Team of the Denver Social Services Department requested an appointment.

"We occasionally get such requests," Jackson said, "so I didn't think much about it. She came out and spent an afternoon going through three specific instances of alleged child abuse. She talked with our staff, looked at records and generally discussed other possible cases.

"I got the idea from her that some charges had been made against us, but it was hard to know what was involved," Jackson continued.

"On January 5, 1979, I went to a meeting of the Child Abuse Team . . . which definitely gave us a clean bill of health. But at that meeting, I learned that DARC [Denver Association for Retarded Citizens] was the source of the allegations, which originally had been made to the State Division for Developmental Disabilities (3-D).

"After the meeting, I called Bill West [executive director] at DARC and asked him what was up. He and I had been talking earlier about improving relations between Laradon and DARC. He had, in fact, spoken at our board meeting the previous November.

"When I asked about the child-abuse allegations, he professed ignorance, but said it must have been done by the DARC board," Jackson said.

Ironically, DARC had been founded 20 years earlier at the urging of Calabrese, who believed organizations working with handicapped children should have an association for mutually supportive activities, including lobbying.

"In addition to the child-abuse report," Jackson added, "I was hearing other rumors. People from public agencies dropped by and would ask: 'What about this in-
vestigation?" It was pretty vague, but we knew something was in the wind, but had no idea why."

That void was filled rather quickly after Haynes and Jackson arrived at the Fort Logan office of Sharon O'Hara, 3-D director, who presided over the January 24 session. The Laradon representatives were given a document listing "certain allegations" and were advised a field review would begin the next day on the following:

1. Abuse and neglect in the supervision of adult residents.
2. The types and method of incident reporting and agency policies related to reporting, and corrective action taken.
3. Staffing patterns—are they appropriate for the type of facility and resident served?
4. Violation of civil rights and individual freedom.
5. Program delivery issues and process—how individualized are the programs? How is placement on a dorm or in a program determined? Policy and practice of restraints, punishment, and other forms of behavior modification used.
6. Health/medical issues including quality of meals served and attention to dietary needs of the resident; review of policies and practice for the medical care and treatment.
7. Fiscal issues regarding residents' personal income, and accounting for residents' income.
8. Involvement of parents, guardians, advocates and adult clients themselves in the plans for care and treatment.
9. Internal mechanisms for the review of issues and solutions to problems.
10. The responsibility of the Denver Board (for the Developmentally Disabled) in monitoring and evaluation of programs.

Comments on these matters follow.

Included among the comments were these two very curious sentences:

The allegations are a product [sic] of numerous statements and incidents that have been grouped under cate-
gories for convenience sake. *They do not reflect the actual allegation*, but represents [sic] an attempt to guide the review team into general areas of concern.

Other comments, later included in the report as the "Introduction," are reproduced with minor editing and some emphasis added:

Sharon O'Hara, Director of the Division for Developmental Disabilities, learned on November 16, 1978, of a series of allegations concerning Laradon Hall Society . . . The source of the allegations were [sic] parents, clients, employees and advocates.

Ms. O'Hara decided to contact representatives of the State Departments of Health and Social Services, and the Attorney General's Office in order to review the allegations and *to work out a strategy* on how to proceed.

On Wednesday, January 19, 1979, a planning meeting was held . . . The participants decided to conduct the review under the direction of a single representative in order to coordinate the effort and *to proceed with all possible haste*.

The Internal Auditor, Department of Institutions, was selected as the coordinator of the review and each department agreed to provide the necessary manpower to accomplish the task . . . On January 17, 1979, Sharon O'Hara requested, in a letter, that the Director of the Department of Institutions approve the engagement of the Department's Internal Auditor to review the allegations . . . Such approval was granted on January 19, 1979.

A meeting was held on January 24, 1979, in order to advise the Board of Directors of Laradon of the impending review, and to explore the process. In attendance were the Vice-Chairman of the Board for Laradon and Secretary for the Denver Board [for the Developmentally Disabled], John L. Haynes; the Assistant Director of Laradon, Gil Jackson; Sharon O'Hara; Jeff Sandler, Assistant Director, 3-D; Edward Martinez, Assistant Attorney General; Stan Welichko, Director, Denver Board; Richard Milne, Assistant Director, Denver Department of Social Services; Royal Edgington, Director of Medicaid and Adult Services, Denver Department of Social Services, and James R. Greer, Internal Auditor, Department
of Institutions.

The representatives from Laradon were advised the review would begin the following morning at 9 a.m. and would take approximately five days to complete.

In a “Memo of Understanding” presented to and accepted by Board Chairman Art Drehle, Laradon agreed to: 1. Cooperate with the review staff during the... field work; 2. Provide access to documents and records as designated under contract; 3. Provide private and secure space for the review team; 4. Immediately report procedural problems to the designated state representative.

From the beginning, the “review” had all the earmarks of an inquisition, despite the school’s excellent past record. Laradon had been a long-time partner with state agencies and had undergone numerous audits and inspections. Errors had been found and corrected. Laradon’s reputation for compliance with regulations was respected throughout the governmental apparatus.

It is noteworthy that Ms. O’Hara was aware of the allegations November 16, 1978, but waited more than two months before acting. Prior to the January 19 meeting, it would have been reasonable for Ms. O’Hara to contact the school, either personally or through a representative, to advise of the allegations and the possibility of an impending review.

Such a courteous gesture, obviously, was never contemplated. The action taken at the January 19 meeting, “to work out a strategy on how to proceed” and then the decision “to proceed with all possible haste,” was similar to that sometimes employed in grand jury inquiries.

The abrupt notice given Laradon of the review was seemingly designed to nullify any “cover-up.”

It appeared the investigation was expected to develop evidence leading to a devastating exposure of Laradon misdeeds. Ms. O’Hara’s decision to parlay hazy charges, since they did “not reflect actual allegations,” into a full-blown cloak-and-dagger review, involving secret informers, “strategy,” and “all possible haste,” was not only unfortunate, but insensitive.

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The field work, taking nine days, was completed February 7. In the ensuing two weeks, Greer ground out 39 "findings," all of them apparently adverse to Laradon, and requested comment from the school. To protect itself legally, the Laradon board employed Attorney Robert S. Eberhardt to assist in responding to the charges. Aided by Chairman Art Drehle, Haynes, Calabrese and Jackson, Eberhardt answered each comment, under trying circumstances, because Greer wanted to get the matter out of the way as quickly as possible.

The attorney's responses were contained in a letter to Greer, whose method of editing comments and inserting them in his text was, to say the least, startling.

By excerpting sentences and phrases from Eberhardt's letter and using them redundantly throughout, Greer was able to give sinister connotations to the Laradon replies. To a person not familiar with bureaucratic dialect, the report was puzzling and could be interpreted as devastatingly critical.

It was not.

Throughout the summer and fall, numerous conferences were held between parties representing both sides. Additional field work was done. Laradon officials worked hard trying to resolve the nit-picking flaws turned up by Greer and his team.

Jeffrey Sandler, assistant director of 3-D, proved extremely helpful in bringing the episode to a conclusion. On December 7, 1979, he notified Drehle by letter that "no further action [would] be taken . . . with respect to the audit."

The enclosures accompanying the letter admitted lamely, but not directly, that Laradon was innocent of anything incriminating. They conceded the school had eliminated or was in the process of correcting rule infractions.

Given the opportunity to review the report before it was released, Calabrese reacted as follows:

There are two points which I would like to make:
First, it seems obvious the deficiencies that have been found were all relatively minor in nature, such as would be routinely found in any operating program. For example, the "new" policies recently adopted by the Board of Directors were merely updates of existing policies and no audit findings showed any problems caused by the policies. Laradon will continue to revise and improve its policies, procedures, and programs, as the need arises.

Secondly, let me state clearly that Laradon never had any objection to being inspected by the Division for Departmental Disabilities or any other agency with a legitimate purpose. Our objections center solely on the fact that the audit was instigated by vague, anonymous allegations and the report of the Internal Auditor was written in such a way as to unfairly portray Laradon Hall in the worst possible light.

I hope this follow-up report will help to correct any wrong impressions that have been created.

In all probability, the case is closed. Aside from costing the state and Laradon tens of thousands of dollars and causing great anguish for the board and staff, it did precious little to improve day-to-day programs for the individuals entrusted to the school's care.

In fact, action taken by Ms. O'Hara may reduce the school's ability to provide as much assistance for its charges as it would like. Laradon, in effect, has been fined about $19,000 by Ms. O'Hara. She determined that shortcomings in accommodations for Adult Residential Services (ARS), located in public housing apartments, were so grave that payments from her budget to the program would be reduced.

Finding No. 39 in the report reads:

"The Division decided to pay Laradon Hall at a lower rate until all deficiencies were corrected."

Even with the corrections made, Calabrese was advised, there would be no retroactive recouping of the payments. This meant the $19,000 penalty was levied not against the school, but on persons in the ARS program.
After a nerve-wracking, gut-grinding experience like this, one can readily understand Joe’s yearning for "complete independence."

How much money would be needed?
“About $10 million,” Calabrese estimated.

Can it be raised?
“I don’t see why not,” he responded resolutely. “We’ve been able, with the help of God and thousands of generous people, to do almost everything we’ve set out to do.”

And that is precisely the answer one would expect from a man who was once told: “Sorry, Mr. Calabrese, but our system simply has no place for your sons.”

Starting from scratch, Joe and Elizabeth built their own system—and they’ve never stopped building.
Appendix

Members
Board of Directors
Elks Laradon Hall
Past and Present

William E. Allen
Dr. W. D. Asfahl
Robert Barth
William Brennan
Mrs. J. William Burke
Joseph V. Calabrese
Robert Chandler
John R. Coen
* Jeremiah Connolly
* Eugene F. Costello
E. L. Dailey
* J. Arthur Drehle
Duke W. Dunbar
Mrs. William Forker
*Dr. William K. Frankenburg
* G. A. Franz, Jr.
Rabbi Herbert Friedman
John Godec, Jr.
E. Ellis Graham
Dr. Edwin Haefli
* David A. Hamil
* John L. Haynes
*John W. Heard
Mrs. Irma (Herbert) Hill
Denny Holmes
*Walter Johnson
Mrs. James B. Kenney, Sr.
Lewis E. Kitts
Judge Joseph N. Lilly
Judge Henry Lindsley
Mrs. Sarah (Arch, Jr.) Metzner
Vincent Mueller
Les Newkirk
Mrs. Madeline Quick
Ralph Rieves
Bertram Rosenthal, Jr.
*Judge Hilbert Schauer
*Jacob L. Sherman
*William G. Smith
*George Thompson
*Howard A. Tingley
Dr. Myron Waddell
Louis Weisberg
*Robert Wilson

*Incumbents

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Author's note: No attempt has been made to index references to Joe and Elizabeth Calabrese, for obvious reasons.

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Joe and Elizabeth Calabrese were an ordinary couple with one important difference. They had two sons, Larry and Don, both mentally retarded. And when school after school rejected Larry and Don, Joe and Elizabeth Calabrese set out to do what public educators said was impossible—train the mentally handicapped to make their way in the "outside" world.

*Garden of Hope: Laradon Hall* is the inspiring story of one special couple and one special school that made a significant difference in the lives of thousands of mentally retarded youngsters.