

Editorial Page

Gannett Suburban Newspapers/Thursday, January 9, 1992

O'Rourke bungles in dropping two hospital board members

Just when we thought the controversy over the Westchester County Medical Center was winding down, and that the healing process was setting in, along came County Executive Andrew P. O'Rourke to reopen the wounds.

O'Rourke this week refused to reappoint to the hospital's citizen advisory board two of its most distinguished members, Chairwoman Carol Farkas and Vice Chairman Arthur Litt, both of whom had disagreed with him over his appointment of Mack Carter as commissioner of hospitals. Not only did O'Rourke get rid of two committed persons, but in the process he sent a message to Westchester residents who volunteer: Don't have a mind of your own.



Arthur Litt

Farkas, Litt and virtually all other members of the hospital board had criticized the appointment of Carter given his qualifications. This occurred after O'Rourke departed from and badly bungled the se-

lection process. But after Carter was confirmed by the Westchester Board of Legislators, all sides in the dispute pledged to work together.

Not only is O'Rourke wrong for

showing Farkas and Litt the door, but he only raises new questions by designating Joseph Colosimo, an 18-month hospital board member, as its chairman. Colosimo was found guilty in 1972 of perjuring himself in 1969 before a State Investigation Commission that was probing corruption involving a bid on a Yonkers incinerator. He should not be given such an important public position.

O'Rourke presented another viewpoint. "I have appointed him before. He headed the Solid Waste Commission and did an excellent job. He has paid his price to society for a mistake he made years ago. I don't think we should hold this against him anymore."

It is true that Colosimo was punished by the justice system for his crime, and that the events took place some two decades ago when he was chairman of the Yonkers Municipal Housing Authority. And we applaud his willingness to give his time and energy. Nevertheless, the nature of his crime involving government corruption should preclude him from having such a voice in setting public policy, especially for a \$250 million government institution.

Westchester County Medical Center has enough problems. If nothing else, it does not need further complications dealing with perceptions.

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