

# View From the Top

## The Bureau of Prisons' five Directors discuss problems and ethics in corrections

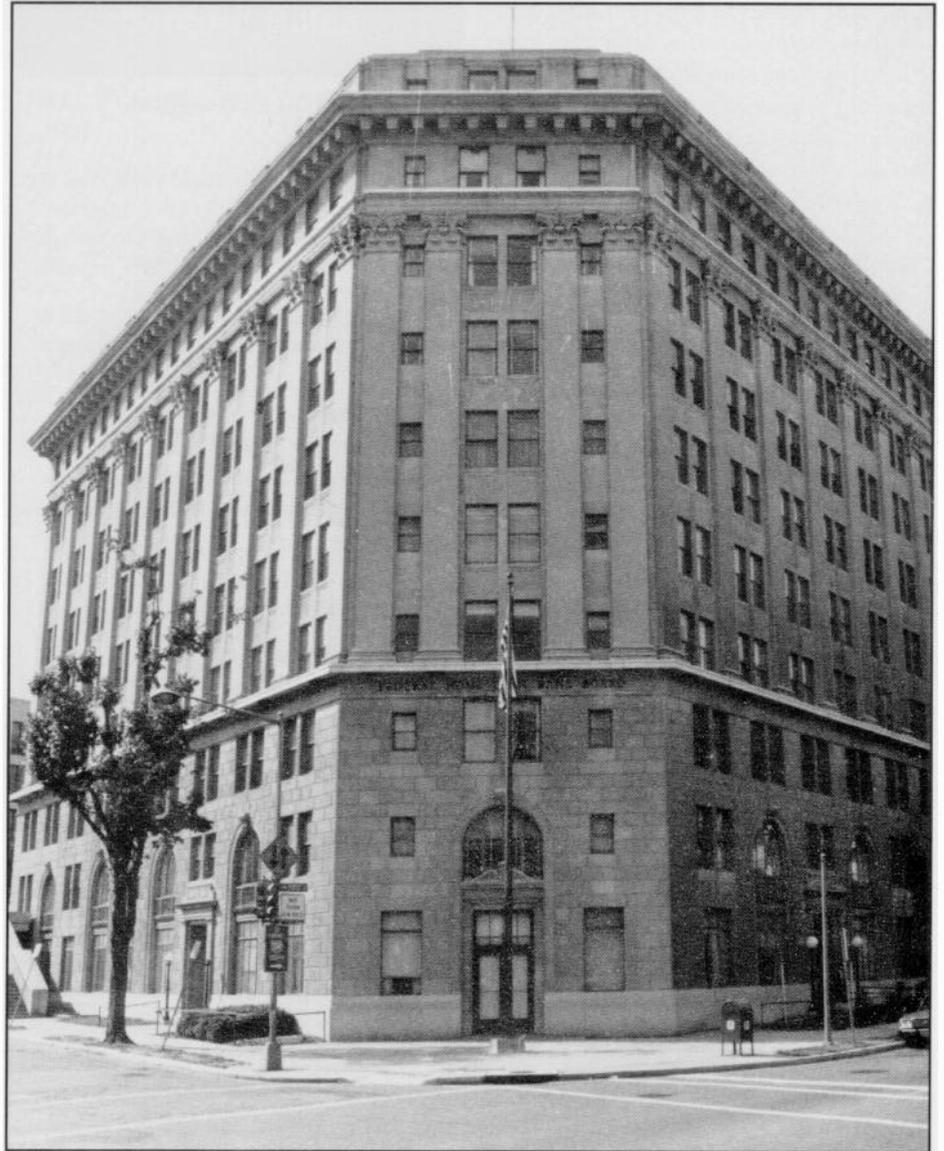
*Compiled and edited by John W. Roberts*

In any society, the sanctions applied against lawbreakers can be misunderstood or misused. Not only do knowledgeable corrections professionals and scholars disagree about the effectiveness or desirability of programs or philosophies, but political leaders and society in general impose standards and demands that add further dimensions to the complicated and daunting process of devising corrections policies that are ethical, useful, and realistic.

Corrections is a field that is well-known but little understood. There is universal awareness that prisons exist, but first-hand knowledge of those prisons is so limited that what actually goes on behind the walls seems a mystery. For solutions to the mystery, it is easy to take refuge in sensationalism: mythical ideas that "pro-inmate" prison administrators maintain country clubs where criminals can enjoy themselves while their victims continue to suffer, or equally romantic notions that inmates are merely scapegoats for society's crimes and that sadistic administrators operate prisons that might be likened to concentration camps.

The reality, however, is much less dramatic. Instead of seeking methods that would either coddle criminals or terrorize them, prison administrators struggle to develop competent, workable, socially acceptable ways of carrying out what former Bureau of Prisons Director James V. Bennett called "the unhappy task of punishing people."

Since its creation in 1930, the Federal Bureau of Prisons has had five Directors. Reflected in their writings and statements are the challenges of trying to reconcile



*The Bureau's headquarters—Central Office, Washington, D.C., located in the Federal Home Loan Bank Board building across from the U.S. Capitol since the 1940's. Four of the five Directors have had their offices here.*

the needs of society, the rights of inmates, the dictates of common sense, and the findings of both research and experience in discharging an onerous but socially indispensable responsibility.

The following excerpts come from the Directors' memoirs, speeches, articles, and interviews. They not only show

some of the issues facing correctional administrators over the years, they also provide insights into the philosophies and personal motivations of the five individuals who have served as Director of the Bureau of Prisons.

## Sanford Bates

### First Director, 1930—1937



#### Sanford Bates on the role and nature of prisons

(from *Prisons and Beyond*, by Sanford Bates, 1936)

Many of us have an inevitably curious mixture of ideas as to the purpose of our penal institutions. Which makes the public more indignant, to be informed that prisoners are mistreated, locked in solitary cells, strung up by their thumbs, and denied contacts with the world outside, or to be told that, after all, the penitentiary is not so bad—one has his three meals a day, his moving pictures, his baseball games, his pipe and daily newspapers?

Perhaps the same people who shudder with horror at the report of “cruelty” in some of our prisons would writhe with righteous indignation at any attempt to provide “the comforts of home” at Government expense for those of their brethren who have visited the fleshpots of an American urban community.

The perplexing problem confronting the prison administrator of today is how to devise a prison so as to preserve its role of a punitive agency and still reform the individuals who have been sent there. If the prison, as was originally conceived, is to stand as the last milestone on the road to depravity, if it is to represent that ultimate of punishment which must follow a refusal to obey the rules of society, and if, as has been so generally contended, its principal object is to deter others from committing depredations which would bring them within its shadow, why must it not be made as disagreeable as may be? If punishment is effective to deter, it would seem as though the more punitive the prison was, the greater would be the effect of deterring others.

When the sole purpose of a prison was to make men miserable there was nothing particular to be gained by beautifying the architecture, by attempting to cure any loathsome disease which the men might have, by educating them, or even by improving their personalities except, of course, in so far as the will to commit crime could be terrorized out of them.

Whatever may be the cause, our ideas as to penal treatment are being challenged. We still insist on punishing people—but within limitations. We must make them unhappy but must do it in a more kindly spirit. We are confronted with the almost impossible and quite anomalous task of at once making our inmates sorry they committed the crime but glad that they went to prison for it. Now we are assailed by the horrible doubt that in mitigating the terrors of the prison commitment we may have laid our communities open to danger. We may say in Scriptural fashion, “O, Prison, where is thy sting?” but it is noticed that the inmates will walk out whenever the door is open—and sometimes when it is not. There are enough riots, escapes, intrigues, and solicitation of political pressure among the prisoners to reassure us that many of the inmates, at least, are not being coddled into a state of complete satisfaction with their surroundings. It will be some time yet before we have any considerable waiting list of persons anxious to break into even our best penitentiaries. After all, the most precious possession of a normal man is his freedom to go and come. “Give me liberty, or give me death,” said Patrick Henry, and so would many of us if we were offered the alternatives of an indefinite confinement in a small though sumptuous apartment and the liberty to choose our environment, however humble it might be.

## Sanford Bates

1884-1972

- LL.B., Northeastern University, 1906.
- Served in Massachusetts State legislature, 1912-1917; Commissioner of Penal Institutions in Boston, 1917-1919.
- Commissioner of Massachusetts Department of Corrections, 1919-1929.
- Superintendent of Prisons, U.S. Department of Justice, 1929-1930; while in this post, Bates prepared the legislation that established the Bureau in 1930.
- President (Chairman) of Federal Prison Industries, Inc., 1934-1972.
- President of the American Correctional Association.
- After retiring as Director, Bates served as Executive Director of the Boys Clubs of America, Parole Commissioner for New York State, and New Jersey State Commissioner of Institutions and Industries.

Arthur Train in “Puritan’s Progress” tells of a Massachusetts prison in which in 1837 a man was discovered “confined in a dark room in a cellar where he had lived for seventeen years. He had protected himself against cold by stuffing hay through the cracks in the door, his food being passed to him through a wicket.” The daily menu of the prison of a hundred years ago would be insufficient for a stray dog to live on today.

Compare with these the simple yet sustaining menus in most of our present-day penitentiaries, the more humane system of punishments and the growing disposition to use the deprivation of privileges instead of the enervating or debasing types of punishment, the successful effort to get prisoners out of

their cells into shop or farm or into the yard each day for certain hours, and the development of the road camp system. The great increase in the use of probation and parole, the attempt to employ prisoners in industries and vocational pursuits, the introduction of carefully managed libraries, the insistence upon medical prophylaxis, the success of many States in classifying their prisoners into a variety of institutions, the recent development of new types of prison architecture, the belated discovery that prisoners are individuals and must be treated as such if any attempt at their cure is to be effected, are hopeful developments to the credit of the last two or three decades.

At this point the skeptic will again rise up to inquire what will be the result of new and more adequate buildings, decent living conditions, improved diet, better qualified prison guards, and efforts to educate the individual. Will it remove the fear of punishment? Can we improve our prisons and yet deter the potential criminal? I believe we can. If the experience of punishment makes possible an acquaintance for the first time with some of the higher things of life, it may still be very desirable disciplinary experience.

There is no wise prison man but admits that, even with all the improvements that may be instituted in the modern prison, it will still be better for the prisoner if he can safely be kept out. There comes a time, however, in the community treatment of many an offender when he becomes unmindful of precept, immune to good example, heedless of warnings and advice, and positively dangerous in his activities. The case for prison is merely this, that a strict program of prophylaxis, hard manual labor, enforced education, daily regimen, and fair discipline with a modicum of constructive recreation and opportunity for soli-

tary introspection will not induce people to commit depredations on society; the possibility exists that it may do what all else has failed to do.

### **Sanford Bates on the origins of the Federal Prison System**

(from *Prisons and Beyond*, 1936)

“That which is past and gone is irrevocable; wise men have enough to do with things present and to come.”

These words from Bacon, engraved upon the proscenium arch of the chapel at the new Federal penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, may be said to be suggestive of the ideal underlying this new Federal prison program. It is not predicated on fear of a man's past so much as it is expressive of hope for his future. It suggests courage and opportunity rather than hate and vengeance.

Up to the close of the nineteenth century the Federal Government had no penal institutions of its own. In 1891 Congress passed an act establishing three penal institutions; but there was no appropriation for the purpose and nothing was done to provide for Federal housing of prisoners until July 1, 1895, when the Department of Justice took over the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In the next year Congress authorized the acquisition of 1,000 acres of the military reservation adjoining Fort Leavenworth and the erection thereon on a penitentiary with a capacity of 1,200 prisoners. Work began in 1897, and with the completion of this first penitentiary of its own the Department of Justice on February 1, 1906, returned control of the old military prison at Fort Leavenworth to the War Department.

The Atlanta Penitentiary, although authorized in 1899, two years after work

began at Leavenworth, was virtually completed in January, 1902, on a 300-acre site at the southern limits of the city of Atlanta, with total accommodation for at least 1,200 prisoners.

These two penitentiaries with the small territorial jail located on Puget Sound, which was later destined to become the McNeil Island Penitentiary, constituted the entire investment of the Federal Government so far as penal institutions went until 1925.

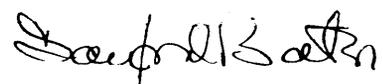
By 1925 the pressure upon the three existing institutions had become overwhelming, and with the necessity for new accommodations came the demand for different types of institutions. To meet the more modern requirements for group treatment of varying types of offenders, two reformatories, one for women at Alderson, one for men at Chillicothe, were sanctioned by Congress in 1925.

Upon the shoulders of Attorney General Harlan F. Stone and his progressively minded assistant, Mabel Walker Willebrandt, fell the responsibility of meeting this new and expanding situation. At that time the work of supervising Federal institutions, recommending the parole of inmates to the Attorney General, and inspection of jails was administered by a handful of people in the Department of Justice. The business of taking care of prisoners had never been a serious concern of the Department of Justice. Things went from bad to worse and that right quickly, so that in 1929 a committee of the House of Representatives made a thorough investigation and reported that the time had come for the establishment of a Bureau of Prisons, the construction of a group of new institutions, and the passage of such legislation as would result in the organization of an integrated Federal penal system.

Upon the revelation of shocking conditions of overcrowding, both at Atlanta and at Leavenworth, and with the explanation of the need for the development of both parole and probation systems in the Federal Government, legislation was prepared and transmitted to Congress in December, 1929, with the active support of President Hoover and Attorney General William DeWitt Mitchell. Congress passed the legislation in May and June, 1930. Every recommendation of the Department of Justice was adopted, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons became a reality.

By this legislation, the powers and duties of the Bureau were defined and the development of a complete prison system with classified institutions was envisaged. A separate Board of Parole was established. A new penitentiary and an additional reformatory were authorized. A hospital for the care of the insane and the sick became the subject of enabling legislation. The Federal Probation Law was clarified and expanded. The United States Public Health Service was instructed to furnish adequate medical and psychiatric services to Federal penal institutions; the construction of a limited number of Federal jails was provided for, and an act was passed calling for the installation of a diversified system of prison industries.

It is doubtful if any prison system in the world ever received such a plenary and liberal charter, or such abundant and understanding support. The new organization was given carte blanche to work out a modern prison system for the Federal Government.



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## James V. Bennett

### Second Director, 1937-1964

#### James V. Bennett on the need for meaningful programs and funding in State prisons

"Why Fear and Hate Shadow our Prisons"  
(excerpt from *New York Times Magazine*, May 11, 1952)

These are tense times for prisons. Wardens pace their offices. Commissioners argue hotly with budget directors. Parole board members schedule special meetings. Orders go out constantly over intercom speakers in numberless guard towers. Prisoners in crowded prison stockades and yards seem restive and moody. "Break it up," is the repeated command of guard captains inspecting laundries, clothing rooms, shops, each teeming with five times the number of men who can be usefully employed. In the background of even the best prison is the disturbing feeling that it can happen here. All this because the giant institution at Jackson, Mich., and the prison relic at Trenton have recently been the scenes of prison rebellion. [Editor's note: the Jackson, Michigan, and Trenton, New Jersey, prisons were State prisons.]

In all our prisons the problem of classification and segregation of prisoners according to their character, offense, and attitudes is fraught with great difficulty. To sort out and provide individualized treatment in "big houses" and ancient relics for society's most aggravated social misfits daunts all but the stoutest heart. When this fails, erroneously classified ringleaders easily stir pent-up feelings of bitterness, despair, and recklessness into revolt. Men seem to go mad. Furniture is wrecked, buildings are fired, cuttings are commonplace. Leadership goes to the strongest and most ruthless. To reason with such a mob is impossible. No one can say what it will do.



Most wardens bemoan as their greatest handicap to preventing riots and maintaining order the lack of constructive, stimulating, and skill-building work programs. As Warden James A. Johnston, late head of Alcatraz and formerly in charge of San Quentin said: "The one tool beyond all others that must

not be struck from our hands is work-hard, upbuilding, stimulating."

Yet prison industry has all but become a thing of the past, save in a few institutions which would not accept defeat by shortsighted pressure groups. And so the

raw material for agitators, strongarm men, the psychopathic and the sexually aggressive now mills aimlessly about cramped prison yards or in the double-decked and overcrowded dormitories of most of the older prisons. The only wonder is that there are not more outbreaks.

The whole penal system is a series of contradictions and paradoxes. On the one hand, prisons are expected to punish; on the other, they are supposed to reform. They are expected to discipline rigorously at the same time they teach self-reliance. They are built to be operated like vast impersonal machines, yet they are expected to fit men to adjust to constantly changing community standards. They operate in accordance with a fixed, autocratic routine, yet they are expected to develop individual initiative. And so the whole paradoxical scheme continues because our ideas and views regarding the functions of correctional institutions are fuzzy.

Prison administrators, for the most part, know all too well wherein our prisons have failed. They also know generally how prisons can be made to succeed to a far greater extent than in the past. And these new goals are not to be reached, on the one hand, by severe and repressive measures or, on the other, by coddling and lax discipline.

To be sure, safe custody must be fundamental. It is the first duty of any prison to carry out faithfully and undeviatingly the sentence of the court. But when this has been established, custody should assume its place as a basic, but not the only, element in a prison program. There must also be a proper classification, religious,



FIG. 129-G, National Archives

*The Federal Correctional Institution, Seagoville, Texas, opened in 1945, embodied the principles of a “prison community” that Bennett discusses.*

educational, industrial, psychiatric, and medical program. Hit-and-run vocational training, part-time doctors, insincere preachments, and little or no planning for the prisoner’s release spell more, not less, recidivism.

Such programs cannot be had without adequate financial support. Prisons are at the bottom of the list when the tax dollar is divided. Prison administrators must wait for an aroused citizenry to support them. Unlike some other public services, prisons have no boosters, no beneficiaries, no alumni who will come to their rescue and lobby for more funds. True, the public thrills to the drama of trouble in prisons and becomes acquainted then with what goes on behind the walls. It is perverse, but it is true that, following such revolts, long-sought progress is made. It is equally true that progress may be set back. Legislators may curtail even further any funds for rehabilitation activities and a disturbed public demands more of the iron-fist approach.

The danger in such incidents also lies in the fact that too many people will believe that anyone and everyone who goes to prison is a fearsome creature. They demand harsh measures and shun and discriminate against everyone who has a prison record. They ignore the fact that thousands of men leave prison each year and find a place in society never to commit crime again. Hundreds of them were released from prison to join the armed services. The record of some of these men in military service has been outstanding. The demonstrations at Jackson, Trenton, or Rahway should not—indeed, cannot change the basic philosophy of hope and rehabilitation to a regime of the tooth and the claw.

### **James V. Bennett on creating a humane, constructive prison environment**

“If Not Prisons—What?”

(excerpt from paper delivered to the Institute of Illinois Academy of Criminology, Monticello, Illinois, April 2, 1955)

More and more reasonable people are puzzled about our prisons and wondering whether they are not failing completely in their purposes. [Prisons] are as frequently accused of being too soft as they are of being too severe and of turning out hostile, embittered individuals unfit to live with self-respecting, law-abiding citizens. Gambling, favoritism, and perverted sex practices are said to be commonplace in these so-called correctional institutions. Overage and underpaid prison personnel are still accepted complacently; and idleness, overcrowding, and regimentation are assumed to be insoluble problems.

Moreover, penal institutions have few articulate, organized voices who will

champion the need for modernized plants and facilities. It is frequently pointed out, with some degree of accuracy, that prisons do not reform or rehabilitate and that two out of every three men who leave prison will return within less than 3 or 5 years. It is no wonder therefore that thoughtful citizens characterize the prison as self-defeating and that others urge us to break down the walls, to abandon the idea of punishment as a deterrent to crime, and to find some new approach.

There is no severer critic of the prison than the professional prison administrator and correctional worker himself. He, above all, wants to abolish the old scheme which our predecessors found so praiseworthy a substitute for hanging, mutilation, and banishment.

But, if not prisons, what? Certainly, society must have some devices, procedures, symbols, or techniques to insure orderly control and to deter crime. Certainly, there are persons in the community who are a threat to the safety and security of life and property. And, of course, everyone will admit that something must be done to keep out of circulation as effectively as possible the dangerously perverted and psychopathic...who will not voluntarily accept any responsibility for himself or anyone else.

Perhaps, some of our difficulties in viewing this problem are semantic in origin. The word "prison," for example, creates a stereotyped image of towers and walls, steel cells and armed guards. In many cases, unfortunately, prison is just that, but surely it need not be that and we have prisons today which have gone far beyond that type of stereotype. I wish we could find some other name that would describe this modern kind of prison. I

## James V. Bennett

1894-1978

- B.A., Brown University, 1918; LL.B., George Washington University, 1926.
- Veteran of U.S. Army Air Corps.
- Investigator, U.S. Bureau of Efficiency, 1924-1930.
- Author of *The Federal Penal and Correctional Problem*, a Bureau of Efficiency report that paved the way for the creation of the Bureau of Prisons.
- Assistant Director, Bureau of Prisons, 1930-1937. Helped draft much of the legislation that affected Federal corrections, including the laws that established the Bureau and Federal Prison Industries, as well as the Federal Youth Corrections Act.
- Member of numerous U.S. delegations to the International Penal and Penitentiary Congress and the United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime.
- President, National Association for Better Broadcasting; President, Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training; President, American Correctional Association; Chairman, American Bar Association Section on Criminal Law.
- Recipient of the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service, the War Department's Exceptional Civilian Service Medal, and the E.R. Cass Award of the American Correctional Association.

like the phrase "the prison community," with all of the connotations that the word "community" implies.

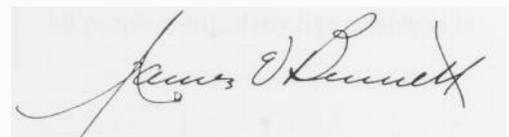
Another word I would like to see dropped from our vocabulary is "penology." It seems naive to believe we can reduce to a science the unhappy task of punishing people.

But we continue to use the old words with new shadings. We speak of the "new prison" and the "new penology."

These terms are used to describe the efforts being made to achieve some reconciliation of the conflicting demands of social protection on the one hand and the individual's reconstruction on the other.

The new type of institution I have in mind is the one such as the Federal Government has at Seagoville, that California has at Chino, and the one that New York has at Walkill. If you were to visit our Seagoville institution, you would find none of the features that characterize the usual concept of a prison. It has no walls, no guard towers, no long lines of men marching off to work or to meals under the watchful eyes of a guard. About half the population live in small dormitories, the others in simply furnished rooms, unlocked and without steel bars or grilles. The men go to their assigned jobs at the appointed time on their own initiative. On visiting days a man can take his family to church services or they can have their lunch together in the dining hall. A full program of employment, education, and vocational training, religious counseling, casework services, a wide range of recreational and leisure time activities and medical care comprise the day-to-day operations. The emphasis throughout is on self-reliance, self-respect, and trustworthiness.

What I am really trying to describe is not an institutional program but an atmosphere, a climate in which failure, self-defeat, apprehension, and tensions can be dissipated; an atmosphere in which that suspicion and hostility between officer and prisoner so characteristic of the traditional prison cannot exist. In short, Seagoville, and the other similar types of institutions are the closest approximations we have to that "prison community" idea.



## Myrl E. Alexander

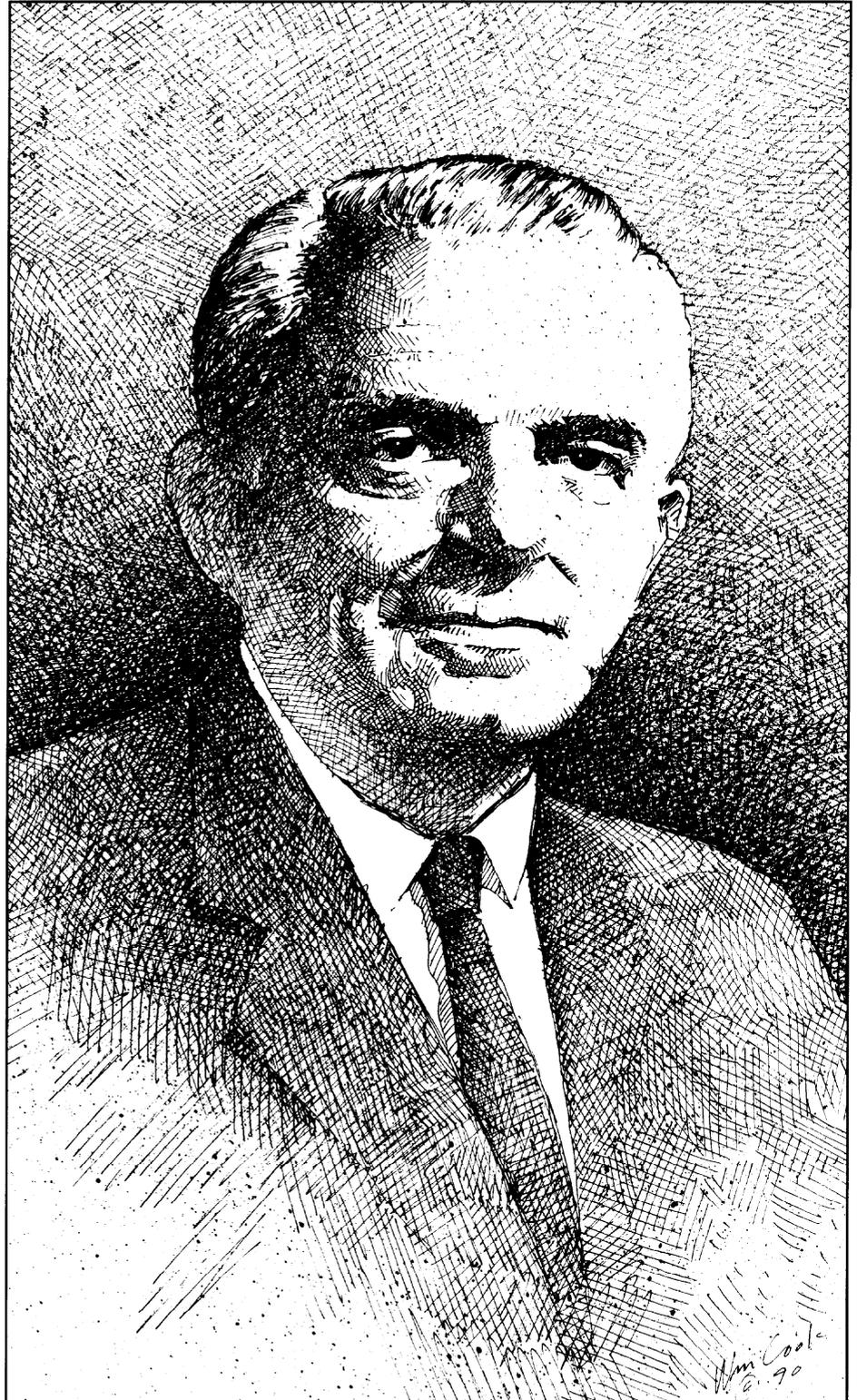
### Third Director, 1964-1970

#### Myrl E. Alexander on correctional change and social reform

"Corrections and the Future"  
(excerpt from speech given to the  
City Club of Portland, Oregon,  
April 23, 1965)

The need for accelerated change in corrections is the challenge facing us today. It is a part of the larger effort to reduce or eliminate our major social problems of overpopulation, hunger, mental illness, alcoholism, poverty—all of which produce crime and delinquency. And so we need to take inventory of the role of corrections in the emerging social order. Early in that reevaluation several critical facts will become abundantly clear.

First, the causes of crime and delinquency lie deep within the community. Behavioral problems are usually symptoms of grave problems in early life. Therefore, we in corrections need to have far greater insights into the causes of delinquency and criminal behavior if we are to successfully treat and train offenders. Secondly, corrections is a continuous and closely interwoven process, no one element of which can be successfully isolated from the others. Juvenile detention, the jail, the court, probation, halfway houses, juvenile institutions, penitentiaries, parole, work release and pre-release programs, academic education, vocational training, group therapy, are inseparable in their total impact on delinquent and criminal behavior. Yet, in practice, these correctional processes are all too often separate and disparate: only the client as he passes from one process to another senses the discordant and uncoordinated procedures involved in correctional practice.



Critical self-examination also will reveal that all too often a correctional institution operates on the implied principle that the institution is managed and exists for its own sake. If our correctional institutions were to serve as a guide and a model to the automobile industry, the Ford Motor Company today would be struggling to move from production of the Model T to the Model A Ford. Honest research and development—in the same sense that it is used in industry or the defense establishment—would produce phenomenal results in corrections. We must face the fact that our work today is grossly inefficient.

We will also discover that our standards for personnel recruitment, training and development are grossly inadequate to meet the challenge of tomorrow. A correctional institution, like a school or a hospital or an industry, simply can't be any better and more efficient than the people who operate it. This year 25,000 jobs in the correctional field are unfilled or filled with people with inferior qualifications—simply because the trained manpower isn't immediately available.

Finally, we will discover that even as the roots of criminal and delinquent behavior lie deep within the community, so must we look to the community for broadened use of its resources. Much of corrections stands withdrawn and isolated from the normal resources of community life. We must prepare and guide...our clientele for *community* adjustment rather than adjustment to probation or to the correctional institution.

These are five critical and important discoveries which will emerge from an honest appraisal of our correctional processes. And when these recognitions

## Myrl E. Alexander

born 1909

- A.B., Manchester College, 1930.
- Served in various capacities at USP Atlanta, USP Leavenworth, USP Lewisburg, and U.S. Parole Board, 1931-1940.
- Associate Warden, USP Lewisburg, 1940-43.
- Warden, FCI Danbury, 1943-1945; 1946-1947.
- Chief of Prisons, Military Government for Germany, 1945-1946.
- Assistant Director, Bureau of Prisons, 1947-1961.
- Founder and professor, Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency, and Corrections, Southern Illinois University; professor, University of Florida.
- President, American Correctional Association.
- Served on Executive Board of the Illinois Synod of the Lutheran Church in America.
- Recipient of the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Service and the E.R. Cass Award of the American Correctional Association.

occur, then we will be ready to begin the most difficult task ever faced in corrections: directing realistic planned change to eliminate and overcome these long-standing and deep-rooted problems which thwart and confuse us.

What is the real significance of these discoveries about corrections? What changes can be produced?

I believe that we must have some clear understanding of the causes of crime and delinquency. It is no longer sufficient... to assume that a convicted offender stole a car and therefore we must "rehabilitate" him. If *rehabilitate* means to restore to a state of former usefulness, ability, or performance, we're kidding ourselves

about rehabilitation. As a matter of fact, the job of corrections is almost inevitably one of reestablishing and accelerating the development, the education, the training, and the emotional maturation of people who have been socially, educationally, and emotionally retarded.

The current discussions about school dropouts, unemployed youth, deteriorated slum areas of large cities, aid to dependent children and public welfare have a familiar ring to those of us in corrections. This is because we have spent our lives dealing with the behavior of the products of these social problems, which have now been discovered anew and publicized.

The modern correctional worker must keep current with new facts, new insights, and new theories of delinquency causation as they develop and are proven or disproven. We do not treat the car thief, we treat the undeveloped and deprived youth. We do not treat the check forger, we treat the alcoholic, the unemployed, the uneducated. We cannot work from the limited perspective of symptomatic behavior. We cannot meet emotion with emotion. We can no longer afford to treat symptoms.

The advice I give to my colleagues in corrections can be summed up in these few points:

We must be dedicated to the development of a truly continuous correctional process based on thorough insights and understandings of the causes of crime and delinquency. We must use research and development as a basic and indispensable tool of administration. We must devote our time and energy and faith to the development of a higher level of personnel training and development for all people, particularly line personnel in

our correctional process. We must recognize that even as the roots of crime and delinquency are in the community, so the roots of correctional success lie in the community and its tremendously rich but unused resources.

Above all we must be realistic, bring corrections out of isolation, and recognize that we must deal with the policy makers and lawmakers who have this important voice in corrections.

Finally, we must tap the rich wells of public understanding and acceptance which we have thus far underestimated.

### **Myrl E. Alexander on his reasons for entering the corrections field**

"My Four Heroes"  
(by Myrl E. Alexander, 1990)

One wintry night in 1944, a small circle of inmates and I sat talking in the cellhouse dayroom at the Federal Correctional Institution, Danbury, Connecticut.

One of the inmates, a one-time union organizer, asked, "Warden, is it correct that you're a graduate of a college run by the Church of the Brethren in Indiana?" "Right."

"And that church is one of the historic peace churches. True?"

"Yes, along with the Mennonites and the Quakers."

"Then how in hell can you be the warden of this prison, the keeper of us who have been sentenced because we are war objects?"



*Alexander with Attorney General Ramsey Clark, at the U.S. Penitentiary, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.*

"I didn't come here just to keep you incarcerated." I motioned toward the main cellhouse and said, "I'm in this work to help those young men out there—men that you, with all your education, could be helping, too."

But the inmate's question was relevant. World War II was at its height. Nearly a third of the 600 inmates in the institution had violated the Selective Service Act. This small group had persisted in their war resistance to the extreme of non-cooperation with all activities within the institution. They were assigned to a small 15-room cellhouse. The cells were unlocked. They could pursue their interests of reading, discussions, artwork, preparing their meals, laundering clothing. Otherwise they maintained their daily lives isolated from and without the support services of the main population.

I met with the group once or twice a week. They were serious, intelligent. Most had been university students.

We pursued the question of my work in corrections. "My career began to develop back in 1930, long before the War. I graduated from college that year. It was the beginning of the Depression. Jobs were scarce. I volunteered to work in the Juvenile Court in my home town. As I worked with delinquent kids, I learned much about their frustrations and depriv

"But how does that explain your being warden of this joint?" queried a young artist.

I explained how my first chance for a salaried job was as a caseworker at the Atlanta Penitentiary. It was a chance to study further the causes of crime and delinquency.

A young pre-law student interrupted. "We're sitting here making judgments about each other. How do we make such decisions? What criteria are to be used?"

An animated discussion followed. Then a young seminarian whose studies had been interrupted by his sentence suggested that "if we know who a person's gods are, then we have a real clue as to who and what the guy is all about." The group agreed this was a valid criterion for judging others.

Suddenly, the aggressive union organizer challenged, "Okay, Warden. Will you tell us who your gods are in this prison business?"

"Of course. But let me begin by telling you that prisons have a long history of repression, conflict, and, from time to



FIG 129-P, National Archives

Alexander with his “four heroes” in his office as Director. Clockwise from upper left: Elizabeth Fox, John Howard, Benjamin Rush, Thomas Mott Osborne.

**“A bill of rights for the person under restraint in a free, democratic society.”**

—presented by Myrl E. Alexander as part of his presidential address to the American Correctional Association. 1956

- “1. The *right* to clean, decent surroundings with competent attention to his physical and mental well-being.
2. The *right* to maintain and reinforce the strengthening ties which bind him to his family and to his community.
3. The *right* to develop and maintain skills as a productive worker in our economic system.
4. The *right* to fair, impartial, and intelligent treatment without special privilege or license for any man.
5. The *right* to positive guidance and counsel from correctional personnel possessed of understanding and skill.”

time, remarkable change with new concepts precipitated by memorable personalities. Those persons are my heroes—gods, if you please.

“First, Dr. Benjamin Rush, a Philadelphia physician and psychiatrist, who pioneered the Philadelphia Prison concept of individual confinement with religious guidance.

“Then, in the mid-1700’s, John Howard, a former sheriff in England who exposed the widespread misuse of prisoners and led a reform movement that swept across Europe.

“A phenomenal Quaker lady, Elizabeth Fry, was appalled in 1830 at the conditions under which women were held in

English jails and devoted her life to prison reform. To this day Elizabeth Fry Societies are influential in Britain and Canada.

“Finally, in the early years of this century, a New York lawyer, Thomas Mott Osborne, became convinced that imprisoned men could develop self-government and learn responsible living. He became warden at Sing Sing and a nationally recognized prison reformer.”

The group proposed that they study my “gods.” A few days later I lent them biographies of each of the four from my personal library.

Some weeks later when I met the group again I was surprised to see four paintings arrayed in the dayroom were our discussions were held.

“Mr. Alexander,” one of them said, “we have read the lives of your gods. Now we know who you are and why you’re a warden. We now present to you these paintings of your four heroes.” They had used the materials available to them: Elizabeth Fry was done in pastel crayons; Benjamin Rush in charcoal; Thomas Mott Osborne in dry brush; and John Howard in crayon and charcoal. They had been rendered from illustrations in the biographies.

For over forty years those four pictures have hung in every office I have occupied. Today they are displayed in my home study—and will be there so long as I live.

## Norman A. Carlson

### Fourth Director, 1970-1987

#### Norman A. Carlson on the evolution of the “medical model”

(excerpt from interview conducted as part of the BOP Oral History Project, Springfield, Missouri, November 30, 1989)

As one looks back in history, the field of corrections has been marked by a series of shifts or swings in philosophy. When prisons were initially established, they were seen as places of punishment where change hopefully would occur through introspection and penitence. Later, specific programs were added to prison discipline as a means of helping offenders overcome their problems and deficiencies.

During the 1960's, we entered an era where it was widely believed that government could successfully intervene in a host of social problems, including criminality. We began a “war on poverty,” based on the assumption that government had the knowledge, resources, and political will to eliminate the problems of illiteracy, joblessness, racism, and poverty.

A similar phenomenon occurred in corrections. Many believed that given sufficient resources—psychiatrists, psychologists, teachers, and social workers—we could diagnose and treat criminal behavior much like a doctor treats a patient who has a physical ailment. When I was in graduate school, this was clearly the theoretical framework underlying the social sciences.

An example of this shift in philosophy was the adoption of intermediate sentencing by virtually all the States as well as the Federal Government. The notion was



accepted that corrections had the ability to successfully treat convicted offenders and that parole boards could accurately determine the optimum time to return them back to the community, where they would become law-abiding, productive citizens. In the Federal system, the Congress enacted the Youth Corrections Act, which was based explicitly on the concepts of diagnosis, treatment, and release once the objectives had been achieved.

Most involved in corrections today would agree that experience failed to bear out our optimism. Research conducted in the United States as well as in other countries demonstrated the great difficulty of changing human behavior, particularly in individuals who have little or no desire to help themselves. What we had failed to recognize was the impact of motivation on the part of offenders to change their patterns of behavior. Studies demonstrated that there are limitations to what government can do to intervene in people's lives when there is no desire to change.

As a result of the research and evaluation efforts, as well as the first-hand experience of many of us, the Bureau adopted a new model during the early 1970's, which emphasized our obligation to provide *opportunities* for inmates to assist themselves—if they so desired. Contrary to the views expressed by some, we did not adopt the “nothing works” approach that has been attributed to sociologist Robert Martinson. Rather, the Bureau emphasized a fundamental obligation to encourage offenders and to provide quality programs that could assist them. What we did, in effect, was

**Norman A. Carlson**  
born 1933

- B.A., Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN, 1955; M.A., University of Iowa, 1957; Mid-Career Fellow, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, 1965.
- Correctional Officer, Iowa State Penitentiary, 1956.
- Staff member at USP Leavenworth and FCI Ashland, 1957-1960.
- Served in various capacities in the Bureau's Central Office from 1960 to 1970, including Executive Assistant to Director Myrl Alexander.
- Member of U.S. delegations to four United Nations conferences on crime prevention.
- President, American Correctional Association.
- Recipient of the Presidential Rank Award as Meritorious Executive in the Senior Executive Service, E.R. Cass Award of the American Correctional Association, Arthur S. Flemming Award, and the Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Service.
- Upon retirement from the Bureau, joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota's Department of Sociology.

acknowledge that we could not diagnose or forcibly treat offenders and that change in anyone—including ourselves—must come from within, if it is to have any lasting impact. The Bureau articulated a position that correctional institutions serve multiple objectives—retribution, incapacitation, and deterrence, as well as rehabilitation. We attempted to develop a balanced approach that recognizes corrections as an integral part of the criminal justice system.

At the time that the Bureau of Prisons was clarifying its mission, the then Dean of the University of Chicago Law

School, Norval Morris, wrote a book entitled *The Future of Imprisonment*. In his book, Professor Morris argued that the proper role of corrections was to facilitate change—not attempt to coerce it as the Medical Model had implied. Professor Morris also outlined what he thought an effective and just correctional institution should look like. We took the theoretical model he outlined and attempted to apply it to the new institution being constructed at Butner, North Carolina. That model subsequently served as a “blueprint” for many of the developments that occurred during the decades of the '70's and '80's.

### **Norman A. Carlson on the role of the courts in Federal corrections**

(excerpt from interview, November 30, 1989)

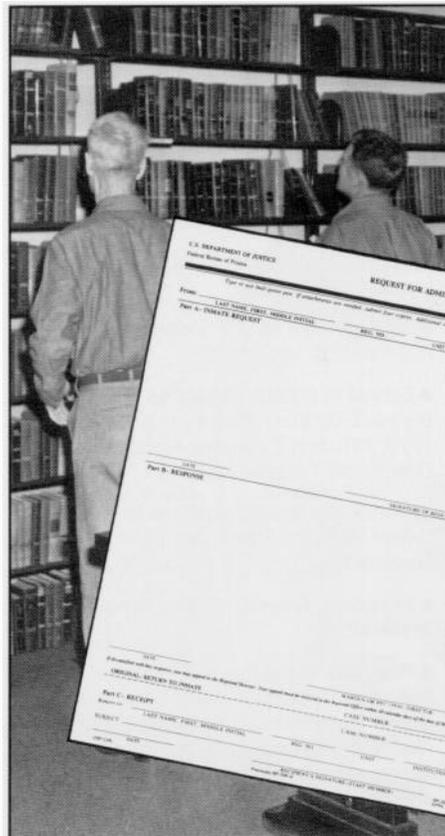
Without question, the Federal courts have played a significant role in bringing about many of the changes in corrections. While none of us would agree with every decision, I believe that on balance we recognize that the courts have been a dominant force in improving the manner in which prisons and jails are operated in the United States.

Historically, the Bureau of Prisons has attempted to anticipate the direction in which the courts were moving and to modify its programs and operations accordingly. This enabled the organization to be proactive in many areas, such as inmate discipline, rather than waiting for the courts to tell us what to do and how to do it. Unlike some other correctional organizations, the Bureau was not forced to become defensive and reactive after the Courts had intervened.

One example that comes to mind concerns the development of the Inmate Grievance System, a program that was one of the first of its kind in the United States. That system had its origins in a meeting I attended during the early 1970's with judges on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis. The judges asked me to attend the meeting, as they were discussing the tremendous number of lawsuits being filed by inmates from the Federal Medical Center in Springfield, Missouri. Court dockets were overwhelmed with inmate complaints, many of which concerned such trivial matters as ill-fitting shoes and breakfast cereal that was cold. The judges asked if there was some way that we in the Bureau of Prisons could resolve these and similar issues before they reached the court and further clogged the dockets.

When I returned to Washington, I met with Gene Barkin, Clair Cripe, and Ira Kirschbaum of our legal staff to see if we could devise a mechanism that would assist the courts in resolving inmate complaints. They came up with the notion of developing an Administrative Remedy process, which we first piloted at Springfield. Based on the success of that endeavor, the system was soon expanded to all institutions. Today, virtually every correctional agency in the United States has implemented a grievance mechanism modeled on the Bureau's program.

In my opinion, what made the grievance mechanism a success is the fact that it has credibility with the courts as well as with most inmates. Judges and inmates recognize that when there are legitimate complaints, the Bureau will take steps to



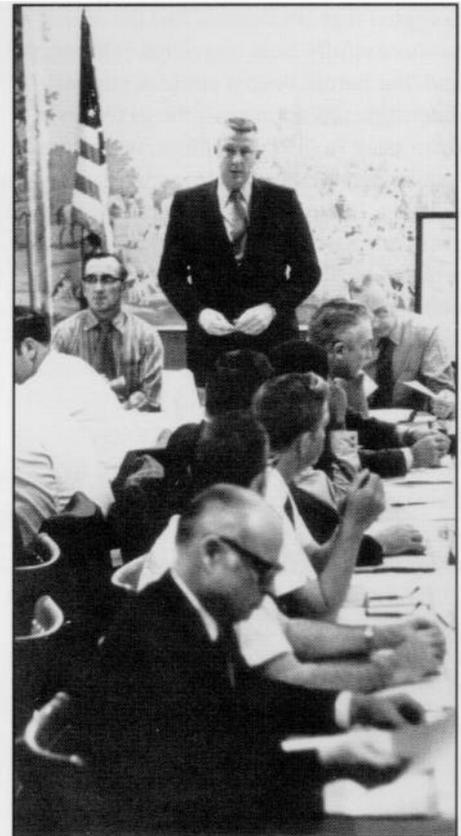
*A formal grievance mechanism for inmates was instituted during Carlson's tenure.*

correct the problems before they become issues for the courts.

### **Norman A. Carlson on overcrowding and alternatives to incarceration**

(excerpt from "Corrections in the United States Today: A Balance Has Been Struck," by Norman A. Carlson, *American Criminal Law Review*, vol. 13, Spring 1976)

There are several ways to ease the growing problem [of overcrowding in prisons]. The burden on jail and prison facilities could be lightened to some extent by an increased use of community-based correctional programs, such as



*At 6 feet 4 inches, Carlson literally towered over his staff.*

probation, parole, halfway houses, and other programs designed to keep offenders under supervision without incarcerating them in traditional institutions. Thus, the first step is to separate those offenders who should be confined in institutions from those who can be released with reasonable safety under community supervision.

Despite much unfounded opinion to the contrary, community-based programs are not a panacea for all the ills of the criminal justice system. There are no panaceas. Unfortunately, there is a hard core group of offenders who are dangerous to the lives and property of other people.

They will not respond to supervision, and they pose a threat to the safety of the community. Until a more successful alternative is developed, they must be incarcerated to protect society. A second reason why alternatives to incarceration are not a panacea is that they can be effective only if institutionalization remains available as a sanction for offenders who violate the terms of alternative programs. Accordingly, even the large-scale diversion of offenders from incarceration to community-based programs will not remove the need for jails and prisons. In the long run, new correctional facilities will be required, first to house the growing number of inmates and second to replace the obsolete institutions in such widespread use today.

These new institutions will have to be quite different from their predecessors. Humane standards advocated by the United Nations, the American Correctional Association, the National Clearinghouse on Correctional Planning and Architecture, and the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals would provide each prison inmate with a private room or cell, or 75 to 80 square feet of space, or both. In fact, many prisons currently in use are fortress-style institutions built in the 19th century with inmates housed eight and ten to a cell in tier on tier of iron cages with concrete floors. Creating and carrying out safe and humane correctional programs is virtually impossible in such a corrosive atmosphere. These old-style prisons housing 2,000 or more inmates must be torn down and replaced by modern, more humane, and more open institutions. Because privacy is essential



*Former General Counsel Clair A. Cripe, at right, speaks to legal staff in the mid-1970's; Carlson is at left.*

to maintenance of human dignity, each inmate should have a private room or cell. As Attorney General Edward H. Levy states, "humane incarceration is, by itself, a form of rehabilitation."

Corrections has a long history that illustrates the deleterious effects of continued overcrowding. The Walnut Street Jail during its first ten years stood as a model of humaneness and reform; it represented one of the most important advances in history in the art of corrections. Its success was destroyed mainly by overcrowding. Overcrowding was also a major factor in the degeneration of the Auburn system into one of harsh punishment and incredibly strict discipline. Similarly, the drastic increase in

prison population between 1904 and 1935 led to the abandonment in most prisons of offender classification systems and of educational and other services and to an emphasis on punishment, discipline, profitable inmate labor. Although a recurrence of such practices is extremely unlikely, continued overcrowding is certain to have deleterious consequences.

*Norman A. Carlson*

## J. Michael Quinlan

### Fifth Director, 1987-present

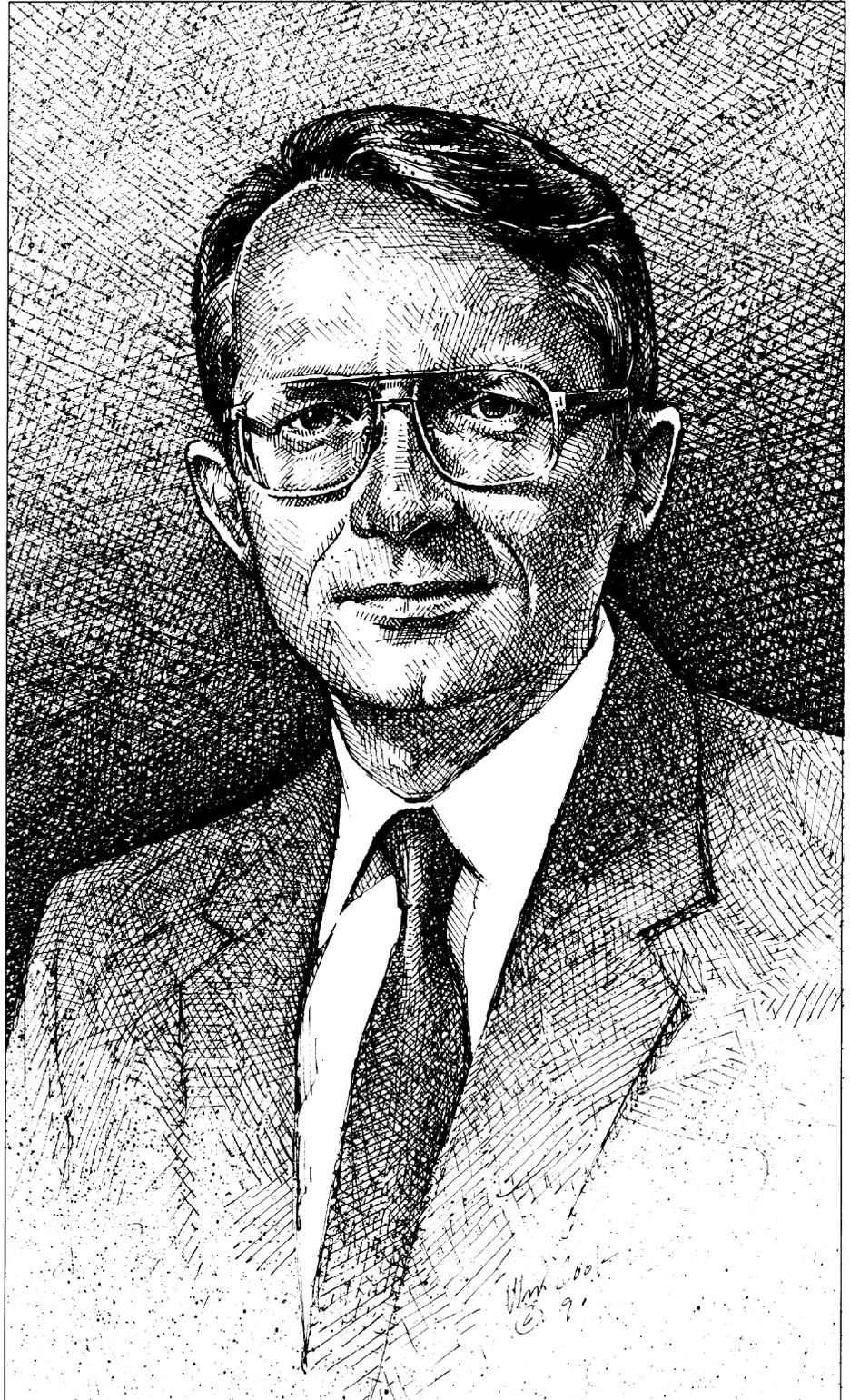
#### J. Michael Quinlan on his expectations upon joining the Bureau of Prisons... and on his disappointments

(excerpt from interview conducted on May 24, 1990)

I became involved in corrections through a course I took on Post-Conviction Dispositions while studying for my Masters in Law at George Washington University, a course that was taught by Eugene Barkin. At that time Gene was the General Counsel of the Bureau of Prisons. When I got out of the Air Force about 2 years after the course was completed, the Bureau was one of the places that I applied to. At my initial interview, I was asked why I wanted to work in corrections, and I simply said that I thought I could make a meaningful contribution.

I had the perception at the time that the Bureau of Prisons was much like the media portrayals of prisons I was familiar with; hence there was a need for people who had a sense of fairness and a sense of providing people in trouble with a better opportunity.

My original misimpressions dissolved quickly. When I started, I was not fully knowledgeable about what was really happening in the Bureau of Prisons and in corrections generally; I hadn't realized that there was already a strong orientation to caring for our charges, in the sense that we wanted them to be better off when they left than when they arrived in prison. Furthermore, the Bureau had policies in place to protect inmates from abuses of authority and inconsistencies of that nature. When I developed a better understanding of what the Bureau was really about, I established new and more



informed expectations. Not all of those have been met, but we continue to strive in the direction of meeting them.

My greatest disappointment—which is probably one that my predecessors would share—is the total misunderstanding by the public of what we do. Society is schizophrenic about whether prisoners should only be punished or whether they should also be sent away and given an opportunity to change through rehabilitative programs. TV and movie portrayals of prison workers, professional though we are, are usually in a sadistic or incompetent vein, which reinforces the well-ingrained, negative public view.

In fact, we have a very difficult clientele to deal with, and I don't think the general public fully understands the complexity of our work. They assume that everyone can be treated and educated, get out of prison, and get a steady job and work in middle-class America. And certainly, on the one hand, there are many, many offenders who confirm that expectation. When they come to us they are remorseful about their crimes, they have family support networks, they seek out our education programs, our vocational training programs, our job experiences, and they truly benefit. When they leave us, they are what society expects.

On the other hand, we have a significant portion of inmates who are aggressive or assaultive, who have never held a steady job, who dropped out of school and got into trouble in their neighborhoods, who were abused or abusive in their families, who developed at an early age an orientation toward immediate gratification—with no appreciation of the greater benefits of family and community—and who have no meaningful personal rela-

**J. Michael Quinlan**  
born 1941

- B.S.S., Fairfield University, 1963; law degree, Fordham Law School, 1966; Master of Law degree, George Washington University, 1970.
- Joined Bureau of Prisons in 1971 as Attorney in General Counsel's Office; went on to serve as Executive Assistant to the Warden, USP Leavenworth, Northeast Regional Counsel, and Executive Assistant to the Director.
- Superintendent, FPC Eglin, 1978-80.
- Warden, FCI Otisville, 1980-85.
- Deputy Assistant Director, Medical and Services Division, 1985-86.
- Deputy Director, 1986-87.
- Recipient of the Presidential Distinguished Rank Award, the Surgeon General's Medallion, and the Justice Department's Edmund D. Randolph Award.
- Member of the American Bar Association and the District of Columbia and New York Bar Associations; member of the Board of Directors of the American Correctional Association.

tionships of any long-lasting nature. These people have grown up committing crimes and have adopted crime as their vocation. The frustration is that society expects us to rehabilitate them, without any understanding of the dilemmas and the complexity and the difficulty of doing so. While we clearly provide prisoners with opportunities for bettering themselves, their own self-motivation is the keystone of "rehabilitation." I have tried for 3 years as Director to have a more aggressive public relations program, but I'll be darned if I can point to any major successes in that regard. I don't see any significant change.

But we now have a golden opportunity to create a more accurate public perception. In the 1990's, the public is going to

become more sensitized to the tremendous cost of incarceration, and they are going to become more interested in our problems. In the '60's, '70's, and '80's, we were not very proactive in getting the public involved in our business. We had high walls that kept our prisoners in and effectively kept the community out. One of the things we can do in the 90's is to get the community involved with community relations boards and through volunteer work or education programs, visiting programs, chaplaincy programs, self-help groups, drug abuse programs, and other self-betterment programs that we can put together for the inmates. I think that the assistance of volunteers and the community will be instrumental in bringing about change, and will make positive inroads on some of the age-old prison image problems.

### **J. Michael Quinlan on his administration's long-term goals**

(excerpt from interview, May 24, 1990)

One of my long-term goals is to see the Bureau continue to receive the type of resources it needs to meet the challenges it faces, particularly in the next decade of unprecedented growth that is confidently predicted. That has to be our first priority, and to achieve this it is essential to increase the efficiency of the agency. The idea of increased efficiency for a corrections agency may sound almost unique or not even necessary, but in the 1990's and certainly in the 21st Century, the agencies that are the most efficient—and, therefore, credible with the administration and Congress—will get the resources they need to carry out their missions.

The Bureau will, I am confident, become more efficient through some of the

programs that I have begun to institute—such as strategic planning, prison climate surveys, our “key indicators” automated executive information system—all mechanisms that bring information to the attention of managers and leaders so that they can make more informed judgments, more analytical judgments, about the issues they are facing.

I also hope, through more efficient use of our agency’s resources, to reduce the Federal recidivism rate. I am convinced that the Bureau can do a more effective job in channeling its resources to serve those offenders who are in the best position to take advantage of them. We tended in the past to offer everything to everyone and not be selective about program involvement. However, in the future, through stratification of program resources, we will provide a more focused approach; and, by targeting those who will benefit most, we can reduce recidivism.

More active involvement of the community can help us in this regard. We have always had volunteers involved in our institutions, but have never marshaled the talents of our volunteers in a unified and cohesive way. We can help reduce recidivism and bring mainstream social values to inmates on the most regular basis, in addition to staff doing it, through the use of dedicated members of the public on a volunteer basis.

I also hope during my tenure as Director to create a more positive public awareness of corrections. The general public do not hold us in high esteem, and we as a profession do a disservice to our employees when we do not work feverishly to try to educate the public as to the professional nature of our work and our workforce.



*“...The amount of money being invested in prison construction and in the management of prisoners is overwhelming the taxpayers.” The Federal Correctional Institution at Minersville, Pennsylvania, currently under construction.*

Finally, I would like to achieve, during this period of major growth in the Bureau, a continued sense of the Bureau as family. I think it’s one of our strongest characteristics, and it allows us to accomplish a great deal more than other agencies might accomplish with similar resources.

In fact, there is a critical connection between the Bureau’s family concept and its ability to carry out its mission. When top-level management demonstrates a sense of professional caring in its relations with line staff, then line staff will not only reciprocate this attitude toward management but will also emulate it in their treatment of inmates. Through empowerment of staff at all levels—primarily through involving them in strategic planning—many good and innovative ideas are brought to the attention of the Bureau’s leaders, and the job satisfaction and productivity of all employees are enhanced. By emphasizing training and mentoring during this period of rapid change, we are able to counteract deficiencies in the level of on-the-job experience staff currently

acquire, as compared to the past, when the inmate population was more stable. Thus, the Bureau’s family orientation creates a climate for better human relations, greater professional competence, and higher efficiency.

I want to maintain our heavy emphasis on the principle of career service by continuing to stress the Bureau as family and by leaving the agency in the hands of top management who have demonstrated that they are the most highly qualified through their achievements within the Bureau.

#### **J. Michael Quinlan on issues raised by his predecessors**

(excerpt from interview, May 24, 1990)

#### **■ Alternative sanctions** (see Norman Carlson section)

We are on the verge of some major breakthroughs in the whole area of alternative or intermediate punishments. The Bureau has been an innovator in this

area, being one of the first to get involved in community treatment centers in the early '60's. In the American public information environment today, we are getting much more visibility for intermediate punishments because the amount of money being invested in prison construction and in the management of prisoners is overwhelming the taxpayers. The budget deficits we face will force us to take hard looks at meaningful sanctions that do not necessarily include incarceration. I expect the Bureau in the '90's to make major advances in the area of home confinement, to establish day prisons, and to make greater use of community programs for work training or drug treatment, as well as such programs as restitution centers, community service, fines, weekend sentences, and day sentences.

Because of the issue of taxes and resources, I think there will be a receptive public attitude toward intermediate punishments. We can see that in some State corrections systems, with the concept of boot camps, and we will find in the next few years more and more innovative approaches to the typical 8- or 10- or 20-year sentence to reintegrate people into the community more quickly—to show very directly that the debt to society is being paid, but that for some individuals some or all of the sentence will not necessarily be spent in institutions.

#### # Research

(see Myrl Alexander section)

I think that things have changed dramatically [since Alexander identified research as a neglected field in corrections]. Research has become part of the mainstream in the Bureau of Prisons. Particularly with the development of the



Courtesy FCI Memphis

*"A healthy environment is very much what we are after." Federal Correctional Institution, Memphis, Tennessee.*

"key indicators" program, the focus has become one of doing management-related research that helps managers make decisions and tying research into every program initiative where there potentially is significant investment of resources or significant benefit to inmates or staff, and initiating it at the earliest stages so it can be most informative. The Bureau of Prisons really stands out in this country in the area of research. No State correctional system and not even the American Correctional Association has the talents and resources invested in the quality of research that the BOP has. It's an important part of our ability to carry on our mission in a way that is responsive to the needs of our constituents and also reflective of the positions of academia and other experts in the field.

#### ■ Creating healthy prison communities

(see James Bennett and Sanford Bates sections)

A healthy environment is very much what we are after. As Dostoyevsky suggested, a civilization should be measured by the way it treats its prison-

ers. It is a responsibility of correctims in general—and it is certainly a responsibility for the Bureau of Prisons in particular—to provide a decent, safe, and humane environment and offer opportunities that society may not have provided before then to help some of its misfits improve their prospects for future success in the community.

#### # Achieving a balance between the different objectives of corrections (see Sanford Bates and Norman Carlson sections)

The Bureau has made tremendous progress in pursuing the dual mission of corrections. There may occasionally be friction between the program area and the custody area, but, in my view, that problem has been largely resolved. I would attribute that primarily to the effectiveness of the unit management concept, which is based on our long-standing philosophy of keeping inmates and staff in direct interaction in an architectural environment characterized by barrier-free design. I think that unit management and the policy of cross-

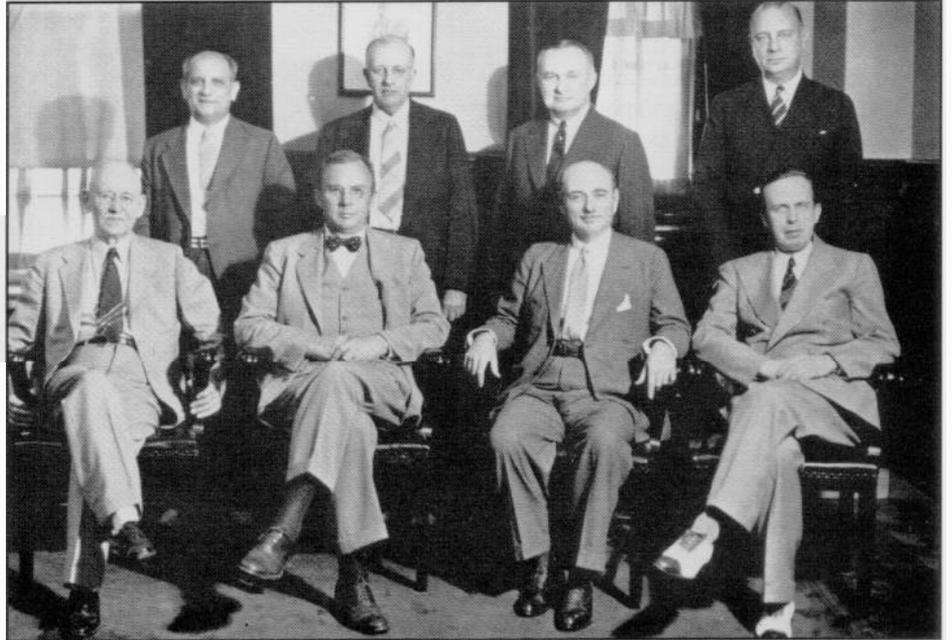
training staff in different disciplines have sensitized staff throughout the Bureau to the fact that the agency must provide security but that it also must provide humane care and good opportunities for the inmates to better themselves. ■

*John Michael Linnell*

### The “other” directors

The Federal Prison System existed for more than 30 years before the establishment of the Bureau of Prisons. Although its wardens functioned almost autonomously, a Justice Department official in Washington was nominally in charge of Federal prisons, starting with the passage of the Three Prisons Act in 1891, which authorized the Federal Government’s first three penitentiaries.

Until 1907, prison matters were handled by the Justice Department’s General Agent. The General Agent was responsible for Justice Department accounts, oversight of internal operations, and certain criminal investigations, as well as prison operations. In 1907, the General Agent’s office was abolished, and its functions were distributed among three new offices: the Division of Accounts (which evolved into the Justice Management Division); the Office of the Chief Examiner (which evolved into the Federal Bureau of Investigation); and the Office of the Superintendent of Prisons and Prisoners, later called the Superintendent of Prisons (which evolved into the Bureau of Prisons).



*The officers and directors of Federal Prison Industries, Inc., in 1939. Sanford Bates, President of FPI and first Director of the Bureau, is second from left, front row. Then-Director James V. Bennett is on the right, front row. Second from left, back row, is Captain A.H. Conner, Superintendent of Prisons from 1927 to 1929, who later became an Assistant Director under Bennett.*

Thus, the first chiefs of the Federal Prison System were:

- Frank Strong (General Agent, 1889-1903).
- Cecil Clay (General Agent, 1904-1907).
- R.V. Ladow (Superintendent of Prisons and Prisoners, 1907-1915).
- Francis H. Duehay (Superintendent of Prisons, 1915-1920).
- Denver S. Dickerson (Superintendent of Prisons, 1920-1921).
- Heber H. Votaw (Superintendent of Prisons, 1921-1925).
- Luther C. White (Superintendent of Prisons, 1925-1926).
- A.H. Conner (Superintendent of Prisons, 1927-1929).

- Sanford Bates (Superintendent of Prisons, 1929-1930).

Until Sanford Bates became Superintendent, with the mandate to establish a new, centralized Bureau of Prisons, the functions of the office were largely routine or ceremonial. The General Agents and Superintendents exerted little actual authority over the wardens. Still, they were the predecessors to the Directors of the modern Bureau. ■

—John W. Roberts