

Hardy Continues to Be Involved

By J. Y. Smith

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It was by choice that Kenneth L. Hardy became a hostage yesterday of the prisoners whose custody is his main responsibility.

It was a choice that in some ways typifies Hardy's career since he became director of the D.C. corrections department in 1967. He has worked to try to rehabilitate prisoners through the use of community-based halfway houses, and he has repeatedly stressed programs that were meant to help former prisoners become full-fledged members of society.

Just last month, he negotiated for four days to end a strike by the 1,800 inmates of the Lorton reformatory, the city's correctional facility in suburban Fairfax County. He had risked community criticism by agreeing to negotiate freely with the assembled prisoners in an open forum in the Lorton prison yard, without being forced into the meeting by the threat of violence.

The climax of that work came when Douglas Johnson, a leading inmate negotiator, told Hardy:

"Realize you have established your credibility with us. We do not feel the need for continuing the strike."

Hardy moved, Hardy went to Johnson and the assembled crowd of prisoners. "Men of Lorton, I want to thank you."

The talks, which centered on such issues as better food and medical and dental care and lights in the visitors parking lot, had showed "how a segment of the community which has been re-

jected has not lost their manhood . . . and their ability to be gentlemen," he said.

Hardy continued: "I know my career is on the line right now. There are those who want me to leave this job . . . I do not run from a fight. I want change . . . and I will stay and try to bring about that change."

Given these convictions and coming fresh from his Lorton success, the 54-year-old Hardy's decision to join the nine guards being held by the prisoners who took over Cellblock 1 at D.C. jail yesterday is at least partly understandable.

According to William L. Claiborne, a Washington Post staff writer who accompanied Hardy yesterday and who was himself held by the inmates for a time, Hardy made the decision on the spur of the moment.

But at the time, he knew the prisoners were holding the guards, and he knew the prisoners were armed.

While Hardy was willing to talk to prisoners face-to-face under tense circumstances, he has also often said there were some men whom the prison system could not rehabilitate.

Speaking about a recent proposal for a \$65 million expansion of the Lorton complex, Hardy said: "I have to be pragmatic as director of the department. The criminal population is getting more and more complicated in terms of crime. So I don't need anyone to tell me to tear down the walls and build no new prisons."

Hardy has frequently come under criticism from persons who thought some of his rehabilitative pro-

grams, particularly the community-based halfway houses, were too permissive.

Others attacked him for running a system that allegedly tolerated needlessly repressive policies. The American Civil Liberties Union won a court order earlier this year under which prisoners received more privileges.

Winston Moore, the head of the jail system in Cook County, Ill., and a long time friend of Hardy, said in a telephone interview that he thought the ACLU suit had resulted in Hardy and other officials losing control over the D.C. jail.

"He got caught in the class action," Moore said. "At this point he lost command of his institution. That is what happens when the courts and the do-gooders interfere."

Hardy has spent his entire professional career in the corrections field in the District of Columbia. He was born here, and graduated from Armstrong High School and Howard University. He did post-graduate work at Harvard, Boston, American and George Washington Universities.

During World War II he served four years in the Army, rising to the rank of captain. In 1948, he went to work as a parole officer with the D.C. parole board. In 1955, he joined the department of corrections.

At that time the department was headed by the late Donald Clemmer, who is credited with undertaking major reforms within the system to eliminate racism and other indignities to which prisoners were customarily subjected.

Hardy has frequently ex-

pressed his admiration for Clemmer and his desire to continue reforms along the lines charted by him.

When he has time, Hardy likes to relax by painting. He and his wife, Anna, are also interested in tropical fish, and they maintain an aquarium in their home. The couple have two sons by a former marriage of Mrs. Hardy.

Mrs. Hardy said yesterday her husband has had little time in recent years for his hobbies. In fact, she said she met him "in jail," because she is a parole examiner herself.

"He lives his job not eight hours a day, but 24 hours a day—this is the Ken Hardy I know," she said. "He is a dedicated man, and I have known this for a long time. I have learned to live with his work as well as with the man."