

Humanitarian Warden

Vukasin Savo Vukceвич

11-26-71
NYT

By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

"I just don't like that place," Mrs. Stana Vukceвич said after her son was appointed superintendent of Rahway State Prison last year. "Some day he's going to lose his head." On Thanksgiving Eve, the 71-year-old widow's son was taken hostage in a rebellion among

the convicts at the maximum-security prison. The superintendent, who is 43 years old, was

not unaware of his mother's uneasiness, but he passed it off lightly. "He's just one of these happy-go-luck guys," an acquaintance said yesterday.

To Vukasin Savo Vukceвич, the men in his charge are never "the prisoners" or "the inmates." It is always "the boys."

"He loves correctional work," says his sister, Mrs. Hazleton, Pa. "He feels that in every human being there is some good."

Mr. Vukceвич (pronounced Vook-sev-itch) is a tall, solidly built man with wavy black hair, hazel eyes, a light olive skin that reflects his Montenegrin ancestry and sparkling even teeth. Some people think he bears a striking resemblance to James Garner, the actor.

Yugoslav Ancestry

The eldest of four children of Yugoslav immigrants, the former Stana Punosevich and the late Savo Vukceвич, the superintendent was born Oct. 25, 1928, in St. Clair, Pa.

He attended West Hazleton Elementary School and the William Cramp School, John Stetson Junior High and Northeast High School for Boys in Philadelphia before he graduated from West Hazleton High School.

After high school, where he was a star fencer and played football, Mr. Vukceвич enlisted in the Marine Corps. He served in the Pacific area and returned to civilian life just before the outbreak of the Korean war



Associated Press

To him, the prisoners are always "the boys."

in 1950. He entered Bloomsburg (Pa.) State College under the G.I. bill.

Before beginning correctional work 16 years ago he taught chemistry and physics at high schools in Minersville, Pa., St. Clairsville, Ohio, and Baltimore. He continued his education at Penn State and Temple Universities, got his master's degree in education and has taken courses toward a doctorate.

Served as Engineer

For a short time, he worked as an engineer for an electrical concern, Tung-sol Electric, in Weatherly, Pa.

In the years before he became superintendent at Rahway he was warden at the state reformatories at Crosswicks and Annandale, N. J.

Known to his family as Ukie and to his friends as Sam, an Anglicization of his middle name, Mr. Vukceвич is active in the Masons and the Y.M.C.A. and speaks frequently before such groups on the topic of rehabilitation.

He lives on the prison grounds with his mother and with his wife, the former Anne Pejakovich, who also grew up in Hazleton, and their two teen-age children, Debra and Michael.