

# Delancey Street pioneer gets second state term

## Board of Corrections spot for Silbert

By Robert Salladay  
EXAMINER CAPITOL BUREAU

SACRAMENTO — The driving force behind San Francisco's nationally recognized Delancey Street Foundation was appointed by Gov. Davis to her second stint on the state Board of Corrections, which helps set prison policy for the state.

Mimi Silbert, 57, whose appointment was announced Friday, has served for more than 25 years as president, board chair and chief executive of Delancey Street, a self-help residential center for former convicts, addicts and prostitutes. The Delancey Street Foundation also runs a popular South Park restaurant.

Since 1996, Silbert has served as a special assistant to Mayor Willie Brown on juvenile justice policy. At the time of her appointment, Brown asked Delancey Street to come up with a master plan for The City's juvenile justice system.

Some of Silbert's recent reforms include a 24-hour "community assessment center" in the Tenderloin District's YMCA, staffed by workers from the Juvenile Probation Department, Police Department, Department of Public Health and community-based organizations.

In an interview, Silbert said she's looking forward to working again on the Board of Corrections because the Legislature recently gave its members more power over juvenile justice policy.

Silbert said she wants to work on coordinating all 58 counties in California to form a single vision for juvenile justice, and she wants to update facilities and work on better links between juvenile jails and community programs, like group homes.

"There is such a span of possibilities," Silbert said. "It's really getting each county to be able to go in both directions at the same time, to provide a circle of real alternative services so we can do something to change criminals into non-criminals, which is the whole point."

Delancey Street is acclaimed for reforming hardened adult criminals by administering a dose of confrontational group therapy, occupational training, "life-skills training" and tough love — all within a residential setting.

Silbert served on the Board of Corrections from 1986 to 1992, after being appointed twice by Republican former Gov. George Deukmejian. From 1990 to 1994, Silbert served as project director for the Department of Corrections' Bay Area Parole Services Network.

In an interview with The Exam-

iner at the time of her first Corrections appointment, Silbert said imprisoning criminals "at someone else's expense, providing all their food and lodging and letting them sit there with no responsibility, is absurd."

She was equally opposed to the folks who are soft on crime. "If you care about people," she said, "you hold them accountable."

Silbert has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in criminology and psychology at Berkeley, San Francisco State and Golden Gate University. She also was a member of the Peace Officers Standards and Training advisory commission.

The Board of Corrections position is unpaid, but Silbert must be confirmed by the state Senate. Approval is almost certain: Senate President pro tem John Burton, D-San Francisco, is one of Silbert's biggest supporters.