



Officer R.S. Christian inspects new prison-issue clothing for inmates

## *New detention center a 'state-of-art' prison*

By Bill Montgomery  
Staff Writer

Atlanta's spanking clean, "state-of-the-art" Pre-Trial Detention Center — or new city jail, if you prefer — officially opened Wednesday with appropriate speeches by civic dignitaries, while scant feet away, prisoners' relatives made bond or asked news of their kin.

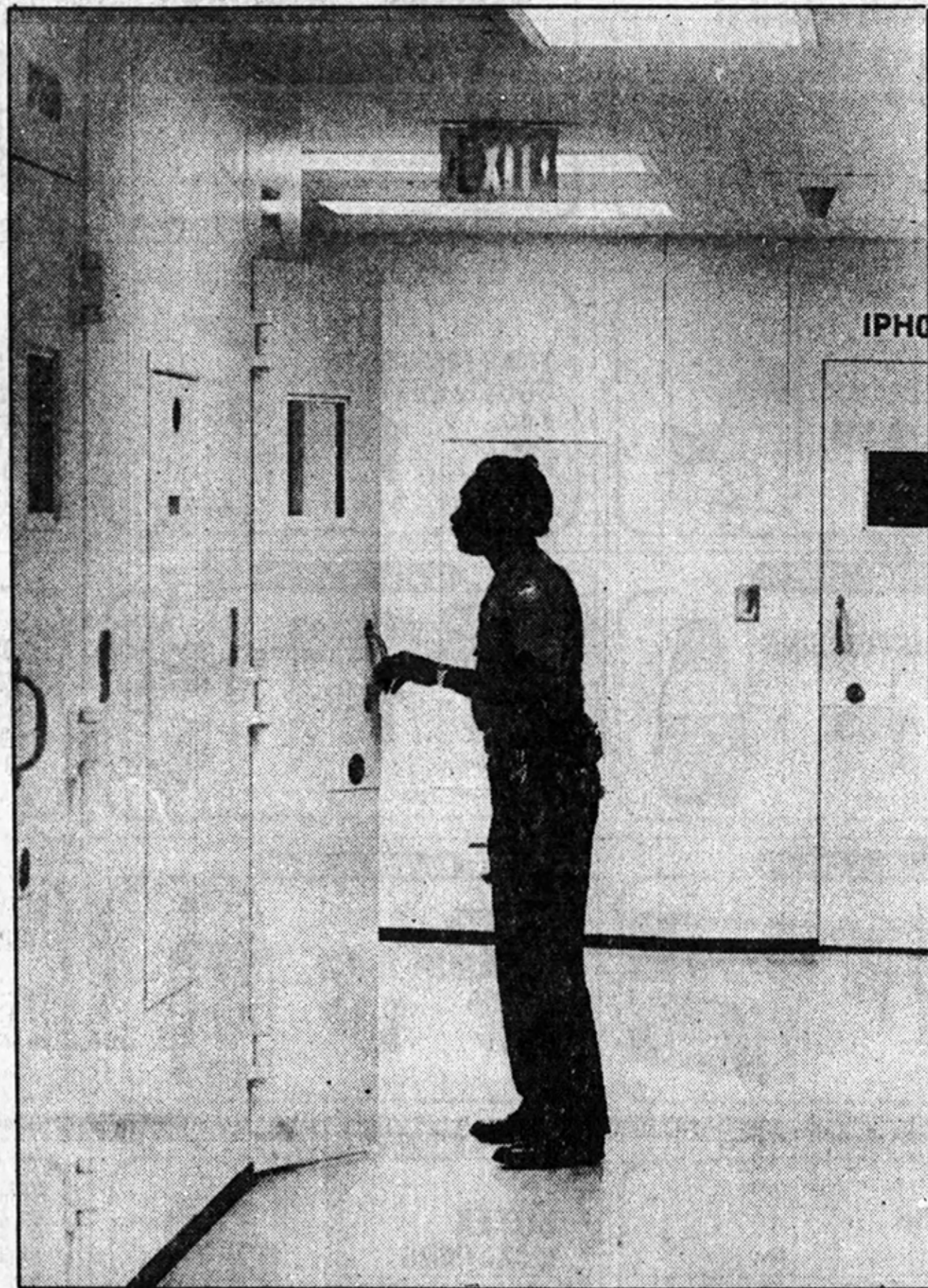
The long-delayed opening of the \$16 million, 416-capacity facility provided a simultaneous contrast of ceremony and the gritty realism of an urban jail. The city has been moving inmates over from the outdated cells in the Atlanta police station for several days now.

Attorneys, City Council members, members of the judiciary and other

invited guests stood in the lobby — some carrying lemonade in souvenir plastic glasses commemorating the occasion — as Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, City Council President Marvin Arrington and Public Safety Commissioner George Napper praised the new facility as a much-needed improvement in criminal justice.

Competing with the speeches were occasional interruptions from citizens at the information counter off the lobby: an old man's quavering voice asking the whereabouts of a prisoner, an officer's soothing reply: "Sir, you just go to the window and tell them who you want to see."

The jail had been plagued by con-



BEVERLY CRAWFORD/Staff

Corrections officer Harold Smith opens the door to a holding cell

struction delays and disputes between the contractors and the city that delayed opening for 18 months. But the handsomely landscaped, red-brick, four-story

building on Garnett Street is designed to accommodate modern views on prison philosophy.

See JAIL, Page 26-A

# Jail

Continued From Page 20-A

Mayor Young set the tone: "We don't see our main purpose as putting people in prison and keeping them there. We're putting more emphasis on crime prevention and community relations . . . and when (an offender) is wrong, they'll be treated with respect because our interest is in reclamation, not retribution and punishment."

Matching Young's philosophy, the new jail has not the first cell with bars; nor is there a barbed-wire fence surrounding the grounds. The facility's television-monitored control center, 100,000 square feet in space, porcelain commodes and wash basins in the permanent cells, the processing and screening areas for new arrivals and the jail kitchen make Atlanta's new facility "the state of the art, the best," said J.D. Hudson, director of the city's Bureau of Correctional Services.

Despite the modern equipment and the cleanliness of the new jail, the death of 32-year-old Larry Gene Anderson of East Point on Tuesday marred the opening. Anderson died in a holding cell, and his three companions were hospitalized, after their arrest on charges of committing drug violations and driving under the influence.

Hudson said Anderson's death still was under investigation Wednesday but that he did not appear ill or physically hurt during an initial screening by officers when he was admitted. Hudson said that all new jail arrivals are questioned about whether they feel sick, and that Anderson had said he was not sick.

"If he had appeared intoxicated or injured, he would have been immediately taken to Grady," Hudson said.