



ALABAMA PRISONERS EXECUTED DESPITE JURY VERDICTS REJECTING THE DEATH PENALTY

Michael Lindsey was convicted of murder in 1982. The jury in his case voted by an 11-1 margin for a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Mobile County trial judge Braxton Kittrell overrode the jury's sentence and imposed the death penalty. Mr. Lindsey spent seven years on death row before his execution in 1989. In denying clemency to Mr. Lindsey, Alabama Governor Guy Hunt said that he did not want "to alter the decision of the jury and courts" in Mr Lindsey's case – even though the jury had decided that Mr. Lindsey should not have been executed. Michael Lindsey died by electrocution on May 26, 1989.

Cornelius Singleton was convicted of the 1977 murder of a Catholic nun. Mr. Singleton, who had at best a 65 I.Q. score, was convicted almost exclusively on the basis of a coerced confession. The detectives interrogating him permitted his girlfriend to sit on his lap during the interrogation. The jury determined that the appropriate sentence was life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, but Mobile County trial judge Ferrell McRae overrode the jury's decision and imposed the death penalty. The victim's religious order and parish petitioned to stop Mr. Singleton's execution. He nonetheless was executed by electrocution on November 20, 1992.

Henry Hays was convicted of the racially-motivated 1981 murder of 17-year old Michael Donald. The jury in his case determined that he should be sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Mobile County trial judge Braxton Kittrell overrode the jury's verdict and imposed the death penalty. While on death row, Mr. Hays was active in Project Hope, a group committed to racial reconciliation. Henry Hays died by electrocution on June 6, 1997.

Steven Thompson was convicted of a 1984 murder. At his trial the following year, the jury voted 10-2 in favor of a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Without considering the jury's life verdict as a mitigating circumstance, the trial judge overrode the jury's verdict and imposed the death penalty. Steven Thompson died by electrocution on May 8, 1998.

Anthony Johnson was convicted of a 1984 murder. The State of Alabama conceded that Mr. Johnson did not kill the victim, who was shot by Mr. Johnson's co-defendant. The jury determined that the appropriate punishment was life in prison without parole, but the trial judge overrode the jury's verdict and condemned Mr. Johnson to death. In dissent from the United States Supreme Court's decision upholding Mr. Johnson's death sentence in 1988, Justice Thurgood Marshall wrote: "[I]t approaches the most literal sense of the word 'arbitrary' to put one to death in the face of a contrary jury determination where it is accepted that the jury had indeed responsibly carried out its task." Anthony Johnson was executed by lethal injection on December 12, 2002.