

# Constitution Today

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gang Founder Executed

Kim Curtis  
The Associated Press  
December 13, 2005

Stanley Tookie Williams, the co-founder of the Crips gang, was put to death today in San Quentin, California. He was put to death for murdering four people in 1979. He is the twelfth person to be put to death in California since 1977.

Lawyers for Williams tried to get his death sentence overruled. California courts said they would not reopen William's case. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger could have stopped the execution, but did not. He said that Williams did not show he was sorry for the murders.

Thousands of people came to San Quentin prison to protest. Some of them were famous people. The protesters said that Williams should not be put to death. Many of them believe there should not be a death penalty. They called the execution "state-sponsored murder."

"Tonight is planned . . . cold-blooded murder and I think everyone who is here is here to try to enlist the morality and soul of this country," said singer Joan Baez.

Williams started the Crips gang in 1971 with a friend. Experts say that members of the Crips have caused hundreds of deaths. In 1979, Williams was charged with robbing and killing four people.

Witnesses at the trial said that Williams bragged and laughed about the murders. Williams always said he did not commit the murders. He believed that he changed a lot during his time in jail. He said he was sorry for starting the Crips.

"There is no part of me that existed then that exists now," Williams said in a recent interview.

While he was in jail, Williams wrote books for children. These books told children to stay away from gangs and violence. He also spoke to students, teachers, and community groups about peace.

Williams was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize while he was in jail. The Nobel Peace Prize is an award given to people who help to create peace in the world. William's fans believe he saved hundreds, maybe thousands, of lives.

Governor Schwarzenegger did not agree. He had the power to stop the execution, but did not. He said that Williams never admitted to his crimes. He also said that he had not shown regret for the deaths caused by the Crips.

"Without an apology and atonement for these senseless and brutal killings, there can be no redemption," said Schwarzenegger.

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## DNA Proves Executed Man's Guilt in Murder

The Associated Press

Published Friday, January 13, 2006

DNA tests can answer many questions. Information from DNA can stop an innocent person from going to jail. It can also stop a murderer from walking free.

In the past 16 years, DNA tests have led to the freedom of many innocent prisoners. These prisoners were found guilty of crimes they did not commit. Now that we can use DNA in this way, the debate over the death penalty has changed.

Roger Keith Coleman raped and killed his sister-in-law. He was found guilty but claimed he was innocent. DNA tests proved that he was the murderer. Coleman was executed in 1992.

Many people are against the death penalty. They want old cases to be investigated using DNA evidence. They are sure that DNA testing will prove that some innocent people have been executed.

DNA testing can only be used in some cases. Only in crimes like murder where the murderer may have left blood or skin cells at the crime scene. These cells have DNA that can identify who was at the crime scene.

Barry Scheck is the co-founder of the Innocence Project. This is a group that wants to use DNA tests to see if innocent people have been executed. He said, "We know many more people have been wrongfully convicted than anyone thought."

DNA tests have proven the innocence of 172 prisoners. Centurion Ministries is a New Jersey organization that says DNA testing shows that there are problems with our court system.

But DNA tests can also be used to prove that a criminal is guilty. This is what happened to Roger Keith Coleman.

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# Constitution Today

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## Issue: Death Penalty Florida Executes Serial Killer of 5 Students

Associated Press  
October 25, 2006

STARKE, Fla. (AP) — Danny Harold Rolling was put to death by injection Wednesday for killing five college students in 1990. Rolling is Florida's worst serial killer since Ted Bundy.

Rolling's execution has been an unpleasant reminder for families of the victims.

Dianna Hoyt, whose stepdaughter Christa Hoyt was killed by Rolling, planned to watch the execution at Florida State Prison in Starke.

"This is a tough thing, but is a necessary thing to go through," she said. "This is the final thing we can do for Christa and for my late husband and her dad, Gary."

"It is very hard for us to see someone else die," she said. "But, he deserves it."

Tracy Paules' mother and sister also planned to watch her killer receive the lethal injection. "If you see us crying, it is not for Rolling, but for Tracy," said her mother, Ricky Paules.

Rolling shocked the courtroom by pleading guilty to the five slayings at his 1994 trial.

"There are some things you just can't run from, this being one of those," Rolling told Circuit Judge Stan R. Morris. Judge Morris accepted the pleas and sentenced him to death.

Rolling was executed in the same death chamber where Ted Bundy, the serial killer, was put to death.

Throughout the years, Rolling has insisted he was not as bad as many thought. In a letter to The Associated Press in 2002, Rolling wrote: "I assure you I am not a salivating ogre. Granted ... time's past; the dark era of long ago — Dr. Jeckle & Mr. Hyde did strike up & down the corridors of insanity."

Rolling said he had good and bad personalities. He said he committed the murders because he was abused by his police officer father when he was young. Rolling also said he was treated badly in prison.

Rolling is the 63rd inmate to be put to death since Florida returned to executions in 1979 and the third inmate this year.

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