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CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR FEMALE OFFENDERS:
PRESENT FEMALE DEATH ROW INMATES AND
DEATH SENTENCES AND EXECUTIONS OF FEMALE OFFENDERS,
JANUARY 1, 1973, TO MARCH 1, 1991*

by

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* A new periodic report on the current implementation of the death penalty for female offenders, combining information formerly reported under two separate periodic report titles: "Female Offenders on Death Row as of _____," and "Imposition of Death Sentences Upon Female Offenders, January 1, 1973, through _____."

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This edition of this periodic report is the first to combine both death sentencing information and current death row occupancy information concerning crimes committed by female offenders. Both the female death sentencing rate and the female death row population remain very small in comparison to that for adults, each being around 1% to 4% of the totals. However, the annual death sentencing rate has doubled beginning in 1989, and the population of female death row inmates is growing.

My research continues on the imposition of death sentences and the actual execution of female offenders throughout American history. Preliminary findings indicate that actual execution of female offenders is quite rare, with only 398 documented instances beginning with the first one in 1632. And the incidence of execution of females has declined considerably in the twentieth century as compared to earlier centuries. The last female offender executed was Velma Barfield in North Carolina on November 2, 1984. For a more complete history of this practice, please see Streib, "Death Penalty for Female Offenders," 58 U. CIN. L. REV. 845 (1990). A detailed history of the death sentence for female juvenile offenders can be found in Streib & Sametz, "Executing Female Juveniles," 22 CONN. L. REV. 3 (1989).

FEMALE DEATH SENTENCES IMPOSED:

The current American death penalty system began when new death penalty statutes were passed beginning in the Fall of 1972. These statutes followed the United States Supreme Court's decision in Furman v. Georgia, 408 U.S. 238, on June 29, 1972, which in effect struck down all then existing death penalty statutes. Sentencing began under the new statutes in 1973 and continues through today. While some of these post-Furman statutes have undergone minor and sometimes major challenges, most have endured relatively unchanged, making them and the sentences under them the legal structure for our current death penalty system.

While some uncertainty exists as to the precise number of death sentences imposed in the early years of this period, Table 1 on the next page lists the sentences imposed each year according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics and to my research. A total of 83 female death sentences have been imposed, only 1.9% of the total of 4,329 death sentences for all offenders. Despite some fluctuations particularly in the early years of this period, the death sentencing rate for female offenders was typically about 5 per year beginning in the early 1980s. However, beginning in 1989 this annual death sentencing rate doubled and has remained at this new, higher rate since that time. Research continues to discover the reasons for this dramatic jump in the female death sentencing rate.

TABLE 1

DEATH SENTENCES IMPOSED UPON FEMALE OFFENDERS,

JANUARY 1, 1973, TO MARCH 1, 1991

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Death Sentences</u>	<u>Female Death Sentences</u>	<u>Portion of Total</u>
1973	42	2	4.8%
1974	151	1	0.7%
1975	301	6	2.0%
1976	234	4	1.7%
1977	141	1	0.7%
1978	188	4	2.1%
1979	158	4	2.5%
1980	186	2	1.1%
1981	239	3	1.3%
1982	277	5	1.8%
1983	262	4	1.5%
1984	294	8	2.7%
1985	291	5	1.7%
1986	315	3	1.0%
1987	304	5	1.6%
1988	296	5	1.7%
1989	300*	11	3.7%
1990	300*	8	2.7%
1991**	50*	2	4.0%
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Totals:	4,329	83	1.9%

*Estimates

**As of March 1

Appendix A to this report (pp. 4-7) provides a more detailed listing of name, age, race, gender, state, and current status for each case. While the sources of this information are many, the major sources are the outstanding research effort of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (particularly their newsletter, Death Row, U.S.A.) and the equally fine monitoring effort of the National Coalition for the Abolition of the Death Penalty. However, the data from 1973 through the early 1980s may not be as complete as those for more recent years. This data compilation effort has always been and it appears will always be "research in progress," so recipients of this report are asked to complement this research with any corrections, additions, and deletions which they might be able to provide.

CURRENT FEMALE DEATH ROW INMATES:

Of the 83 death sentences imposed upon female offenders since 1973, only 33 female offenders remain on the death rows of 16 states. Three-quarters of the offenders are white and an even greater portion of their victims were white. Their present ages range from 21 to 69, and they have been on death row from 1 week to nearly 9 years.

Appendix B to this report (pp. 8-11) sets forth the names of these offenders and some brief details about their crimes and sentences. Multiple sentencing dates mean that the earlier death sentence was reversed but then a new death sentence was imposed.

APPENDIX A

FEMALE DEATH SENTENCES IMPOSED, JANUARY 1, 1973, TO MARCH 1, 1991

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>OFFENDER'S NAME</u>	<u>RACE</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>DATE OF CRIME</u>	<u>DATE OF SENTENCE</u>	<u>CURRENT STATUS</u>
1973	Ward, Mamie Lee	W	N.C.	?	9-?-73	reversed in 1976
	?	?	Ga.	?	-73	reversed in 19??
1974	Hunt, Rozell O.	AI	N.C.	?	6-?-74	reversed in 1976
1975	Boykin, Margie	W	N.C.	?	12-?-75	reversed in 1977
	Lockett, Sandra	B	Ohio	1-15-75	4- -75	reversed in 1978
	Osborne, Alberta	W	Ohio	12-15-74	- -75	reversed in 1978
	Sanders, Janet (AKA Miller)	W	Okla.	2-24-75	8-26-75	reversed in 1977
	Smith, Rebecca	W	Ga.	8-31-74	1-30-75	reversed in 1983
	Glenn, Mabel	?	Cal.	?	10-21-75	reversed in 1979
1976	Brown, Faye B.	B	N.C.	?	1-?-76	reversed in 1977
	Jacobs, Sonia	W	Fla.	2-20-76	8-20-76	reversed in 1981
	Wernert, Patricia	W	Ohio	11- -75	11- -76	reversed in 1978
	?	?	Cal.	?	-76	reversed in 1977
1977	Smith, Benita	B	Ohio	?	12- -77	reversed in 1978
1978	Anderson, Mary	W	Texas	1-3-78	8-29-78	reversed in 1982?
	Barfield, Velma	W	N.C.	2-1-78	12-2-78	executed 11-2-84
	Bracewell, Debra	W	Ala.	8-15-77	5-17-78	reversed in 1981
	Detter, Rebecca	W	N.C.	6-2-77	9-26-78	reversed in 1979
1979	Binsz, Michelle	W	Okla.	?	10-23-79	reversed in 1984
	Burnett, Linda	W	Texas	6-01-78	3-20-79	reversed in 1983

(continued)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>OFFENDER'S NAME</u>	<u>RACE</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>DATE OF CRIME</u>	<u>DATE OF SENTENCE</u>	<u>CURRENT STATUS</u>
(1979)	Cunningham, Emma	W	Ga.	1-1-79	10-26-79	reversed in 1983
	Tyler, Shirley	B	Ga.	10-22-79	12-04-79	reversed in 1986
1980	O'Bryan, LaVerne	W	Ky.	7-5-79	9-12-80	reversed in 1982
	Perillo, Pamela	W	Texas	2-24-80	9-2-80 & 11-13-84	now on death row
1981	Buttrum, Janice	W	Ga.	9-3-80	8-31-81	reversed in 1989
	Stebbing, Annette	W	Md.	4-9-80	4-30-81	reversed in 1985
	Thomas, Patricia	B	Ala.	2-28-81	12-28-81	reversed in 1990
1982	Cannaday, Attina	W	Miss.	6-3-82	9-23-82	reversed in 1984
	Ford, Priscilla	B	Nev.	11-27-80	4-29-82	now on death row
	Foster, Doris	AI	Md.	1-29-81	2-8-82 & 4-4-84	reversed in 1987?
	Smith, Nadean	W	Okla.	7-4-82	12-29-82	now on death row
	Whittington, Teresa	W	Ga.	1-2-82	5-7-82	reversed in 1984
1983	Grant, Rosalie	B	Ohio	4-1-83	10-21-83	reversed in 1991
	Neelley, Judith	W	Ala.	9-23-82	4-18-83	now on death row
	Summers, Sheila	W	Nev.	9-14-82	12-20-83	reversed in 1986
	Young, Sharon	W	Ohio	6-12-83	9-30-83	reversed in 1986
1984	Foster, Doris	A.I.	Md.	1-29-81	4-4-84 & 2-8-82	reversed in 1986?
	Hendrickson, Pat.	W	Ark.	3-10-83	4-13-84	reversed in 1985
	Jackson, Andrea	B	Fla.	5-16-83	2-10-84	reversed in 1990
	Moore, Marie	W	N.J.	1- -83	11-19-84	reversed in 1988
	Perillo, Pamela	W	Texas	2-24-80	11-13-84 & 9-2-80	now on death row
	Tucker, Karla	W	Texas	6-13-83	4-25-84	now on death row
	Williamson, Celia	W	Miss.	3-23-82	3-14-84	reversed in 1987

(continued)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>OFFENDER'S NAME</u>	<u>RACE</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>DATE OF CRIME</u>	<u>DATE OF SENTENCE</u>	<u>CURRENT STATUS</u>
(1984)	Windsor, Karla	W	Idaho	9-6-83	2-28-84	reversed in 1985?
1985	Beets, Betty	W	Texas	8-6-83	10-14-85	now on death row
	Brown, Debra	B	Ohio	7-13-84	6-18-85 & 6-23-86	reversed in 1991
	Buenoano, Judi	W	Fla.	9-16-71	11-26-85	now on death row
	Houston, Judy	W	Miss.	6-03-84	11-30-85	reversed in 1988
	Thacker, Lois	W	Ind.	11-03-84	06-27-85	reversed in 1990
1986	Brown, Debra	B	Ind.	6-18-84	6-23-86 & 6-18-85	now on death row
	Cooper, Paula	B	Ind.	5-14-85	7-11-86	reversed in 1989
	Owens, Gaile	W	Tenn.	2-17-85	1-15-86	now on death row
1987	Caillier, Carla	W	Fla.	11-20-86	3-19-87	reversed in 1988
	Casteel, Dee Dyne	W	Fla.	8-20-83	9-16-87	reversed in 1990
	Cox, Sue	W	N.C.	7-12-86	10-30-87	now on death row
	Dudley, Kaysie	W	Fla.	9-30-85	1-27-87	reversed in 1989
	Foster, Lafonda	W	Ky.	3-9-86	4-24-87	now on death row
1988	Green, Elizabeth	B	Ohio	1-4-88	7-11-88	reversed in 1991
	Haney, Judie	W	Ala.	1-1-84	11-18-88	now on death row
	Newton, Francis	B	Texas	4-7-87	11-17-88	now on death row
	Wacaser, Nila	W	Mo.	8-28-87	5-31-88	reversed in 1990
	Walker, Altione	W	Ala.	3-31-88	12-15-88	now on death row

(continued)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>OFFENDER'S NAME</u>	<u>RACE</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>DATE OF CRIME</u>	<u>DATE OF SENTENCE</u>	<u>CURRENT STATUS</u>
1989	Allen, Wanda	B	Okla.	12- -88	4-26-89	now on death row
	Balfour, Susie	B	Miss.	10-7-88	-89	now on death row
	Coffman, Cynthia	W	Cal.	11-7-86	8-30-89	now on death row
	Harris, Louise	B	Ala.	3-11-88	8-11-89	now on death row
	Jones, Patricia	W	Okla.	4- -88	12-7-89	now on death row
	Lampkin, Beatrice	B	Ohio	-88	4-26-89	reversed in 1991
	Landress, Cindy	W	Ind.	4-23-88	6-26-89	now on death row
	Plantz, Marilyn	W	Okla.	8- -88	3-31-89	now on death row
	Rivers, Delores	B	Pa.	2-?-88	3-16-89	now on death row
	Stager, Barbara	W	N.C.	2-1-88	5-19-89	now on death row
	Twenter, Virginia	W	Mo.	5-4-88	1-6-89	reversed in 1991
1990	Butler, Sabrina	B	Miss.	4-11-89	3-14-90	now on death row
	Copeland, Faye	W	Mo.	1986-88	11-13-90	now on death row
	Hunt, Deidre	W	Fla.	10-20-89	9-13-90	now on death row
	Jennings, Patricia	W	N.C.	9-19-89	11-5-90	now on death row
	MaHaley, Marilyn	W	N.C.	3-20-90	12-17-90	now on death row
	McDermott, Maureen	W	Cal.	4-28-85	6-15-90	now on death row
	Moore, Blanche	W	N.C.	-89	11-16-90	now on death row
	Smith, Rebecca	W	S.C.	7-17-89	12-10-90	now on death row
1991	Milke, Debra Jean	W	Ariz.	12-2-89	1-18-91	now on death row
	Smith, Geraldine	B	Ill.	6-?-87	2-20-91	now on death row

APPENDIX B

CASE SUMMARIES FOR CURRENT FEMALE DEATH ROW INMATES

ALABAMA

Haney, Judy: White; age 32 at crime and now age 39 (DOB 6-29-51); murder of her white husband (hired her brother-in-law to commit killing) in Talladega County on 1-1-84; sentenced on 11-18-88.

Harris, Louise: Black; age 34 at time of crime and now age 37 (DOB 6-16-53); murder of her black husband (hired someone to commit killing) in Montgomery County on 3-11-88; sentenced on 8-11-89.

Neelley, Judith Ann: White; age 18 at time of crime and now age 26 (DOB 6-7-64); kidnapping and murder of white female age 13 in DeKalb County on 9-28-82; sentenced on 4-18-83.

Walker, Maxine Altione: White; age 43 at crime and now age 46 (DOB 9-10-44); murder of white male boyfriend (hired nephews to commit killing) in Talladega County on 3-31-88; sentenced on 12-15-88.

ARIZONA

Milke, Debra Jean: White; age 25 at crime and now age 26 (DOB: 3-10-64); murder of white male age 5 (her son) in Maricopa County on 12-2-89; sentenced on 1-18-91.

CALIFORNIA

Coffman, Cynthia: White; age 24 at crime and now age 29 (DOB 1-19-62); murder in San Bernadino County on 11-7-86; sentenced on 8-30-89.

McDermott, Maureen: White; age 37 at crime and now age 43 (DOB 5-15-47); murder in Los Angeles County on 4-28-85; sentenced on 6-8-90.

FLORIDA

Buenoana, Judias V. (AKA Judy Ann Goodyear): White; age 28 at crime and now age 47 (DOB 4-4-43); arsenic murder of white husband in Orlando on 9-16-71; sentenced on 11-26-85.

Hunt, Deidre: White; age 20 at crime and now age 21 (DOB: - - 69); murder of two white males ages 18 and 19 in Datona Beach on 10-20-89; sentenced on 9-13-90.

ILLINOIS

Smith, Geraldine: Black, age 39 at crime and now age 42; hired man to kill her lover's wife (black female, age 37) in Chicago in June 1987; sentenced on 2-20-91.

INDIANA

Brown, Debra Denise: Black; age 21 at crime and now age 28 (DOB 11-11-62); murder of black female age 7 in Gary on 6-18-84; sentenced on 6-23-86.

Landress, Cindy Lou: White; age 30 at crime and now age 33 (DOB 1-20-58); murder of white male adult (her boyfriend) in Hammond (Lake County) on 4-23-88; sentenced on 6-26-89.

KENTUCKY

Foster, Lafonda Faye: White; age 22 at crime and now age 27 (DOB 8-30-63); murder of 3 white males and 2 white females in Fayette County on 3-9-86; sentenced on 4-24-87.

MISSISSIPPI

Balfour, Susie: Black; 27 at crime and now age 29; murder of white male police officer in DeSoto County on 10-7-88; sentenced in late 1989.

Butler, Sabrina: Black; age 19 at crime and now age 21; murder of black male infant (her son) in Lowndes County on 4-11-89; sentenced on 3-14-90.

MISSOURI

Copeland, Faye: White; age 67 at crime and now age 69; murder of four adult males in Livingston County from 1986 through 1988; sentenced on 11-13-90.

NEVADA

Ford, Priscilla: Black; age 51 at crime and now age 62 (DOB 2-10-29); murder of 3 white females and 3 white males in Reno on 11-27-80; sentenced on 4-29-82.

NORTH CAROLINA

Cox, Donna Sue: White; age 27 at crime and now age 31 (DOB 4-6-59); murder of white male adult (her boyfriend) in Parkton (Robeson County) on 7-12-86; sentenced on 10-30-87.

Jennings, Patricia JoAnn [Wells]: White; age 47 at crime and now age 48 (DOB: 8-24-42); murder of elderly white male adult (her husband) in Wilson County on 9-19-89; sentenced on 11-5-90.

Mahaley, Marilyn [Rudd]: White; age 34 at crime and now age 35 (DOB: 9-3-55); murder of white male (her husband) in Alamance County on 3-20-90; sentenced on 12-17-90.

Moore, Blanche [Taylor]: White; age 56 at crime and now age 57 (DOB: 6-?-33); murder of white male adult (her boyfriend) in Alamance County in late 1989; sentenced on 11-16-90.

Stager, Barbara Terry: White; age 39 at crime and now age 42 (DOB 10-30-48); murder of her husband in Durham (Durham County) on 2-1-88; sentenced on 5-19-89.

OKLAHOMA

Allen, Wanda Jean: Black; age 29 at crime and now age 31 (DOB 8-17-59); murder of female adult in Oklahoma County in December 1988; sentenced on 4-26-89.

Jones, Patricia: White; age 36 at crime and now age 39; murder in Oklahoma County in April, 1988; sentenced on 12-7-89.

Plantz, Marilyn Kay: White; age 27 at crime and now age 30 (DOB 10-19-60); murder of white male adult (her husband) in Oklahoma County in August, 1988; sentenced on 3-31-89.

Smith, Lois Nadean: White; age 41 at crime and now age 50 (DOB 9-12-40); murder of white female adult in Gans (Sequoia County) on 7-4-82; sentenced 12-29-82.

PENNSYLVANIA

Rivers, Delores: Black; age 34 at crime and now age 37 (DOB 12-25-53); murder in Philadelphia in February (?) 1988; sentenced on 3-16-89.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Smith, Rebecca: White; age 39 at crime and now age 41; murder of white male age 49 (her husband) in North Myrtle Beach on 7-17-89; sentenced on 12-10-90.

TENNESSEE

Owens, Gaille Kirksey: White; age 32 at crime and now age 38 (DOB 9-22-52); murder of husband (had someone commit killing) in Shelby County on 2-17-85; sentenced on 1-15-86.

TEXAS

Beets, Betty Lou: White; age 46 at crime and now age 53 (DOB 3-12-37); murder of husband in Athens (Henderson County) on 8-6-83; sentenced on 10-14-85.

Newton, Francis Elaine: Black; age 21 at crime and now age 25 (DOB 4-12-65); murder of husband (black male age 23), son (black male age 7), and daughter (black female age 1) in Houston on 4-7-87; sentenced on 11-17-88.

Perillo, Pamela Lynn: White; age 24 at crime and now age 35 (DOB 12-3-55); robbery and murder of white (?) male age 26 in Houston on 2-24-80; sentenced on 9-2-80 and 11-13-84.

Tucker, Karla Faye: White; age 23 at crime and now age 31 (DOB 11-18-59); murder of white female age 32 and white male age 27 in Houston on 6-13-83; sentenced on 4-25-84.