

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/166/2001

16 November 2001

Further information on EXTRA 74/01 (AMR 51/163/2001, 8 November 2001) - Death penalty

USA (Georgia) Fred Marion Gilreath (m), white, aged 63

Fred Gilreath was executed in Georgia on 15 November after 21 years on death row. He was convicted of killing his wife, Linda Gilreath, and her father, Gerrit Van Leeuwen, in 1979.

The execution had been scheduled for 7pm on 14 November, but was delayed by 20 hours by a federal court. The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals issued the temporary stay apparently to give it more time to consider a last-minute appeal that his clemency hearing had been not been full, fair or impartial, due to the absence of one board member, and an alleged conflict of interest of two others. Early on 15 November, the 11th Circuit court refused any further stay. The US Supreme Court then delayed the execution by another 30 minutes. When it too, denied a further stay, the execution went ahead, and Fred Gilreath was pronounced dead at 3.53pm on 15 November.

The state Pardons and Paroles Board had rejected clemency on 13 November. It heard testimony supporting clemency from the family members of the victims and the prisoner (see original EXTRA). Fred Gilreath's son urged the Board to grant clemency: "If my mother could talk now, she would say she didn't want him to die. We've lost enough... We don't want to lose any more".

After the execution, a spokesperson for the US organization Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation said that the Gilreath family were devastated: "The state of Georgia made orphans of [Fred Gilreath's children]... despite their pleas to the state of Georgia that their families not be traumatized. Another body is in the coffin".

Fred Gilreath is the third person to be executed in Georgia in the past three weeks, and the 26th since the USA resumed executions in 1977. Nationwide his was the 743rd execution since 1977 and the 60th this year.

No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.