

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 316/99 (AMR 51/205/99, 13 December 1999) - Death Penalty / Legal Concern

USA (Virginia) Steve Edward Roach, aged 23

Steve Edward Roach was executed in the state of Virginia on 13 January 2000 for a crime committed when he was 17 years old. International law bans the use of the death penalty against child offenders -- those who commit crimes when under 18 years old.

Steve Roach was sentenced to death in 1995 for the murder of his neighbour, 70-year-old Mary Ann Hughes, on 3 December 1993. She was shot at her home in the small rural town of Stanardsville in Greene County.

Governor Gilmore denied clemency at 8pm local time, an hour before the scheduled execution. Steve Roach was pronounced dead at 9.04pm.

After the execution, his attorney released a statement on behalf of the 23-year-old: "It was important to Steve Roach to be remembered not just as the teenager who committed a horrible crime, but also the adult who accepted responsibility for it and begged the forgiveness of those he caused to suffer. And not just as someone who ended a life for no reason, but also as someone whose own life was ended to no-one's benefit. Steve Roach wanted us who live after his death to know that he was not a monster: He was a human being, a young man, with flaws and with promise who deserved to live. The principle lesson he wanted his own death to communicate is that this makes no sense. Killing kids makes no sense, and it must be stopped".

Steve Roach was the second child offender executed in Virginia this week. Chris Thomas was executed on 10 January, also for a crime committed when he was 17. The state of Virginia, which executed child offender Dwayne Wright in October 1998, has now accounted for half of the known executions of child offenders in the world since October 1997. All six have been carried out in the USA.

The USA has now executed 12 child offenders since 1990. The combined total in the rest of the world in the same period is nine.

Another child offender, Glen Charles McGinnis, is scheduled for execution in Texas on 25 January 2000 (see UA 320/99, AMR 51/213/99, 16 December 1999 and *Shame in the 21st Century: Three child offenders scheduled for execution in January 2000*, AMR 51/189/99, December 1999).

No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals on behalf of Steve Roach.