

Execution date set for Cooley, who killed UA coeds in 1986

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POSTED: 11:25 a.m. EDT, Jul 11, 2008

Ohio inmate Richard Cooley's 21-year stay on death row is set to end in October.

The Ohio Supreme Court today ordered the warden of the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility near Lucasville to carry out Cooley's execution by lethal injection on Oct. 14.

In May, the Summit County prosecutor's office asked Ohio's high court to set an execution date after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the legality of lethal injection in a Kentucky case.

In 2004, Cooley sued Ohio, claiming the execution procedure, which uses a cocktail of three chemicals, violates the U.S. Constitution's ban on cruel and unusual punishment.

Ohio and most other states had been under an unofficial execution moratorium while awaiting the U.S. Supreme Court decision.

Cooley, 40, was sentenced to die in 1986 for raping and murdering two University of Akron students.

In September 1986, Cooley, then 19, and his accomplice Clint Dickens, 17, abducted, raped and murdered Wendy Offredo, 21 and Dawn McCreery, 20. The women were headed home when Offredo's car was disabled by a rock thrown by Cooley and Dickens from a bridge over Interstate 77 in West Akron.

A three-judge panel convicted Cooley of aggravated murder, aggravated robbery, felonious assault and kidnapping.

Because Dickens was a juvenile at the time of the crime, he wasn't eligible for the death sentence. He is serving a life sentence.

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