

Court to rule on lethal injection

United Press International
 WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court said Monday it will decide if the federal government must certify that drugs used for executions are "safe and effective" for their lethal purpose.

The justices will review a lower court ruling ordering the Food and Drug Administration to conduct a study to make sure the drugs do not cause "unusual" pain and suffering during executions.

The court set arguments on the issue next term, which begins in October. Meanwhile, several states, including Texas and North Carolina, are continuing to use lethal injections for scheduled executions.

In another case, the court ruled unanimously that states may not ban liquor advertisements from cable television programs beamed in from other states that allow the advertising.

The decision reverses a lower court ruling that Oklahoma's interest in shielding its citizens from liquor and wine ads outweighs the free speech rights of cable networks.

In the lethal injection case, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia decided prisoners in 11 states facing execution by injection must be assured the method is not "cruel and unusual."

Mattox forsee no delays on Texas executions, expects court to rule in favor of injections

AUSTIN — Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox said Monday he does not believe the Supreme Court's decision to consider the safety and effectiveness of drugs used in executions will delay any executions in Texas.

Mattox said he expects the high court to "rule quickly" in favor of the 11 states that use lethal injections to carry out death sentences.

The Supreme Court decided Monday to review a lower court ruling ordering the Food and

Drug Administration to determine whether the drugs cause "unusual" pain and suffering during execution.

Since the lower court ruling in October 1983, two Texas inmates have been executed by lethal injection.

"The Supreme Court very clearly expressed itself in the O'Bryan case," said Mattox. "Therefore, we do not see the decision today as another major stumbling block to carrying out Texas' death penalty statute."

"As a result of the FDA's inaction," Judge Skelly Wright wrote last October, "(prisoners) face the risk of cruel executions and are deprived of the FDA's expert judgment as to the effectiveness of the drugs used for lethal injection."

"Even a slight error in dosage or administration can leave a prisoner conscious but paralyzed while dying, a sentient witness of his or her own slow, lingering asphyxiation," Wright wrote.

The lethal-injection method uses

a combination of drugs that first induce a coma, then halt breathing.

About 200 of the nearly 1,400 prisoners on Death Row nationwide face execution by lethal injection. The injections are used in Arkansas, Idaho, Illinois, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah and Washington. Some states give a choice.

Inmates in Oklahoma and Texas brought suit demanding the FDA investigate and certify that the drugs used are suited for their purpose.

They noted the agency took time to assure they were safe for lab experiments with animals.

The appeals court, 2-1, ordered the FDA investigation. But the government appealed, and Chief Justice Warren Burger stayed the order pending the high court's decision on whether to hear the case.

Three men have been executed in America by lethal injection — in Texas and North Carolina — since the appeals court ruled on Oct. 14, 1983.

Charlie Brooks, put to death in Texas in December 1982, was the first person in the nation executed by lethal injection. He took only seven minutes to die.

But James David Autry, executed in Texas March 14, took 15 minutes to die after the combination of drugs were first given to him.

Dr. L.D. Masters, the physician who pronounced Autry dead, said Autry was given a diluted solution of the drugs for a longer period.

Nine minutes into the procedure, Autry shrugged his shoulders and made a gesture toward the warden indicating nothing was happening.

Less than a minute later, he experienced about 20 seconds of muscle spasms in his legs and then became lifeless. He was pronounced dead four minutes later.

Gifted students like A&M camp

By JUDY OLIVER
 Reporter

How about a summer camp with astronauts and architects, marine biologists and veterinary scientists? That's what is offered at Texas A&M's Galveston Island Adventure, a camp for above-average children who want a close look at the world of professions.

Dr. William Nash, who began the camp four summers ago, is director of the Texas A&M Gifted and Talented Institute, which sponsors the camp for students 11 to 16 years old. He will be president of the National Association for Gifted Children in 1985.

"Studies of adult creative achievers frequently report that individuals who become leaders and innovators in their field often fell in love with that field of study at a fairly young age and pursued it with intensity over the years," Nash says. "We try to provide an exciting adventure in these fields of study to allow students a chance to fall in love with one."

The camp will be the first time many of the participants have

been really challenged intellectually, Nash said.

"A lot of bright kids in some school settings aren't really challenged and breeze through making the highest grades with little effort," he said. "Then they receive scholarships to outstanding universities and are forced to compete. Some of them don't handle it very well and even flunk out."

The first group of 165 campers arrived Sunday at Texas A&M University at Galveston to explore marine biology and microcomputers, Nash said.

The campers will spend most of their time on field trips, he said.

Marine biology students will gain an understanding of nature through collecting specimens and studying sand and oyster reefs, Nash said.


Two other sessions will be held July 8-28 and July 15-28 for campers interested in journalism, architecture, space science and veterinary medicine.


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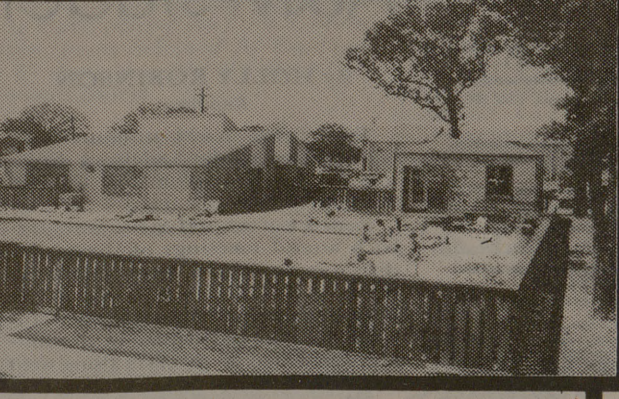
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