

Most on death row escape execution

1 of 42 killed in past decade

WASHINGTON (AP) — One out of every 42 death row inmates has been executed in the decade since the Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment, the federal government reported Sunday.

There were 2,839 convicts under a death sentence from 1977 to 1986 and 68 of them were executed, including 18 last year, the Bureau of Prisons said. There have been more than 200,000 murders in the past decade.

Since 1977, one-third of the offenders on death row carried out successful court appeals or obtained commutations of their sentences, and 41 died while awaiting execution. A total of 1,781 inmates were on death row at the end of last year, including 18 women.

Of those under a death sentence in the past decade, some 2.4 percent were executed, including 2.7 percent of the white offenders and 2 percent of the blacks. At the end of last year, 57 percent of those on death row were white, 42 percent black and 1 percent were American Indians or Asian Americans.

More than 60 percent of those awaiting execution are being held in the South, 17 percent are in the

West, 15 percent in the Midwest and 5 percent in the Northeast.

Among the 68 executed since 1977, it took an average of six years and four months from the time the sentence was imposed until it was carried out. For the 18 executed last year, the average time spent awaiting execution was seven years and two months.

Last year, 10 inmates were executed in Texas, three in Florida and one each in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

A total of 297 people were sentenced to death in 1986, while 64 had their death sentences vacated or commuted.

At the end of last year, 254 condemned inmates were being held in Florida prisons, more than any other state. Texas had 236 convicts facing the death penalty, California had 176, Georgia 111 and Illinois 101.

As of last Dec. 31, the death penalty was authorized in 37 states and by federal statute. The last federal execution was in 1963.

The Supreme Court held that capital punishment was constitutional under strictly defined conditions in 1976 and the first execution following that decision was carried out in 1977.

Vietnam announces amnesty for prisoners

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — Vietnam is releasing 6,685 prisoners, including generals and senior officials of the South Vietnamese regime it toppled in 1975, the official Vietnam News Agency said Sunday.

The agency said the communist government ordered the amnesty and reduced the terms for 5,320 other prisoners to mark two anniversaries.

Among those granted amnesty were 480 military and civilian personnel of the former South Vietnamese government, including two ministers, 18 administrative officials, nine officers of general rank, 248 field officers and 117 junior officers, it said.

"They were all convicted of crimes against the people," said the agency, monitored in Bangkok.

After the communist victory over South Vietnam in 1975 following the withdrawal of U.S. forces, tens of thousands of South Vietnamese were sent to re-education camps.

The official news agency's report said the Council of Ministers granted the amnesty to mark National Day Sept. 2 and the 42nd anniversary Aug. 19 of Vietnam's "Au-

gust Revolution," when a communist government was first proclaimed in North Vietnam.

It said 365 prisoners were released in Ho Chi Minh City — formerly Saigon — where authorities "provided material and moral conditions for their quick reintegration into social life."

After their victory, the communists set up a network of up to 100 re-education camps that critics described as the "Vietnamese Gulag."

In 1980, Hanoi told the London-based human rights organization Amnesty International that 1 million people underwent short re-education courses and 40,000 were detained for longer periods.

Western sources believe that up to 200,000 South Vietnamese spent at least a year in the camps, which range from "model" institutions visited by foreigners to remote jungle shacks where inmates die of malnutrition and disease.

Former inmates and other sources interviewed in recent years said the systematic brutality found in early Soviet labor camps was not the policy in Vietnam, but that there were occasional beatings, torture and executions.

Auto union workers prepare for strike as deadline nears

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) — Strike preparations are all but complete at the locals of the United Auto Workers as negotiators for Ford Motor Co. and the union face today's contract deadline.

For the 104,000 rank-and-file Ford Motor Co. workers, little was left to do but wait for word on whether union and company bargainers would reach a contract by the 11:59 p.m. deadline today. The talks resumed Sunday after a Satur-

day session that lasted late into the night.

The top Ford bargainers, Vice President Peter Pestillo and Labor Relations Director Stanley Surma, said talks with Ford would go all night if necessary.

UAW President Owen Bieber planned to meet with the union's 23-member executive board Sunday evening, but a UAW spokesman declined to give a reason for the gathering of union executives and regional directors.

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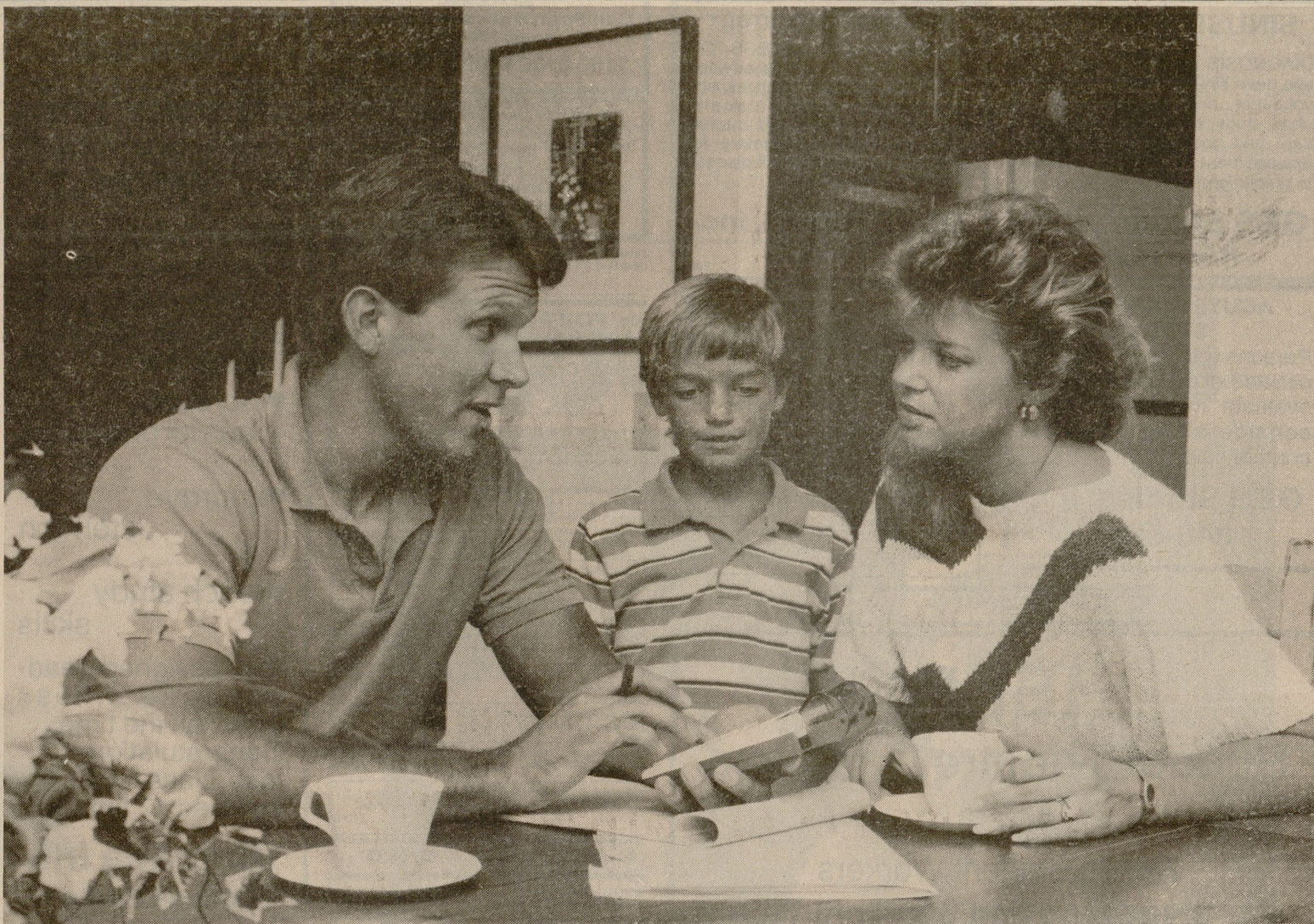
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