

Board hearing. On the phone that night, she told Thomas she had thought the courts would stop the execution. Thomas ended the conversation abruptly; he had no use for her remorse.

We watched the 10 o'clock news: "Time is running out for death row inmate Thomas Ward as he waits for word from the US Supreme Court. A vigil of death-penalty protesters continues at the governor's mansion." We watched the report on the Simpson trial—a study in contrasts. Thomas' lawyers were no dream team; his trial lasted a day and a half. We speculated on whether O.J. did it alone or with an accomplice.

All evening long, a guard from the prison's "tactical" squad sat by us, listening to every word and keeping a log of Thomas' phone calls and activities. Thomas seemed used to this intrusion, but I finally lost my patience and asked him to back off so that my client and I could talk privately. With squadrons of guards surrounding Camp F (the "death compound" at Angola), there was little risk that we were going to hatch an escape plan. The guard slid his chair to the corner of the tier, but kept his eyes riveted on Thomas.

One of the guards brought in a tub of butter pecan ice cream, which we dished out into Styrofoam cups—the only thing either of us had eaten in many hours. Thomas, a diabetic, had been on a low-fat, no sugar diet—until today. "Do you want to write a statement?" I asked. "The warden seems to think your death will have more meaning if you make a statement." Thomas shrugged his shoulders and said, "You know how I feel—you write it." I typed out a statement on the laptop computer I had brought with me from Boston. Thomas studies it through the bars, dodging his head back and forth so that he could read the screen. He suggested a few changes, and then said it was OK:

"The warden has asked me if I would like to make a final statement. I do not wish to do so. I have asked my lawyer to inform the press as follows: I am leaving the world at peace with myself and with the Almighty. I feel remorse for the things that I did. I hope that young people today will learn that violence is not an answer. I hope that the legal system learns that lesson, too. The death penalty is not a solution."

One of the guards summoned me to take a phone call at 10:45 p.m. It was my office. The Supreme Court had turned down the appeal. The governor had decided against commutation. A spike of disappointment shot down my spine. I thought I was prepared for this news. I was not. I was convinced that our claim for a new trial was both legally and morally compelling. I felt betrayed by the courts.

All emotion drained from my face as I returned to the cellblock to share the news with Thomas. He was quiet. He nodded his acknowledgment that we had reached the end of the road. He took off two rings and handed them to me. "I want you to have these," he said. "One of them is my wedding band. The other is just a trinket I picked up years ago in California." I told him I would give the wedding band to Tarsha (Linda and Thomas' oldest child) and keep the other ring myself.

At 11 p.m., the warden returned. I gave him a copy of the statement, and he shook my hand and thanked me. The statement obviously had more meaning for him than for Thomas. One of the guards told me I had to leave because prison rules permit lawyers to stay with their clients only until an hour before execution. I asked for a few more minutes with Thomas. Under the bulldog gaze of the officer, Thomas and I stretched our arms through the bars and gave each other as much of a hug as the bars would allow. We

said our good-byes as we held each other, and then I left the cellblock.

A deputy warden told me that I would have to leave the building and the prison complex. I asked him what would happen between 11 p.m. and midnight; he said that, according to prison regulations, only a "spiritual adviser" could remain with Thomas until midnight. Since Thomas had declined to meet with the prison chaplain, he would be alone for that hour. The chief warden stepped into our conversation and asked if I felt I could be Thomas' spiritual adviser. He pointed out that Thomas considered himself an Israelite (an African-American Jew) and I was Jewish (I had mentioned that to the warden when he brought up the subject of Christianity). I said I felt I could do that. Neither of us was fooled by this collusion. He did not want Thomas to be alone.

I returned to the cellblock, but conversation did not come easily that last hour with Thomas. He withdrew as we talked about death. He wondered what was on the other side. He felt confident that something better lay ahead. He told me he had lived a long life—unlike his brother, who was stabbed to death on the streets of Harlem at age 26. He said he had not begged the Pardon Board to spare his life because his diabetes was causing him to lose sensation in his extremities, and he did not wish to spend his life as an amputee in prison. He said he had seen such inmates in the sick bay, and he described the way they were treated by the guards as monstrously degrading. He said he was ready to go.

At 11:41 p.m., the warden arrived with the phalanx of guards who would accompany Thomas to the death room. I would be permitted to walk by his side until we reached the witness room. I was not on the approved witness list, and I had no desire to be.

We marched out of the cellblock, past a row of guards. No one spoke. As Thomas was marched through the witness room, I waited in an adjacent cinderblock room with a few guards while the state did its work. I typed out my own statement to give to the press. I hoped the press would be outside the gate, but I feared I would lose my composure if they were.

At 12:11 a.m., the warden, several guards and a lab-coated official walked single file out of the death room. Everyone stood up as they walked by, except me. I could not. A lawyer for the prison system stopped at my chair and said, "He handled it well. He was OK." I thanked him for telling me and left.

The press talked with the warden in his office as the guards ushered me out of the prison gate. There was no one to give my statement to. The night and a dark road lay ahead. I leave my statement here as a small tribute to a client and friend:

"Thomas Ward's case is a good example of the unfairness and arbitrariness of our death penalty system in the United States. Mr. Ward, who was poor and an African-American, did not receive a fair trial. My colleagues and I have worked for nine years, trying to get Mr. Ward a new trial. But the bottom line is that no matter how fair a trial he received, our legal system does not have any reliable means of sorting out who deserves death and who does not. As a result, the people on death row are often there simply because, as in this case, they did not have enough money for "dream team" lawyers or even competent lawyers. Or they had prosecutors who, as in this case, withheld evidence. Or, as in this case, the courts announced new principles but refused to apply them to people who had already been tried. This case leaves me more convinced than ever that, because we lack the wisdom to know who should live and who should die,

our legal system should not be in the business of killing people."

RECOGNITION OF REAR ADM. RAY  
R. SAREERAM

**HON. JAMES V. HANSEN**

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, August 1, 1995*

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Rear Adm. Ray R. Sareeram, Supply Corps, U.S. Navy, as he prepares to retire on October 1 1995. Rear Admiral Sareeram is completing over 33 years of dedicated service to the Navy and our Nation.

A native of Sacramento, CA, Rear Admiral Sareeram graduated from Sacramento State College and was commissioned through Officer Candidate School in 1962. He subsequently earned a masters of business administration degree from the University of Michigan, and is a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Currently, Rear Admiral Sareeram is the director, Supply Programs and Policy Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Admiral Sareeram has distinguished himself in one of the most crucial flag-rank logistics billets in the Navy. His leadership and vision has been instrumental in maintaining the high state of readiness our naval forces rely upon to meet the global commitments with which they are tasked.

Rear Admiral Sareeram's other tours ashore have included command at the Naval Supply Center in Oakland, CA, and at the Ogden Defense Depot in the great State of Utah. Admiral Sareeram served as fleet supply officer, U.S. Pacific Fleet during the Desert Storm conflict. He also served as deputy chief of staff for supply, Commander Task Force 73 in the Philippine Islands. Other tours include service at headquarters, Naval Supply Systems Command, Washington DC; Navy Ships Parts Control Center Mechanicsburg, PA; and, service in Saigon during the Vietnam war.

Rear Admiral Sareeram served at sea as supply officer aboard U.S.S. *Kenneth D. Bailey*, a destroyer based in Mayport, FL; as assistant supply officer on U.S.S. *Sylvania*, a fast combat stores ship out of Naples Italy; and as supply officer on board U.S.S. *Emory S. Land*, a submarine tender based in Norfolk, VA.

Admiral Sareeram's decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with one Gold Star, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal with three Gold Stars, and numerous unit and campaign medals.

Rear Admiral Sareeram is a dynamic and resourceful naval officer totally committed to excellence. A visionary, Admiral Sareeram has led the way in downsizing and streamlining operations without degradation of service to the fleet. His efforts have ensured our naval forces readiness levels are at historic highs even during these times of budget reductions.

Mr. Speaker, Ray Sareeram, his wife, Cathy, and their three children have made many sacrifices during his 33-year naval career. It is only fitting that we should recognize their many accomplishments and thank them for the many years of service to our country.

I ask all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me today in wishing this great American every success as well as "Fair Winds and Following Seas" as he brings to close a distinguished naval career.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

SPEECH OF

**HON. EARL POMEROY**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2099) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes:

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Chairman, today I am supporting passage of the VA, HUD, Independent Agencies appropriations for fiscal year 1996. But I do so with reservation.

Affordable, safe, clean housing is a basic need which eludes many low-income families and elderly individuals. We should not be making extreme cuts to housing programs as our elderly population increases and personal income erodes for the working poor. It is ironic that as we push more people into the at-risk population for becoming homeless, we cut homeless programs by almost half.

I hope that my colleagues on the conference committee will be amenable to any increases suggested by their Senate counterparts.

Additionally, I supported the Stokes-Boehlert amendment to the VA-HUD-Independent Agencies appropriations bill, which eliminated legislative language that would gut portions of the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Community Right-to-Know Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act. If the amendment had been approved it would have protected both public health and the legislative process.

Under the Stokes-Boehlert amendment the legislative process, to which we have grown accustomed in this country, would have been preserved. No matter what Members think about the details of the riders that would have been eliminated by the amendment, all should agree that the appropriations process is not the place to have a full and informed discussion of environmental policy. This appropriations process has robbed the public and this body of its chance to have a full and informed discussion of environmental policy.

NOTING THE PASSING OF  
MARJORIE BLACK WILSON

**HON. LOUIS STOKES**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 1, 1995

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker. I am saddened to rise today and report the passing of Marjorie Black Wilson. Marjorie was a very gifted

and inspirational woman who was loved by all who knew her. On July 16, 1995, the St. Louis community mourned her passing after a prolonged illness. I join my colleague from Missouri, BILL CLAY, his wife, Carol, and many other as we reflect upon the life and legacy of this talented and courageous individual.

Throughout her life, Marjorie Black Wilson gave freely of her time and talents. For many years, she volunteered in city schools where she counseled teenage girls on the importance of education. She also had a great love for the arts and theater. In remembering Marjorie, friends recall that she was the type of person who always expected the best from people. Marjorie encouraged others, and she inspired them to reach their fullest potential. They also recall that during her long battle with cancer, Marjorie did not retreat, but she drew them even closer and sought to educate women of color about the disease.

Just recently, The St. Louis American paid special tribute to Marjorie Black Wilson and acknowledged her contributions to the St. Louis community. The article captures the spirit of an individual who was very special to each of us. I am pleased to share this article with my colleagues and the nation.

Mr. Speaker, the passing of Marjorie Black Wilson brings to a close a rich, full life devoted to family, friends, and the community. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Marjorie will always remember her zest for living. My wife, Jay, and I extend our deepest sympathy to her husband, Earl; to her daughters, Denise, Stacy, Kim, and other members of the Wilson family. We take comfort in knowing that Marjorie's spirit lives on.

[From the St. Louis American, July 20-26, 1995]

MARJORIE BLACK WILSON LOVED ARTS AND THEATER

(By Kimberly Kendle)

DOWNTOWN.—A phenomenal woman. Someone who wove a tapestry of love. A friend to children, an appreciator and champion of the arts and theater. A tenacious spirit who was always driven, even in the face of adversity.

These are the words used by close friends of Marjorie Black Wilson, an artist and volunteer in St. Louis public schools, who died Sunday, July 16, 1995, at home in her sleep after a prolonged illness. She was 61.

"She truly had a zest for life and lived it fully and lovingly until the end," said Barbara J. Mabrey, who met Wilson in college in 1952. "She possessed an unusual ability to establish and maintain close relationships. Margie cultivated, nurtured and enriched relationships with many people. She made each of her friends feel very special and important to her."

Mrs. Wilson was born September 5, 1933, to Theodore and Lurline Black in Jefferson City, Mo. She attended the Jefferson City Public Schools and attended college at Lincoln University where she graduated magna cum laude. While attending Lincoln University, she met her husband, Earl Wilson Jr. The two married June 11, 1954, and moved extensively around the country and abroad before setting in St. Louis in 1987.

Mrs. Wilson volunteered in city schools, counseling teen-aged girls on parenting skills and the importance of education in a program called Sisters and Sisters United. The program encourages leadership, character development, rights of passage and womanhood training. She encouraged the girls to postpone sex and parenthood until they finished high school and college.

"One of the things she would do is tell them (the students) about her travels," and Cora Cade-Lemmon who knew Mrs. Wilson for four years. "She had an Afrocentric spelling bee where she would give the girls awards."

Mrs. Wilson was expecting the best from people, Cade-Lemmon added. Cade-Lemmon recalled one day when Wilson, who wanted to give fruit as a reward to the students for good work on their projects, was skeptical about how the children would receive the kind gesture.

"We were thinking these kids aren't going to be into fruit," Cade-Lemmon said. "It turned out to be one of the best awards we had."

During her eight-year battle with cancer, Mrs. Wilson worked diligently to educate women of color about the disease. She is featured in a program to be aired this summer on PBS on treatment options for black women stricken with cancer.

"Margie dealt with her illness as she did with her life, accepting those things she could not change, always including family and friends in her endeavors and fighting the good fight until the end," said Elizabeth J. Chandler, a close friend of Mrs. Wilson.

"I guess the thing I remember most about her is that she was a cancer survivor," Cade-Lemmon said. "Her love for life, she lived life fully and encouraged the girls to do the same. She didn't talk about her illness. She focused on the girls and their development. She put them first."

Mrs. Wilson frequently traveled with her students to visit black colleges and universities across the nation. An admirer of poetry, Mrs. Wilson often took her books with her on such trips, Cade-Lemmon said. "She felt very strongly that only African Americans can save African-American children and that we must lift while we climb."

Mrs. Wilson's ability to lift as she climbed also spread to the world of arts and theater, and she frequently found herself enjoying plays at the St. Louis Black Repertory Theater with friends.

"She was an appreciator and champion of the arts. She encouraged all artists and was a source of inspiration to us all," said Chirley Simmons, an artist and friend of Mrs. Wilson for 10 years.

In what was described by one friend as "a tapestry of love," Marjorie Wilson will be best remembered for her kindness and generosity as she embraced life fully and forcefully.

"Her spirit is alive," Cade-Lemmon said quietly, as she reflected on the memory of a friend. "What she left with us in that life is for the living. And so we take those memories, those memories of Marjorie, we take them with us."

A rosary Mass will be celebrated 7 p.m. Friday, July 21, at St. Nicholas Catholic Church, 701 N. 18th Street. A brief prayer service will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, July 22. Burial will follow in Calvary Cemetery in North St. Louis.

Among the survivors are her husband, Earl Wilson Jr.; three daughters, Denise Wilson of Washington, D.C., Stacey Wilson of Paris, France, and Kimberly Wilson of Washington, D.C.; one grandson, Timothy Alexander Brown Jr.; a sister, Mildred Ballard of Washington, D.C.; a brother, Theodore Black Jr. of Omaha, Neb.; and a host of nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.