

Local convicted killer set to be executed

Death row inmate scheduled to die March 9 for Orlando murder 27 years ago

By Sarah Lundy, Orlando Sentinel

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A man convicted of strangling and stabbing an 84-year-old Orlando woman 27 years ago is scheduled to be executed next month.

David Eugene Johnston, 49, is set to die by lethal injection at 6 p.m. March 9 at the [Florida State Prison](#) near Starke.

This comes after Johnston lost a various last minute appeals, including one challenging [DNA](#) found at the murder scene. [Governor Charlie Crist](#) initially signed his death warrant last year and scheduled an execution in May.

The Florida Supreme Court delayed the execution while the DNA issue was hashed out in the lower court. DNA tests last summer on crime-scene evidence did not exonerate Johnston.

Johnston murdered Mary Hammond in her Orlando home in 1983. She was stabbed several times and strangled. Johnston, a transient who had been working at a demolition site in the area, had met Hammond days earlier. He was convicted a year later.