

Stillman denied parole for 1995 murder

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LAKE COUNTY – A man convicted of a 1995 murder has been denied parole in his first hearing before the Board of Prison Terms.

Fred Gene Stillman, 50, had his parole hearing on Nov. 19 at Avenal State Prison in Kings County, according to former Lake County District Attorney Gary Luck, who is now working as a part-time deputy district attorney.

Luck, who prosecuted the case before he was elected district attorney, attended the parole hearing to argue against Stillman's release from state prison.

In November 1995 Stillman was convicted by a jury of second-degree murder and use of a deadly weapon in the murder of Bart Jackman earlier that same year, Luck said.

Stillman was found guilty of slaying Jackman outside of the Landmark Lounge in Clearlake, said Luck.

Stillman, his wife Luanne and daughter Jennifer all participated in the crime. Luanne Stillman was found guilty by the same jury that convicted her husband of assault with a deadly weapon. Jennifer Stillman, who was 16 years old at the time of the crime, was tried as a juvenile.

Fred Stillman received an indeterminate term of 16 years to life, according to Luck. During the same trial, Stillman also was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon on Michael Betts and was sentenced to an additional four-year term.

Luck said Stillman first had to serve two years of the four-year term before starting his life sentence on the murder conviction.

Based on his sentence, Stillman first became eligible for parole on Nov. 22, 2009. Luck said a parole hearing is generally conducted at least one year prior to the anticipated parole release date.

At his first hearing, Stillman's parole was denied, said Luck.

The commissioners denied parole, Luck said, citing Stillman's lack of viable parole plans, insufficient participation in alcohol and substance abuse treatment, and lack of progress in completing any educational goals.

Luck said their decision also was impacted by the fact that Stillman was involved in several fights while in prison which would cause him to still present an unreasonable risk to public safety.

In concluding the hearing, the commissioners informed Stillman that he must make significant changes in his behavior and progress in completing his educational goals during the next five years if he hopes to get a parole release date at his next hearing, according to Luck.

The commissioners for the Board of Prison terms extended the time until Mr. Stillman's next parole hearing for a five-year period. Luck said this means Stillman must serve another full five years in prison before he is again eligible to have a parole hearing.

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