

Convicted strangler whose victim was found burned, battered and raped in Dania Beach, wants Supreme Court to spare his life

By TONYA ALANEZ

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Wednesday, July 01, 2009

TALLAHASSEE — Death Row inmate John Richard Marek's attorney will go before the Florida Supreme Court at 9 a.m. today to plead that his client not be put to death for a 1983 Broward County murder.

Attorney Martin McClain is asking the justices to grant Marek, 44, a new trial or reduce his death sentence to life in prison.

The state's high court in May indefinitely postponed Marek's execution for the 1983 strangulation of a woman whose battered, burned and raped body was found in a Dania Beach lifeguard shack.

Since the postponement, two Broward Circuit Court judges have held separate hearings and listened to testimony from prison inmates who said Marek's co-defendant, Raymon Wigley, told them he, not Marek, was the actual strangler.

Wigley was murdered in prison in 2000 while serving a life sentence for his role in the slaying of Adela Marie Simmons, 45.

Broward Circuit Court judges, Peter Weinstein and Jeffrey Levenson, both rejected the testimony as hearsay and declined to recommend a new trial or sentencing for Marek.

The final say is now up to the Florida Supreme Court.