Williams executed at Angola

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ANGOLA - Convicted murderer Robert Wayne Williams was executed at 1:06 a.m. Wednesday, Louisiana State Penitentiary officials reported.

Williams' final appeal for a stay was rejected by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Byron White shortly after Gov. Treen ordered the scheduled midnight execution delayed until 1 a.m. to await the high court's decision.

Williams was examined and pronounced dead at 1:15 a.m.

Hopes had dimmed for a reprieve for Williams as Treen and federal judges denied three appeals Tuesday - paving the way for the execution.

After the third denial of the day, Williams' attorney, Sam Dalton, rushed an 11th-hour appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court in what was the last step possible to block the Baton Rouge man's death.

A reprieve was considered doubtful since the Supreme Court denied a Williams appeal earlier this week.

Word came at about 7 p.m. that the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had denied Williams' plea. On Tuesday afternoon, Gov. Treen and a federal judge in Baton Rouge denied appeals within about an hour of one another.

Barring a stay on his last-minute plea, Williams - convicted in the 1979 shooting death of a supermarket security guard in Baton Rouge - was to become the first man in 22 years to be executed in Louisiana and only the 10th in the country since the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way in 1976 for reinstatement of capital punishment.

Williams was given the death penalty for killing guard Willie Kelly, 67, with a double-barreled, sawed-off shotgun during an armed robbery. Kelly was shot in the face from a distance of two feet.

Rosella Williams, the condemned man's mother said outside the gates of the prison about an hour before the scheduled execution that the family and others were still appealing to the governor to stay the execution.

"Tonight, as I think about Wayne, I think that you can only destroy his body, but you cannot touch his soul," she said.

Her son's last request was that "we continue to fight for what is right and to strive to let people see the love of God, which is greater than anything else in this world," she said.

A few hours before the scheduled electrocution, Warden Ross Maggio described Williams as "very quiet and reserved." When asked if he thought Williams had resigned himself to execution, he said:

"I think there's a good possibility that he has." Maggio said that Williams met with his minister and made no request for a last meal.

The 31-year-old convict faced his eighth date with death in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Other execution dates were averted through the judicial

(See EXECUTION, 6A)