

# A NEBRASKA EXECUTION:

Friday, September 2, 1994

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## Opponents, supporters gather at penitentiary

By DeDra Janssen  
Senior Reporter

Supporters of the death penalty cheered Thursday outside the Nebraska State Penitentiary as Harold Lamont Otey's execution neared.

Otey was executed at 12:23 a.m. on Friday. A coroner pronounced him dead at 12:33 a.m. He was scheduled to be executed at 12:01 a.m.

About 11:30 p.m., the crowd, which eventually grew to 2,000 people, became increasingly intense. Supporters chanted, held signs and exchanged harsh words with death penalty opponents.

A sea of hands waved back and forth as supporters chanted, "Na na na na, na na na na, hey, hey, goodbye."

Some supporters lit sparklers. Others set off firecrackers.

"Justice is served. Justice is served," some cried.

Others expressed themselves with signs that read "Hey Willie, it's fry day" and "Nebraska State Pen 1st annual BBQ."

But as the crowd grew larger and louder and more vocal, some death penalty supporters stood somberly in the background and expressed very different attitudes.

"This isn't a party," said Bill Suiter of Columbus. Suiter is a member of The Plainsmen, a group that supports the death penalty. "This isn't a celebration. This is a vindication of society. One half or so of everybody here doesn't even understand what's going on."

Brian Bartlett, a UNL sophomore in general studies, stood away from the crowd just after midnight.

"Except for those that are chanting and acting foolishly, I think it's about time the death penalty be carried out," Bartlett said. "I would say I'm glad

that justice has been carried through."

Tim McKain of Omaha said it was a shame that so many were chanting and carrying signs in celebration.

"This is serious business," McKain said. "Somebody's going to die in there. This isn't a celebration of death — it's a celebration of justice."

"They should be down the street at the State Fair if they want a festival. This isn't the place for that."

McKain said he and his wife came to Lincoln to show support for Nebraska's capital punishment law.

Association of Students of the University of Nebraska president Andrew Loudon also came to support the law.

"All I can say is I support the death penalty, and when the death penalty is enacted, it becomes an active deterrent against crime," Loudon said.

"I came down here because it's an historic event. The last time there was an execution was before I was even

*"Except for those that are chanting and acting foolishly, I think it's about time the death penalty be carried out."*

■  
**BRIAN BARTLETT**  
UNL Sophomore

born." Members of Amicus Nebraska, a group of death penalty supporters, brought several photos of Jane McManus.

"We want this to be Jane's celebration of justice," Amicus member Jewel Jordan of Omaha said.



Travis Heying/DN

Death penalty supporters gathered at the state penitentiary Friday night.



Jeff Haller/DN

Ed Howard, Associated Press correspondent for Lincoln and execution witness, recounts what he saw at the penitentiary



Senior chemical engineering major as death penalty supporters body

June 11, 1977 — Jane McManus, 26, a photography student, is raped, stabbed and beaten to death with a hammer in her Omaha apartment.

January 1978 — Otey is arrested in Florida and confesses in detail to the McManus killing. He is returned to Omaha, charged with first-degree murder.

April 13, 1978 — Otey is convicted of first-degree murder in Douglas County District Court.

June 20, 1978 — A three-judge panel of the Douglas County District Court sentences Otey to death.

Dec. 18, 1979 — The Nebraska Supreme Court affirms the conviction and sentence.

June 1980 - February 1990 — Numerous petitions, appeals are heard at state and national level.

June 7, 1991 — Request is filed with the Nebraska Board of Pardons to reduce the death sentence to life in prison.

### Timeline of Harold Lamont Otey case

May 29, 1992 — Nebraska Supreme Court rules Otey is not entitled to a second Pardons Board hearing.

July 1, 1992 — Nebraska Supreme Court sets Otey's execution date for Aug. 6.

July 30, 1992 — Judge Urbom issues stay of execution, sets hearing for Aug. 28 on Pardons Board issue.

Jan. 4, 1993 — Attorney general asks state Supreme Court to set execution date.

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Oct. 8, 1993 — State Supreme Court denies Stenberg's Jan. 4 request on setting execution dates.

June 27, 1994 — U.S. Supreme Court denies (for the fifth time) considering Otey's case.