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**Steve Marshall**  
Alabama Attorney General



For press inquiries only, contact:

Mike Lewis (334) 353-2199

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

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Statement on the Execution of Murderer Willie B. Smith III**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Steve Marshall issued the following statement tonight after the execution of Willie B. Smith III at the William C. Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore, Alabama:

Justice has been served. Tonight, Willie Smith was put to death for the heinous crime he committed nearly three decades ago: the abduction and execution-style murder of an innocent young woman, Sharma Johnson.

When a capital murderer is due to receive his just punishment, one always hears accusations of “cruel and unusual punishment,” with that term rarely used in a way that accords with its constitutional meaning – and absolutely never used in reference to the victim’s loved ones.

The family of Sharma Johnson has had to wait 29 years, 11 months, and 25 days to see the sentence of Sharma’s murderer be carried out. Finally, the cruel and unusual punishment that has been inflicted upon them – a decadeslong denial of justice – has come to an end.

I ask the people of Alabama to join me in praying for Sharma’s family and friends, that they might now be able to find peace and closure.

**Summary of the Facts of the Case**

After midnight on October 27, 1991, Willie Smith was prowling the streets of Birmingham when he spotted a car pull into a bank and stop at its ATM. Smith, armed with a sawed-off shotgun, immediately identified a mark for violent crime – a victim to subject to “some madness,” as he later put it – in the young woman sitting alone in her car: 22-year-old Sharma Johnson.

Smith told his female accomplice, Angelicia Willis, to approach Johnson’s car and ask Johnson a question through the front side window. Smith, who had stayed out of sight, then attacked Johnson through Johnson’s opened window, shoving the barrel of his



shotgun into the vehicle, forcing her out of the car and into the trunk. Trapped and terrified, Johnson was made to call out the code for her debit card as well as the amount of money she had in her bank account—information that Smith used to make a withdrawal from the ATM, emptying Johnson's account, a robbery that profited Smith a grand total of \$80.

After leaving the bank, Smith casually rode around the city in the stolen car with Johnson still locked in its trunk, making stops at a gas station and a shopping center and picking up his brother, Lorenzo. When Lorenzo asked Smith whose car he was driving, Smith responded that it belonged to "some white b—," boasting that not only had he stolen the girl's car, but he had kidnapped her and still had her in the trunk. Taking evil delight in this revelation, Lorenzo taunted and mocked Johnson as his brother drove, banging on the back window and shouting sexual threats at Johnson, who begged for help.

Hours after abducting Johnson, Smith drove to a cemetery and parked in a secluded spot. He told the others in the car that he was going to kill Johnson because "she'll call the police." When Smith opened the trunk, Johnson pleaded with Smith to spare her life and promised that she would not tell anybody about his crimes. Smith remained emotionless and evinced no sympathy for Johnson. In Smith's own words, here was his response to Johnson's pleas: "I said, 'You're a motherf—ing liar.' Boom! Then I shot her in the head."

Sharma Johnson's remains were later found in the trunk of her car where Smith had abandoned it and set it ablaze. After Smith boasted about his crimes in horrific detail to an acquaintance wearing a police wire, he was arrested and charged with two counts of capital murder for his execution-style slaying.

Willie Smith was convicted of capital murder by a jury of his peers and sentenced to death by electrocution. He was successful in evading the electric chair, but not his just punishment. His time of death was 9:47 p.m.