

Judge sentences Carpenter to death

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Trailside Killer David Carpenter was formally sentenced today to die in the gas chamber for fatally shooting two young women hikers at state parks in Northern California in 1981.

Carpenter, 54, branded by prosecutors an "efficient serial killer" who has spent much of his life in prison for violent crimes, showed no visible emotion as Superior Court Judge Dion Morrow pronounced the sentence.

The murders became known as the Trailside Killings and terrorized Northern California hikers for three years.

Authorities have linked Carpenter to even more slayings, but say there is insufficient

evidence to charge him.

An eight-woman, four-man jury on Oct. 5 recommended that Carpenter die in the gas chamber at San Quentin prison for the murders in Santa Cruz County of Ellen Hansen, a student at UC Davis, and Heather Scaggs, of San Jose, both 20; and the attempted murder of Hansen's boyfriend, Stephen Haertle, 23, also a UC Davis student.

The only other possible sentence the balding and bespectacled Carpenter could have received would have been a prison term of life without possibility of parole.

Hansen and Haertle were ambushed on a trail in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park in

March 1981. Scaggs, who had worked with Carpenter before she disappeared in May 1981, was found dead in Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

Now that Carpenter has been formally sentenced, authorities in Marin County, north of San Francisco, plan to prosecute him on charges he murdered four other women and one man in 1980. Marin Deputy District Attorney John Posey hopes to arraign Carpenter on the charges by the end of the month.

Jurors at the penalty phase of Carpenter's Los Angeles trial were presented evidence of the five Marin slayings and said they believed beyond a reasona-

ble doubt that Carpenter had committed them.

In closing arguments at the penalty phase of Carpenter's trial, Santa Cruz County District Attorney Art Danner labeled Carpenter a serial killer and urged the jury to recommend a death sentence because of the defendant's criminal past, including more than 20 years in prison for rape and assault.

Defense attorney Larry Biggam unsuccessfully argued that the only appropriate penalty was life in prison without parole because Carpenter, a severe stutterer, had been psychologically "damned at an early age" by abusive parents in San Francisco.