

A WTOP EDITORIAL

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One day last month a defendant convicted of murder stood before Montgomery Circuit Court Judge Kathryn J. Shook for sentencing. Judge Shook described the circumstances of the case. Then she made this statement to the defendant:

"In considering the punishment to impose here today I have consulted with many eminent jurists...and have studied a number of books on punishment and deterrence of crime, and I have concluded that the time has come when I must speak out." She continued, "I feel the time has come when someone has to speak out in Maryland on the subject (she meant capital punishment) and perhaps it is just as well that I do it. No one has asked me, as a jurist, if I have conscientious scruples against capital punishment, and if they had up until about a month ago I wouldn't have known, because I have imposed capital punishment sitting with other jurists. But at this point in my life I have determined that I do have conscientious scruples against capital punishment." Then Judge Shook proceeded to sentence the prisoner to life imprisonment in the Maryland penitentiary.

That statement encourages our own opposition to capital punishment. It is our belief that this barbaric practice should be done away with and we have supported Congressman Multer's bill to abolish executions in the District of Columbia. Judge Shook, we think, expressed a point of view which has ever-increasing weight and we are glad to quote her comments.

This was a WTOP Editorial, Jack Jurey speaking for WTOP.