

The Times-Picayune

B-6 FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2009

YOUR OPINIONS

Dedicated DAs battle criminal appeals for years

Re: "Abductor loses bid for cut in life term," *Metro*, Oct. 21.

Even though Paul Will never denied kidnapping a Metairie college student, he and his apologists have used all sorts of reasons for the kidnapping, including suicidal behavior over the death of an uncle and plea bargains which, according to the courts, never occurred.

The important issue here is that the Jefferson Parish district attorney has diligently monitored and argued against any post-conviction relief in state and federal courts for the past eight years.

This is important because every criminal case is appealed.

The appeals continue for many, many years. The district attorneys are left to fight the appeal battles, placing great strains on their limited staff and resources.

I have firsthand knowledge of this process. In 1995, my 25-year-old daughter was killed in Bayou St. John in New Orleans by a senior at the LSU School of Medicine. Immediately after sentencing in 1996, the convicted doctor began his appeal through the state district court, the state appeals court, the Louisiana Supreme Court, the federal Eastern District court and the federal appeals court system.

For several years, the New Orleans district attorney's office monitored and argued against

the appeal. No post-conviction relief was ever granted for the convicted doctor.

There is much activity behind the scenes in the enforcement, prosecution, conviction, sentencing and imprisonment of criminals. The average citizen is largely unaware of the process that is in play for many years after a conviction and sentencing.

We are fortunate to have district attorneys in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish who work diligently to protect the citizens. We thank them for their efforts.

W.B. Haensel Jr.
Metairie