Teen killer resentenced to life in prison for 1988 slaying of state representative

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HARRISBURG - The life sentence of a teen who beat a state representative to death with a ball-peen hammer was upheld today.

Bernard Williams, now 47, was 17 years old when he killed state Rep. William Telek of Cambria County in 1988.

He was sentenced to life behind bars, but because of U.S. Supreme Court rulings that found automatic life sentences without parole for juvenile offenders to be cruel and unusual punishment, Williams was up for the possibility of resentencing today.

Williams' attorney, Andrea Haynes, argued that her client is remorseful, and while he's not ready for parole now, he could be years down the road, but Dauphin County District Attorney Fran Chardo countered that Williams has not been rehabilitated during the three decades he has spent in prison.

During that time, Williams was convicted of three separate assaults with weapons, two of which were against correctional officers. He also has at least 30 misconducts on his record, Chardo noted.

"If this person is not permanently incorrigible, then no one is," Chardo said.

Williams had been convicted of attacking and killing Telek, then robbing him of $100 and stealing his car. Telek was found facedown on the street in Susquehanna Township.

Williams was arrested that same day after a high-speed chase with police.

Today, Dauphin County Judge Jeannine Turgeon sentenced Williams once again to life in prison on one count of first-degree murder, along with 10 to 20 years for a robbery charge.