

TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor

Repeat Violent Offenders newsletter

PAROLE HEARING UPDATE: Sept. 15, 2025

Repeat violent offender, 'notorious' killer to remain behind bars for at least five more years

'Wade's more than just sentence must be fully served, and a safe public always is insured with incapacitation by incarceration,' Watkins says.



The Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office learned late last week that convicted murderer Pompie Junior Wade, 72, has been denied parole and will remain in prison for at least five more years.

According to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction website, Wade will have his next parole hearing in June 2030.

Wade, who is incarcerated at Marion Correctional Institution, is serving a 20-year-to life prison sentence after the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled Ohio's death penalty law unconstitutional. Wade was previously sentenced on April 30, 1976, to death by former Judge Sydney Rigelhaupt for the Dec. 29, 1975 murder of Dominic Chiarella, 51, and the attempted murder of Fred G. Piersol, 23, during an armed robbery at the Austin Village Beverage Center in Warren.

Wade at the time of the fatal shooting was on parole for a manslaughter conviction in the 1972 death of William A. Jackson.

Trumbull County Prosecutor Dennis Watkins said he had a conversation with Dr. David Chiarella, the victim's son, who was very happy that Wade was denied parole. Watkins lamented that Dr. Chiarella and his family had to relive the horror of Dominic Chiarella's death because of this parole hearing and others over a 50-year span.

"Nevertheless, his family and society will be safe, and Pompie Wade's just punishment will continue. It is our hope that he serves his full life sentence in prison," Watkins said. "Mercy was already given to Pompie Wade when his death penalty was reversed. We thank the Ohio parole board for making the right decision."

In 1976, Watkins was then an assistant to elected Prosecutor J. Walter Dragelevich and was part of the trial team that convicted Pompie Wade. Since that time, Watkins has been

personally in contact with the Chiarella family and has written the Ohio parole board in 1989, 1995, 2005, 2015 and 2025, five times strongly opposing the inmate's release. Dr. Chiarella also repeatedly wrote the board and met with members of the board every ten years opposing freedom for Wade. Also, the parole board received letters in opposition to Wade's parole from other local officials, including Councilman Michael O'Brien and Warren Mayor William "Doug" Franklin. Both O'Brien and Franklin wrote that Wade's actions deprived the community of one great human being, Dominic Chiarella.

On December 29, 1975, Wade -- while on parole for killing a Warren man -- decided to rob a beverage center on the west side of Warren. Dominic Chiarella and Fred Piersol were working that day when Wade entered the store with a .32 revolver in hand. Even though he had already stolen cash, Wade ordered the victims to go to the back of the store into the cooler which was used for beverages. The two victims stood in the cold, in the cooler, and then Wade walked in, stared at them, and then in cold blood, shot both men in the chest several times with pattern shots near the heart.

Dominic Chiarella died almost instantaneously, leaving behind a wife and children. By the grace of God, Fred Piersol survived. As he left the store, Wade did some shopping, grabbing among other items a bag of potato chips. He munched on the chips as the robbers fled in the getaway car. The empty bag and crumbs managed to make its way into evidence for Wade's trial.

A jury found Wade guilty on all counts, and he was sentenced to death. However, Wade avoided execution when Ohio's death penalty was ruled unconstitutional in 1978,

A newspaper editorial by the Youngstown Vindicator on Aug. 3, 2025, titled "Twice-convicted killer should not get third chance", commenting on an upcoming Ohio Parole Board hearing considering Wade's possible release on parole, stated: "How many breaks should a cold-blooded murder get?"

"Wade's more than just sentence must be fully served, and a safe public always is insured with incapacitation by incarceration," Watkins stated.

Members of the public may submit comments about Pompey Wade's case. Comments can be made through the ODRC website: <https://drc.ohio.gov/systems-and-services/1-parole/parole-board-hearing-input> For more information, contact Guy M. Vogrin, public information officer/investigator for the Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office at 330-675-2485.