



South Carolina Department of Corrections

Sept. 7, 2026

For immediate release

Contact: Chrysti Shain, (803) 413-8206

Shain.Chrysti@doc.sc.gov

COLUMBIA, S.C. – S.C. Death Row inmate Louis Michael Winkler Jr. died this morning at Kirkland Correctional Institution.

Winkler, 66, was pronounced dead 8:49 a.m. in Kirkland's infirmary after an extended illness. An autopsy will be performed.

Winkler was convicted of murder, first-degree burglary and assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature in the death of his estranged wife, Rebecca Grainger Winkler of Loris.

Winkler was out on bond for kidnapping, rape and assault charges involving his estranged wife when he kicked in her door and shot her in the face at close range in front of her teenage son in 2006. He then hid in a wooded area for two weeks before being captured by police.

He was tried and sentenced to death for his crimes in 2008.