Anthony Sowell will get the death penalty for killing the Imperial victims, Sowell kept his eyes closed all through the sentencing until the end.

By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

Anthony Sowell has officially been sentenced to death by lethal injection. After a 45-minute analysis of Sowell's crimes and background factors in his favor, Judge Dick Ambrose on Friday accepted the jury's recommendation of the death penalty for the convicted serial killer.

"The court, having gone through its independent analysis, has accepted the jury's verdicts," said Ambrose before opening things up to statements from family members of those victimized by Sowell, who slumped back in his chair without emotion. Following those statements, Ambrose made it official, setting a date of execution for Oct. 29, 2012. Most everything, of course, is subject to appeal.

Sowell, 51, is convicted of killing 11 women and dumping their remains around his Imperial Avenue home. Jurors who recommended death on Wednesday attended Friday morning's sentencing, as did dozens of relatives.

Sowell, wearing an orange jumpsuit as he had on Wednesday, also had to listen to statements this morning from family members of his victims.

Ambrose read off the sentences for each of his crime – the death penalty for all of the murders themselves and various sentences regarding dozens of other charges for abuse of a corpse, rape and other crimes. While a formality in light of the death sentence, they added up to more than 250 years in jail.

The judge said Sowell would have an automatic appeal for a death sentence before the Ohio Supreme Court. Family members spoke for nearly an hour this morning. Don Smith, father of murder victim Kim Smith, cried when he told the court that the families would never forget what happened.

“He took my heart, my life,” Smith said. “And I might as well die, too because he killed a part of me.”

Others spoke angrily directly to Sowell, who remained silent with his eyes closed until he was

ordered to stand at the time of his sentencing. Even then, when Ambrose asked if he understood the details of his sentence, Sowell did not respond.