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Man receives life without parole in fatal chase

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OZARK — Ronald Pugh looked to the sky and shook his head "No" multiple times on Thursday when asked if he would like to address the judge or the family whose loved one he was convicted of killing during a fatal police chase last summer.

But Pugh did have a few words for Dale County Circuit Judge P.B. McLauchlin after the judge sentenced him to life in prison without parole.

"Um, can I have another attorney on my appeal, or do I have to keep this one? I want another

attorney," he said.

A jury convicted Pugh earlier this month for trafficking marijuana and for murder in the death of retired military veteran Charles Knight of Ozark on the night of July 29, 2009, after a police chase during which Pugh threw five pounds of marijuana from his vehicle.

Authorities said the vehicle Pugh was driving on the wrong side of U.S. 231 while he was being chased by Dothan and Ozark authorities collided with the vehicle Knight was driving.

Knight was pronounced dead while Pugh — who authorities said begged for police to save his life on

the scene — was transferred to a local hospital with injuries.

Dale County District Attorney Supernumerary David Emery asked McLauchlin to sentence Pugh to life without parole based on several past convictions for which Pugh was already serving a prison sentence of life with the possibility of parole.

Emery said the past offenses included attempted murder in Alabama and several armed robbery and assault charges in Florida.

Pugh's attorney, Bill Kommos, argued that despite Pugh's murder conviction, he did not mean to kill Knight.



Ronald Pugh awaits sentencing with his lawyer Thursday afternoon in Judge P.B. McLauchlin's courtroom at the Dale County Courthouse.

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"The evidence clearly shows that it was an accident, that there was no intent to kill or hurt somebody that he didn't even know," Kommos said. McLauchlin said he may determine later whether to assign another attorney to Pugh's case.