

# Ray's Appeal

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The Tennessee Supreme Court today rejected an appeal by James Earl Ray for a new trial in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In a unanimous opinion, the court said Ray "willingly, knowingly and intelligently

and with the advice of competent counsel entered a plea of guilty to murder in the first degree by lying in wait."

Ray pleaded guilty last March 10 to the 1968 slaying of King in Memphis. Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Bat-

tle sentenced Ray to 99 years in state prison.

## Is Denied

THE HIGH court's opinion, read by Special Judge Erby L. Jenkins, said, "This court cannot sit idly by while deepening disorder, disrespect for the Constitution's authority, and mounting violence and murder stalk the land and let waiting justice sleep."

Battle died 21 days after sentencing Ray and Shelby County officials later found in his court records a letter from Ray, seeking a new trial on grounds he was not adequately represented at his trial.

The Supreme Court said Ray "was represented by privately retained able counsel."

IN SEEKING a Supreme Court review of the case, Ray's lawyers cited a state law which says that if a trial judge dies when an appeal is pending, a new trial must be granted.

But the state cited another law that says a person who pleads guilty waives all rights to appeal or to a new trial.

The state's contention was upheld last year by both Criminal Court Judge Arthur Faquin of Memphis and the State Court of Criminal Appeals. Ray's lawyers then sought a state Supreme Court review.