

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 246/04(AMR 51/125/2004, 12 August 2004) - Death penalty

USA (Texas) James Vernon Allridge (m), black, aged 41

James Allridge was executed in Texas on 26 August 2004. He was sentenced to death in 1987 for the murder of a convenience store worker, Brian Clendennen, two years earlier.

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles rejected clemency, by six votes to nil, and Governor Perry refused to intervene. Clemency had been sought on the grounds of James Allridge's efforts towards rehabilitation over the 17 years he had been on death row. The jury that had convicted him of the murder found that he would likely commit future criminal acts of violence that would constitute a continuing threat to society if he was allowed to live, even in prison. In Texas, a jury has to answer this "future dangerousness" question in the affirmative before a death sentence can be passed.

In last-minute appeals to the US Supreme Court, James Allridge's lawyers sought a stay of execution, arguing: "When our criminal justice system is on the verge of executing a prisoner who is innocent of the aggravating factor on which his death sentence is predicated – future dangerousness – the Texas system provides no remedy. The primary premise for executing Mr. Allridge, by virtue of his rehabilitation during his lengthy incarceration, has evaporated." The appeal was dismissed.

James Allridge becomes the 42nd person to be put to death in the USA this year, and the 12th in Texas. His was the 927th execution in the USA since it resumed judicial killing in 1977. Texas accounts for 325 of these killings.

No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.