

# Robert E. Talton

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District 144  
House of Representatives

July 29, 2004

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OPINION COMMITTEE

RQ-D252-GA

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Texas Attorney General  
P.O. Box 12548  
Austin, Texas 78711-2548

FILE # ML-43861-D4  
I.D. # 43861

Dear General Abbott:

Senate Bill 795 (77R) provides for the forfeiture of proceeds gained from the sale of tangible property that has increased in value due to the notoriety gained by a person convicted of crime. It has come to my attention that a Texas inmate is selling his art work on an internet web site. Is this a violation of the above mentioned state statute? Enclosed please find web site information about the sale of the art.

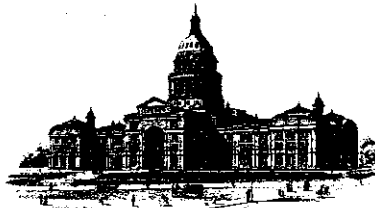
I look forward to your written response. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert E. Talton".

Robert E. Talton  
State Representative

RET:ch  
Enclosure  
cc: Andy Kahan





# James Allridge III

## Texas Death Row




Visit James Allridge's Official webpage at:  
<http://www.lightexpressions.net/>

### View Or Purchase Cards By James

The themes are Koala Bear, Long-Tailed Weasel, Tiger Lilies, Monarch Butterflies, Anemones and Gladiolus. These all occasion designs are offered in assorted pastel colors (mint green, cloud blue, blush pink, lilac, and lemon yellow.) White envelopes are included. The Notelets are suitable for general greetings, brief messages, or an informal letter.

The Noteletes are offered in sets of 12 per design or an assorted set (2 of each design) for a contribution of \$5.00, plus postage and handling. - from a note from James Allridge

### James V. Allridge III - International Homepage

James V. Allridge III - Official Homepage (VERSION FRANCAISE)

James V. Allridge III - Official Homepage (DEUTSCHE VERSION)

### The Art of James V. Allridge III

Tackling the question of restitution is akin to tackling the question of pro- or anti-death penalty sentiments. I don't wish to make restitution as a means to atone for past sins, to seek redemption or to gain forgiveness. These are issues that must be, and which I already have, taken up with God.

Humanity as a whole can be seen as a puzzle. We all are a small part of the whole. When a life is taken, one piece of that puzzle is taken away and cannot be replaced because it is individual and unique onto itself. This is why I concede that there is nothing with which I, or anyone else, could ever do to replace the life that was taken. However, my art allows me to contribute to the entire picture-the whole of humanity. My art allows me to give back something purposeful, productive, constructive and meaningful. By giving back a small part of me with each piece of art I create, I am giving back to society.

I don't ask for forgiveness or recognition from anyone for what I do. I do it simply because I believe it is the right thing to do and for no other reason. I would hope that anyone who has lost a loved one to a senseless act of violence would only want the world to be a better place as a result of their loved one's death.

It is my belief that society would be better served by seeing a changed individual because of what he has learned from the experience than by adding to the cycle of violence by taking yet, another life.

*James V. Allridge, III*  
*Death Row, Terrell Unit*  
*Livingston, Texas*

James V. Allridge III donates his share of the art show proceeds to the Texas Association Of X-Offenders (TAX). TAX is a faith-based criminal recovery and relapse prevention program that targets adult inmates, inmate families, parolees, probationers, and x-offenders. Its programs are structure- and curriculum based. The idea of TAX is to provide a positive identity group for those impacted by the criminal justice system that will help them achieve a crime-free, drug/alcohol-free, prison-free prosocial lifestyle.

The TAX program is not only preventive, but redemptive. Its primary goal is developing human potential through personal empowerment. To rescue a person from a life wasted on crime, drugs, violence, and abuse, you must--so to speak--take that person to the other side of the mountain and show them what is there. TAX does that through role modeling, curriculum-based self-help programs, and peer support groups.

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James Vernon Allridge III was born on November 14, 1962 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, while his father was stationed there in the Army. He remained there until he was 5 years of age, when his father was forced to retire due to a heart condition (he now has a pacemaker). Upon his father's retirement the family moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where his parents and three younger brothers still live.

James attended school in Fort Worth. He attended Green B. Trimble Technical High School where he was an honor student, a three-year letterman on the Tennis Team and was offered a scholarship at Weatherford College, which he declined to work at his vocation in Mill & Cabinetmaking. He later went into management in the Fast Food Industry where he later co-owned and operated his own business, all before the age of twenty-two.

On March 25, 1985, James was arrested along with his brother Ronald K. Allridge, for the robbery/slaying of a Circle K Convenience Store clerk. Ronald was executed by the State of Texas on June 8, 1995.

During his trial, James' court appointed attorneys did very little to defend him and even less on his appeal. His court appointed attorneys dropped off his case when it was affirmed at the State level. James has had 3 execution dates set since being on Death Row. He came within 5 days of being executed on his last date.

Fortunately, with the help of friends and supporters in the U.S. and Switzerland, money was raised through the Fund for Life (FFL) - a legal fund for James - and an attorney by the name of Steven C. Losch was hired to continue his appeal. The court appointed attorney did a very poor job when he filed his State Writ of Habeas Corpus. Mr. Losch subsequently filed his Writ of Habeas Corpus in Federal Court which the federal magistrate ruled against. The ruling was based on the Anti Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. The Supreme Court later ruled that this law could not be applied retroactively. Mr. Losch filed a motion contesting the ruling and they are currently awaiting a ruling.

During his incarceration, James has become a self taught artist and writer. With no formal art training, he now has over 360 works in private collections. He has been recognized for his works in colored pencil at the Annual Prison Art Show & Exhibit held in Huntsville, Texas, and his works have been on display in Washington, D.C.. His pen & ink illustrations have appeared on numerous newsletters throughout the U.S. and Switzerland. Two of his fine art drawings have appeared on the cover of the Journal for Prisoners on Prisons in April of 1996, James had his first one man art exhibit in Switzerland to help raise money for the FFL.

**C.U.R.E. (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation for Errants) purchased several of his illustrations for their line of all occasion note cards. Continuing in this fashion, James decided to produce his own line of handmade Christmas and all occasion greeting cards. Since 1993 they have sold throughout the U.S., Switzerland, Ireland, France, Holland and the United Kingdom. They have been purchased by such notables as Gloria Steinem, Susan Sarandon and Sting. He has gotten letters of support and encouragement from Maya Angelou, Robert Redford, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Ted Turner and Elizabeth Taylor.**

**James also has a scattering of essays, articles, letters and poems that have been published in various publications. He has self published a collection of poetry and prose entitled Deadly Executioner. It is dedicated to the men, and now one woman who have been executed by the State of Texas since the reinstatement of the death penalty.**

**In addition to those things, he's also gone to college at Sam Houston State University through their Correspondence Program where he majored in Business Administration and maintained a 4.0 G.P.A.**

**He also served on the Board of Directors of the Lamp of Hope Project (LHP), a Death Row based organization to help educate the public on the common misconceptions surrounding the death penalty and to provide services for those here on Texas' S Death Row.**

**James has made all of these accomplishments in a never ending struggle to disprove the prosecution's contention that he is a "continuing threat to society". It is his hope that all of these accomplishments will receive a favorable ruling from the Board of Pardons and Paroles and work towards having his sentence commuted to life. James' primary concern has always been to have his sentence commuted to life. This is why his legal fund has been aptly named the "Fund for Life", as opposed to a "defense fund".**

**James is attempting to raise \$15-20,000 to hire an attorney to represent him during a clemency hearing. James has shown that he is a shining example of someone who has taken it upon themselves to rehabilitate himself while being confined on Death Row and that he deserves another chance at life. It is his hope that all his accomplishments prove that one day out of his life of over 36 years shouldn't be overshadowed by one terrible mistake.**

**James believes that he has made many valuable contributions to society through his art and writing and wishes to continue making those contributions, even if from a prison cell.**

**With your help and support he can.**

**Will you help to save his life?**

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**To contact James directly, write to:**



**James V. Allridge III 000870  
Polunsky Unit  
Huntsville, Texas 77343**

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**To make a contribution in the U.S.:**

**James V. Allridge  
P.O. Box 19035  
Fort Worth, Texas 76119**

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**To make a contribution in Europe:**

**Fund for Life  
for James V. Allridge  
Postfach  
CH 4002 Basel  
SWITZERLAND**

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Visit James Allridge's Official webpage at:

**<http://www.lightexpressions.net/>**



*The CCADP offers free webpages to over 500 Death Row Prisoners  
Contact us for more information.*



*"The Eyes Of The World Are Watching Now"*



PETITION

VERSION  
FRANCAISE

DEUTSCHE  
VERSION

urgent appeal  
update

about the  
artist

article about  
james

family photos

contact and  
help

dying to get  
some sleep

we're movi....  
we've moved! !

special  
supplement

i read a story

sibling rivalry



James V. Allridge III

**!!! URGENT !!!  
ONLINE PETITION  
PLEASE SIGN**

welcome to the Homepage  
**James V. Allridge  
III.**

**WHY**

do we kill people  
who kill people to show  
that killing people is wrong

- *Amnesty International* -

The American people are largely  
unaware of the  
information critical to  
judgement on the  
morality of the death penalty  
if they were better informed  
would consider it  
shocking, unjust, and unacceptable

- *Justice Thurgood Marshall*

Capital punishment is our society's  
recognition  
of the sanctity of human  
life

- *Senator Orrin Hatch, R-Utah in  
Observer. 10/25/99* -

I have inquired for most of my  
life  
about studies that might show  
the death penalty is a deterrent  
And I have not seen any research  
that would substantiate that

- *Attorney General Janet Reno in  
1/21/00* -

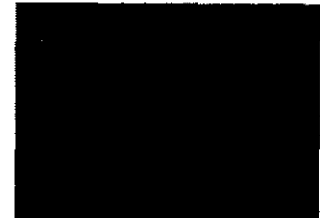
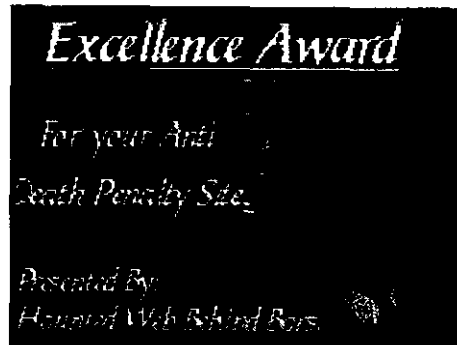
james' friends

SIGN GUESTBOOK

READ GUESTBOOK

We all have purpose and we  
we all have our own unique voice  
the choir of humanity.  
Even a mute can sing.

- James V. Allridge III, 2001



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This RingSurf The Death Row Inmate Webring  
owned by [James Allridge III - Fund for](#)

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July 15, 2004, 3:40PM

## Actress visits death row inmate

### Sarandon meets pen pal, set for execution Aug. 26

By CINDY HORSWELL  
Copyright 2004 Houston Chronicle

LIVINGSTON - With a brisk walk, actress Susan Sarandon made an unannounced trip Wednesday to Texas to visit her pen pal — a convicted murderer on death row.

She had corresponded with the inmate, James Vernon Allridge III, for several years after buying some of the detailed drawings of flowers and animals he creates with colored pencils.

Prison officials said she had only recently been put on his visitation list, and she would not tip her hand as to why she had come to see Allridge, who is scheduled for execution Aug. 26.

"I'm trying to be as low-profile as possible. It fits the strategy at this time," Sarandon said, declining to comment further. She wore tennis shoes and a loose pants outfit without a belt to avoid setting off the metal detector.

"Susan is just here for a visit. It's just communication between two friends," said David Atwood, founder of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, after escorting Sarandon to the prison near Livingston. "She just told him to stay strong, that she would pray for him and was thinking of him."

He said they had discussed the possibility of her doing something on Allridge's behalf but "that will be left up to his attorneys."

Sarandon became more acutely aware of the death penalty when she portrayed a nun who was a spiritual adviser to a death row inmate in *Dead Man Walking*, for which she earned a best actress Oscar in 1996.

After the movie was released, she told the Houston Chronicle, "I've always thought intellectually that (the death penalty) didn't make sense. It's expensive; it's arbitrary and capricious; it's not a deterrent."

She said the role crystallized her feelings to the point that she realized: "It's not important who is to die,



Andrew Innerarity/Chronicle

Susan Sarandon leaves the Texas State Penitentiary in Livingston Wednesday after visiting death row inmate James Vernon Allridge III.

but who is to kill and what it means to recognize the humanity in everyone. I feel more clearly now that there is no reason to kill."

Wednesday, she did not want to publicly discuss her views.

Allridge, who speaks to visitors by telephone through a Plexiglas barrier, had initially agreed to be interviewed by the Chronicle after Sarandon left. He later declined on the advice of his attorney.

• • • • •

**"It's not important who is to die, but who is to kill and what it means to recognize the humanity in everyone. I feel more clearly now that there is no reason to kill."**

**Susan Sarandon,**  
actress

• • • • •

The 41-year-old inmate has spent the past 17 years on death row — much longer than the average inmate, including his older brother, Ronald, who was executed in 1995.

James Allridge was sentenced to death for fatally shooting Fort Worth convenience store clerk Brian Clendennen while robbing the store of \$300 in 1985.

The same year, during another robbery, his brother fatally shot a 19-year-old diner at a fast-food restaurant. He shot her because she was "penniless," news accounts at the time said.

Ronald had spent 3 1/2 years in prison in the late 1970s for killing a high school student and had been accused of killing the store manager of a pizza-delivery business where he worked, authorities said.

"In 1985, the two brothers had gone on a spree of robberies and killings. Each was driving the getaway cars for the other when their capital murders happened," said Mike Parrish, the Tarrant County prosecutor in James Allridge's case.

James Allridge knew his victim would recognize him because they had attended a management training school together, Parrish said.

"He came out of the store and thought about it, but then went back inside to rob the place and shoot him," he said.

Parrish said other robbery cases, including one in which Allridge allegedly pointed a gun at a 4-year-old, were dropped after the murder conviction.

About Sarandon's visit, Parrish said, "Nothing surprises me anymore. Like all those people from Europe who send (Allridge) money. It's surreal."

On a Web site where Allridge sells his art, he writes about his past and does not deny killing the clerk.

"I'm not making excuses," he said. "But there was a lot of pressure from my older brother ... who was a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic."

He also expresses regret that anyone had to "lose their life for me to become the person I am today." He writes he has been rehabilitated and is no longer a danger to society.

He, along with Atwood and Sarandon, wants his sentence commuted to life.

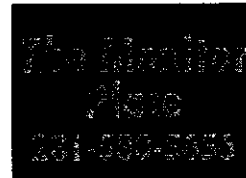
"Susan has written to him for a number of years and sees him as a person who has changed and developed. She is impressed by his accomplishments like his art and intelligence," Atwood said.

"I've never met any death row inmate that is more rehabilitated," he said.

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[cindy.horswell@chron.com](mailto:cindy.horswell@chron.com)

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