



# **Organizing Packet:**

## **200 Executions Under Governor Rick Perry**



**Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty  
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May 22, 2009

Dear TCADP Members and Supporters,

On June 2, 2009 – barring any last-minute stays – the State of Texas will carry out the 200<sup>th</sup> execution during the administration of Governor Rick Perry. This shameful milestone provides us with an opportunity to draw attention to the fact that the pace of executions in our state continues to be at odds with the positive momentum that has been generated on the death penalty issue both nationally and here in Texas.

On this occasion, we encourage TCADP members and supporters to engage in activities at the local level that educate the public about the death penalty and also serve as a witness to the 200 men and women executed and the 279 victims of these crimes.

This organizing packet contains the following materials:

- Ideas for action
- Talking points regarding the 200<sup>th</sup> execution
- A sample letter to the editor
- A fact sheet on 200 executions under Governor Perry
- A handout with the names of those who have been executed and the victims

Also, in case you haven't done so already, we urge you to read the report that Amnesty International released last month: *Too much cruelty, too little clemency: Texas nears 200th execution under current governor*. This document focuses on some of the most egregious executions that have taken place in the last eight years in Texas, including those involving juvenile offenders, persons with severe mental illness, and foreign nationals. It also examines some of the cases that are still pending and might result in further executions during the administration of Texas Governor Rick Perry. The report is available online at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR51/057/2009/en>.

TCADP would like to thank the staff and volunteers of Amnesty International for the support and resources they have provided on this occasion.

We hope that you find this organizing packet useful and that our combined acts of solidarity marking this shameful milestone attract significant attention from the public, the media, and elected officials.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to ending the death penalty in Texas and for all that you do to advance this goal.

In solidarity,

Kristin & Vicki, TCADP

## Ideas for Action

**Level One Activities:** These require minimal planning and can be carried out by an individual or a small group of people.

- Read the accompanying information on the 200<sup>th</sup> execution.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper using the talking points provided to raise awareness of the 200<sup>th</sup> execution under Governor Rick Perry. Submit your letter one or two days before the scheduled execution on June 2 or in response to any articles that appear in your newspaper.
- Respond in the online comments section to articles that appear regarding the June 2 execution, using the talking points provided. [*Note: You may need to be a subscriber or create an account to do so.*]
- Submit information about your regular chapter vigils (if your community holds them) to online and print community calendars.
- If you are a member of a faith community, place a notice in your bulletin for your worship service, ask your faith leader to mention the 200<sup>th</sup> execution, and/or toll your bells to mark the occasion.
- Observe a moment of silence during your worship service to reflect on all victims and perpetrators of violence. A list of the 200 executed inmates and their victims is included with this organizing packet – the list can be reprinted and included in a church bulletin.
- Make copies of the 200<sup>th</sup> execution fact sheet (one page, double sided) and distribute.
- Be visible in your community: Wear your anti-death penalty t-shirt on June 2.
- Attend a vigil or demonstration already scheduled in your area and bring a friend.
- Wear a black armband, a TCADP button, or your “No Death Penalty” wristband on June 2 and explain the significance when asked.
- Write with shoe polish on your car windows a timely message: “Governor Perry’s 200<sup>th</sup> Execution Today.”

**Level Two Activities:** These require some planning by a small group; they might also require consultation with faith leaders or community leadership.

- Take action to make sure that your elected officials, the public, and the media are aware of the 200<sup>th</sup> execution under Governor Perry. Organize teach-ins and discussions about the flaws of the death penalty. Use the June 2 execution to motivate the discussion.
- Organize a vigil on June 2 in remembrance of all victims and perpetrators of violence. Invite members of different faith communities to attend. A list of the 200 executed offenders and their victims is included with this organizing packet. Names can be read and/or bells tolled. Choose a high visibility time and location.
- Create a visual project for the 200<sup>th</sup> execution, such as erecting grave markers or crosses with the names of those executed.
- Create posters signifying the 200<sup>th</sup> execution under Governor Perry and incorporate them into your public events.

## **Talking Points Regarding the 200<sup>th</sup> Execution Under Governor Rick Perry**

- Nearly half of all Texas executions in the so-called modern death penalty era have taken place in the last eight years.
- In this same time period, the death penalty landscape has changed dramatically both in Texas and nationwide:
  - Three states (New York, New Jersey, and New Mexico) have abandoned the death penalty and half a dozen others have given serious consideration to abolishing it.
  - The U.S. Supreme Court has banned the death penalty for juvenile offenders and people with mental retardation.
  - 40 people have been exonerated from death rows nationwide, including 2 in Texas, and concerns about innocence continue to plant seeds of doubt about the death penalty in the minds of the public.
  - New death sentences have declined more than 50%, both nationally and here in Texas.
  - Only 13 other states have carried out executions in the past 2 ½ years.
- Governor Perry and other statewide officials have failed to provide leadership on issues related to criminal justice and the death penalty, in particular.
  - Statewide leaders in Texas have failed to question why our state is so far out of step with the rest of the country (and the rest of the world) when it comes to the use of the death penalty.
  - Our statewide leaders also have done little to address the abundant evidence of the flaws and failures of the Texas death penalty system.

## Sample Letter to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be based on the guidelines of your local newspaper; these can be found on the newspaper's website. Submissions should be limited to between 200-250 words.

The following template (242 words) provides language that might be useful in preparing your own letters. Consider sending a letter between May 26 and June 5. In addition, consider submitting an online comment to any articles that appear regarding the 200<sup>th</sup> execution under Governor Perry.

We encourage you to personalize your letter and to adapt the talking points in the previous section. You also might incorporate some of the statistics found on the fact sheet included in this organizing packet.

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Dear Editor:

On June 2, 2009, the State of Texas is scheduled to carry out its 200<sup>th</sup> execution under the administration of Governor Rick Perry. We have marked a lot of grim milestones regarding the death penalty here in Texas, but there is something particularly sobering about 200 executions occurring during the administration of a single governor.

In this same time period, the death penalty landscape has changed dramatically both here in Texas and nationwide. Three states have abandoned the death penalty and numerous state legislatures have given serious consideration to abolishing it. Forty people, including two in Texas, have been released from death row due to evidence of their wrongful conviction. And the U.S. Supreme Court continues to narrow the scope of those who are eligible for the death penalty, such that some of the executions that have occurred in the last eight years now would be considered unconstitutional.

Rather than speaking of *seceding*, the leaders of this great state should be *following* the example of their peers in Maryland, New Mexico, New Jersey, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, and many others in examining the necessity and utility of capital punishment. It is time for our leaders to take a good hard look at this costly, broken government system – a system that produces wrongful convictions and most likely wrongful executions – and to support alternatives that protect society and punish the truly guilty. It is time for Texas to abolish the death penalty.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
Your Address  
Your City, State, Zip Code  
Your Phone Number or Email Address

(The newspaper needs your contact information to verify the author of the letter. It will not be published in the paper.)

# TEXAS COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY

## 200 Executions Under Governor Rick Perry

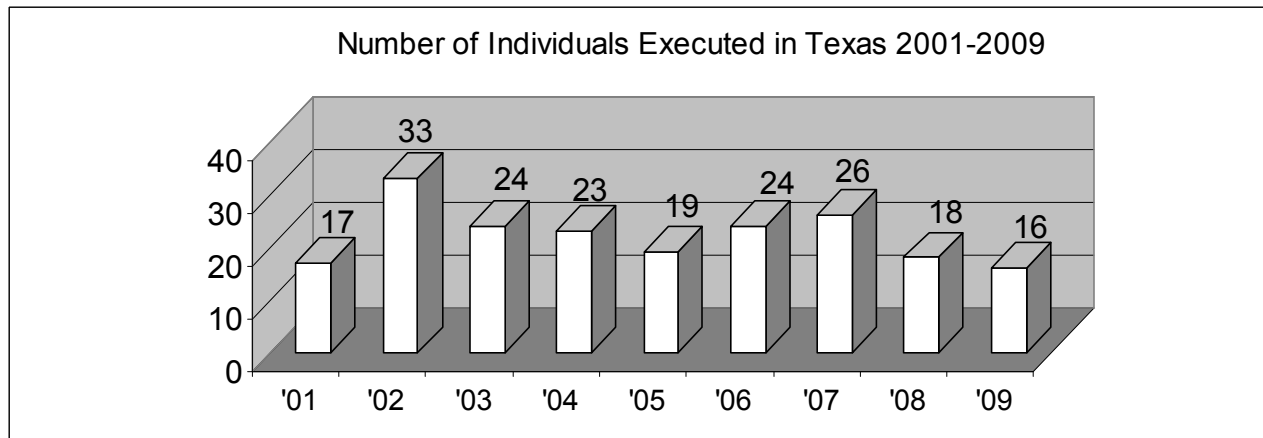
(Statistics as of June 2, 2009)

Governor Rick Perry was sworn in as the state's 47th governor on December 21, 2000. He was elected to a four-year term on November 5, 2002 and re-elected on November 7, 2006.

The powers given to Texas Governors to intervene in death penalty cases are somewhat limited. Under Texas law, the Governor can issue a one-time 30-day stay to anyone facing execution. The Governor cannot grant a longer reprieve or commute a death sentence without a recommendation from the Board of Pardons and Paroles, although he/she can reject a recommendation and proceed with an execution.

### NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS EXECUTED SINCE 2001

- Texas has executed 200 individuals by lethal injection since Governor Rick Perry took office; 46% of Texas executions since 1982 have taken place during the past eight years.



- Of the 200 executed: 84 were White, 81 were Black, and 35 were Hispanic.
- Four of the last five juvenile offenders executed in the United States (before the 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing the practice) were put to death in Texas after Governor Perry and the Parole Board denied clemency; all were Black: Gerald Mitchell (10/22/2001); Napoleon Beazley (5/28/2002); T.J. Jones (08/08/2002); and Toronto Patterson (08/28/2002).
- Five foreign nationals have been executed: Javier Suarez Medina (09/14/2002); John Elliott (02/04/2003); Angel Maturino Resendiz (06/27/2006); Jose Medellin (08/05/2008); and Heliberto Chi (08/07/2008).
- Twelve inmates with strong claims of severe mental illness have been executed in this time period, including Kelsey Patterson, an inmate suffering from severe paranoid schizophrenia Patterson was executed on May 18, 2004, after Governor Perry rejected a rare recommendation for commutation by the Board of Pardons and Paroles.
- Strong arguments have been made that Texas wrongfully executed Cameron Todd Willingham in 2004. His conviction was based on scientific evidence that was later proven to be inaccurate. This information was presented to Governor Perry before the scheduled execution but did not lead to a stay.
- Governor Perry vetoed legislation in 2001 that would have prevented the execution of people with mental retardation. The Texas Legislature still has not enacted statutory provisions in compliance with the 2002 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Atkins v. Virginia*) that exempts those with mental retardation from execution.

## QUOTES FROM GOVERNOR PERRY

Earlier this year, Governor Perry said he has faith in the state's criminal justice system even though DNA testing in Dallas County cases has led to the exoneration of 19 people. He said no conviction commissions or death penalty moratoriums are needed. "By and large, we have a system that is fair, that works well, that is open to correcting errors that are made," Perry said. (*Dallas Morning News*, January 15, 2009)

"Gov. Rick Perry does not believe that an Innocence Commission is necessary," said Allison Castle, a spokeswoman for the governor. She noted that Perry has supported efforts to improve the system for providing attorneys to poor criminal defendants and has strongly advocated post-conviction DNA testing. "He is committed to providing a fair criminal justice system. But the governor's sentiment is that we don't need another layer of bureaucracy," Castle said. (AP, May 2008)

Responding to the European Union's call for a moratorium in light of the 400th execution in Texas: "Two hundred and thirty years ago, our forefathers fought a war to throw off the yoke of a European monarch and gain the freedom of self-determination. Texans long ago decided that the death penalty is a just and appropriate punishment for the most horrible crimes committed against our citizens. While we respect our friends in Europe, welcome their investment in our state and appreciate their interest in our laws, Texans are doing just fine governing Texas." - Governor Rick Perry (AP, August 22, 2007)

In a statement responding to the *Atkins* decision, Governor Perry said that "the state's lawyers will continue to analyze the ruling to determine its impact on Texas law. It may be months, however, before state and federal courts rule on the specifics of our Texas law. Texas does not execute mentally retarded individuals who meet the three-pronged test cited in the High Court's decision." (2002)

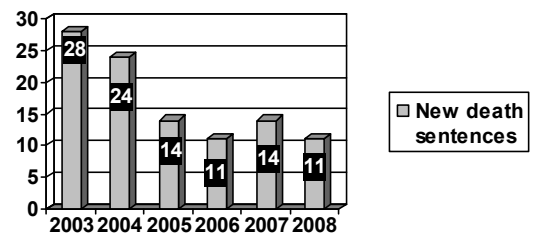
## POSITIVE TRENDS SINCE 2001

- Three states have abandoned the death penalty: New York, New Jersey, and New Mexico. Montana, Maryland, Colorado, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Kansas made substantial progress in moving repeal legislation in their state legislatures in 2009.
- During the 2009 Legislative session, five members of the Texas House of Representatives signed on in support of an abolition bill. Multiple pieces of legislation related to improving the Texas criminal justice system received hearings and positive votes.
- The U.S. Supreme Court banned the death penalty for juvenile offenders and people with mental retardation.
- 40 people have been exonerated from death rows nationwide, including 2 in Texas. Concerns about innocence continue to plant seeds of doubt about the death penalty in the minds of the public.
- New scientific and forensic evidence has called into question the reliability of numerous cases.
- New voices on the death penalty have emerged and become more prominent on this issue, including murder victims' families and members of the law enforcement community.

## DEATH SENTENCES

According to data available from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and the Office of Court Administration, ten men and one woman were sentenced to death in Texas in 2008. 2008 ties with 2006 as the lowest number of new death sentences (11) in Texas since official reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976.

- Over the last five years, the number of new death sentences in Texas has declined by approximately 50%, which mirrors national trends.
- Death Sentences in Harris County: 2001: 6; 2002: 8; 2003: 9; 2004: 10; 2005: 1; 2006: 2; 2007: 4; 2008: 0.





**AIUSA AND TCADP**

# Remembering All Life

*The profound moral question is not, "Do they deserve to die?" but "Do we deserve to kill them?"*

*- Sr. Helen Prejean*



As Texas approaches its 200<sup>th</sup> execution in just 8 years under Governor Rick Perry, the rest of the country – and indeed many Texans – have begun to question this policy that does nothing but perpetuate the cycle of violence and create more grieving families. Texans deserve better!



## The 279 Victims (2001-2009)

Melisa Ann Garcia, Douglas Tillerson, Lori Bruch, Elizabeth Alvarado, Grace Purnhagen, Christina Benjamin, James King, Michael McGuire, Lacey Anderson, John Ebbert, Larry McMillan Jr., Rich Wood, Donald Johnson, Sylvia Dean, Jerry Dean, Joe Sanchez, Charles Marino, Wilton Humphreys, Steve Morgan, Gary McCarthy, Christa Bentley, Christina Sanchez, Dianna Broussard, Corey Harris, James Mitchell, Gene Allen II, James Williams, Michael Watkins, Yolanda Garza, Johnny Lynn Hamlett, Sonya Howell, Victor Cervan, Jenny Lynn Weeks, Lee Styron, Clay Peterson, John Luttigg, Wayne Walters, Kriss Keeran, Sarah Coulson, Mary Coulson, Robin Wentworth, Richard Wentworth, Barbara Pullins, Kathryn Harrison, Willard Davis, Lawrence Cadena, Christie Chauviere, Ollie Brown, Jennifer Brown, Kimberly Brewer, Virginia Simmons, Willie Simmons, Nina Redd, Lori Baker, Kynara Carreiro, Kristin Wiley, Billy Wayne Ezell, Falyssa Van Winkle, James Boswell, Alexandra Heath, Martha Lindsey, Elbert Sitton, Jo Ann Reed, David Rojas, Gwendolyn Reed, Timothy Reed, Verle Kenney, Julianna Kenney, Adrienne Arnot, Adriana Marines, Adeline Dannenberg, Lorenz Dannenberg, David Vela, Katherine Thompson, Shelly Cutler, Ronnie Bennett, Joyce Munguia, Nicolas West, Jeanette Williams, Edwin Holder, Melathethil Varughese, Peggy Murphy, Jose Morales, Dora Watkins, Conrad Harris, Gerald Wood, William Rains, McKay Everett, Katrease Houston, Gwendolyn Black, Christina Black, Herbert Primm, Kevin Wanstrath, Mary Hayes, Rosalyn Robinson, Hazel Rumohr, Carol Arnold, Ruth High, John High, Lula Mae Denning, Carolyn Casey, Helen Ayers, Leslie Gilbert Hooks Jr., Phillip Kinslow, Shakeisha Llyod, Caolo Llyod, Zenobia Anderson, Jennifer Weston, Sandi Marbut, Amber Willingham, Karmon Willingham, Kamerson Willingham, Gil Epstein, Dorothy Harris, Louis Oates, Mark Mays, Tennille Thompson, Brandy Gray, Brian Clendennen, John Moreno, Helen O'Sullivan, Edward Haden, Paul Manier, Nicholas West, Mark Frazier, Andrew Lastrapes Jr., Jesse Fields, Lisa Allison, Michael Burzinski, Alfonso Rodriguez, Robert Tate, Rudy Delgado, Stephen Horton, Leona McBee, Reba Best, Libby Best, Tassy Best, Rozanne Gailunas, Jerry Velez, Robert Cook, Bertha Lemell, Nick Moraida, Helen Oliveros, Kiersa Paul, John Carty, Paula Stiner, Adrian Newton, Farrah Newton, Alton Newton, Bill Davidson, Nemecio Nandin, Jennifer Gravell, Karen Crawford, Raymond Mata, Irvin Wright, Roberto Rios, Victor Rios, Maria Rios, Jessica Quinones, Jose Tovar, Audrey Brown, Frank Farias, Juan Guajardo, Marcos Vasquez, Amy Robinson, David Jacobs, Foluke Erinkitola, Roxanne Mendoza, Adriana Gomez, Jerome Harville, Lottie Rhodes, Annette Chavez, Leonardo Chavez, Sr., Christine Sossaman, Anthony Roney, Riki Johnson, Alonzo Stewart, Claudia Benton, Elizabeth Pena, Jennifer Ertman, Michael LaHood Jr., Audra Reeves, Damien Willis, Terry Wright, Donald Whittington III, Cody Nutt, Betsy Nutt, Uries Anderson, Manny Taboada, Tracy Paules, Gene Summers, Helen Summers, Billy Mack Summers, Mario Stubblefield, Benjamin Garza, Anthony Jiminez, Fabian Dominguez, Amy Swift-Sabeh, Sandra Sabeh, Erica Mayes, Sonnie Mayes, Bertha Cobb, Frank Cobb, Michael Mazingo, Jose Travieso, James Rivas, Claude Shaffer, Jiten Bhakta, Jose Cobo, Elmer Buitrago, Fabio Buitrago, Catherine Crews, Carmelo Surace, Tim Hudson, Deborah McCormick, Tracy Gee, Yvette Barraz, Mary Ann, Walter Werner, Sean Schulz, Leroy McCaffrey Jr., Suzie Malek, Kathyanna Nguyen, Patricia Colter, Reza Ayari, Ronnie Dawn Hewitt, Rachel White, Susan Halverstadt, Brent Roe, Marguerite Dixon, Felecia Prechtl, Tonya Turner, Carlton Turner, Sr., Melody Flowers, Patrick Flowers, Michael Barrow, Elizabeth Pena, Jennifer Ertman, Armand Paliotta, James Armstrong, Brad Lindsey, Aubrey Hawkins, Rena Ratcliff, Devin Morgan, Hak Po Kim, Yan Tzu Banks, Chae Sun Shook, Robert Ratliff, Nicole Benton, Donna Vick, Otis Flake, Shakeitha Carrier, Michelle Robson, Edith Kendrick, Roderick Moore, LaTanya Boone, Henry Truevillan, Samuel Boyd, Patrick Clark, Gertie Perkins, Veronica Fuentes, Joshua Fuentes, Cassandra Fuentes, John Gomez, Gerardo Garcia, Carolina Prado, Erik Prado, Wendie Prescott, Leah Smith, Martha Lennox, James Adams, Sandra Walton, Mike Humphreys, Martha Sanchez, Erick Sanchez, Mary Felder, LaTausha Curry, Wynona Harris

## The 199 Executed (2001-2009)

Jack Wade Clark, Alvin Goodwin, Caruthers Alexander, Adolph Hernandez, Dennis Dowthitt, Jason Massey, David Goff, John Wheat, Miguel Richardson, James Wilkens Jr., Mack Oran Hill, Jeffery Doughtie, James Roy Knox, Gerald Mitchell, Jeffery Tucker, Emerson Rudd, Vincent Cooks, Michael Moore, Jermarr Arnold, Windell Broussard, Randal Hafdahl, Monty Delk, Gerald Tigner, Jose Santellan, William Burns, Gerald Casey, Rodolfo Hernandez, Reginald Reeves, Ronford Styron Jr., Johnny Martinez, Napoleon Beazley, Stanley Baker Jr., Daniel Reneau, Robert Coulson, Jeffrey Williams, Richard Kutzner, T.J. Jones, Javier Suarez Medina, Gary Etheridge, Toronto Patterson, Tony Lee Walker, Jessie Patrick, Ronald Shamburger, Rex Mays, Calvin King, James Powell, Craig Ogan, William Chappell, Leonard Rojas, James Collier, Samuel Gallamore, John Baltazar, Robert Lookingbill, Alva Curry, Richard Dinkins, Granville Riddle, John Elliott, Henry Dunn Jr., Richard Williams, Bobby Cook, Keith Clay, James Colburn, Juan Chavez, Roger Vaughn, Bruce Jacobs, Kia Johnson, Hilton Crawford, Christopher Black Sr., Cedric Ransom, Allen Wayne Janecka, Larry Hayes, Robert Henry, Richard Duncan, Ivan Murphy, Jr., Ynobe Matthews, Kenneth Bruce, Kevin Zimmerman, Billy Vickers, Edward Lagrone, Bobby Ray Hopkins, Todd Willingham, Marcus Cotton, Kelsey Patterson, David Harris, Jasen Busby, James Allridge, Andrew Flores, Edward Green III, Peter Miniel, Donald Aldrich, Ricky Morrow, Dominique Green, Lorenzo Morris, Robert Morrow, Demarco McCullum, Frederick McWilliams, Anthony Fuentes, James Porter, Troy Kunkle, Dennis Bagwell, George Hopper, Douglas Roberts, Lonnie Pursley, Bryan Wolfe, Richard Cartwright, Alexander Martinez, David Martinez, Gary Sterling, Robert Shields, Frances Newton, Ronald Howard, Luis Ramirez, Melvin White, Charles Thacker, Robert Rowell, Shannon Thomas, Marion Dudley, Jaime Elizalde, Robert Neville, Clyde Smith, Tommie Hughes, Robert Salazar Jr., Kevin Kincy, Jackie Wilson, Jermaine Herron, Jesus Aguilar, Timothy Titsworth, Lamont Reese, Angel Resendiz, Derrick O'Brien, Mauriceo Brown, Robert Anderson, William Wyatt Jr., Richard Hinojosa, Justin Fuller, Derrick Frazier, Farley Matchett, Greg Summers, Donell Jackson, Willie Shannon, Carlos Granados, Johnathan Moore, Christopher Swift, James Jackson, Newton Anderson, Donald Miller, Robert Perez, Joseph Nichols, Charles Nealy, Vincent Gutierrez, Roy Pippin, James Clark, Ryan Dickson, Charles Smith, Michael Griffith, Lionell Rodriguez, Gilberto Reyes, Patrick Knight, Lonnie Johnson, Kenneth Parr, Johnny Conner, DaRoyce Mosley, John Amador, Tony Roach, Clifford Kimmel, Michael Richard, Karl Chamberlain, Carlton Turner, Derrick Sonnier, Larry Davis, Jose Medellin, Heliberto Chi, Leon Dorsey IV, Michael Rodriguez, William Murray, Alvin Kelly, Kevin Watts, Joseph Ries, Eric Nenzo, Greg Wright, Elkie Taylor, George Whitaker III, Denard Manns, Robert Hudson, Curtis Moore, Frank Moore, Reginald Perkins, Virgil Martinez, Ricardo Ortiz, David Martinez, Dale Scheanette, Johnny Ray Johnson, Willie Pondexter, Kenneth Morris, James Martinez, Luis Salazar, Michael Rosales, Derrick Johnson, Michael Riley

**“An evil deed is not redeemed by an evil deed of retaliation. Justice is never advanced in the taking of human life. Morality is never upheld by legalized murder.”**  
**- Coretta Scott King**