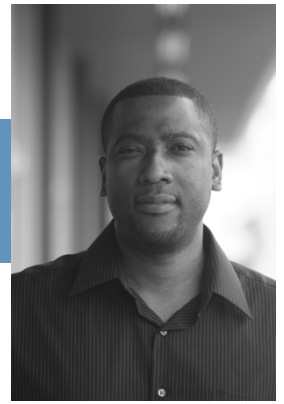


## Voices of Texas: Stanley Allridge

“From the time that I watched my oldest brother executed in 1995, it totally changed my outlook on life. It made me value life itself...”

- Stanley Allridge



Stanley Allridge didn't have his grandmother or his grandfather around when he was growing up. All he knew was that they had both died when he was very young. Little was said about their passing.

It wasn't until he was an adult – and after his two brothers were executed by the State of Texas – that he learned his grandfather, grandmother, and aunt were murdered in two unrelated incidents.

In May 1995, Stanley graduated from high school, was named “Most Athletic,” and attended his prom with a sense of accomplishment. But those moments of triumph were dashed the following month when he witnessed the execution of his brother, Ronald, at the Walls Unit in Huntsville, Texas.

Because Stanley had lived much of his life with two brothers on death row, he said, he never really thought they would die. He always thought there would be another appeal. That wasn't the case.

Stanley vividly remembers that he was watching television one night with his brother when his father walked in. His father's hands were covering his face as he collapsed on the bed. It was the first time Stanley had seen his father cry. When they asked him what was wrong, he said he brothers were in trouble. His two oldest brothers (in a family of five sons), Ronald and James, had been involved in a series of armed robberies. One night they entered a Whataburger in Fort Worth to commit a robbery and someone was shot to death. It wasn't long until both brothers were tried, convicted of capital murder, and sentenced to death.

Stanley was too young to understand what was happening during the trial stage, but by the time his first brother was executed, he was 18 years old. The guards and other prison officials told him what to expect, but none of that prepared him for the execution. He says it seemed like it was happening in slow motion. His family was in one room and the reporters and any relatives of the victim were in another room; both witnessed the execution at the same time but saw it from a very different perspective.

“It was eerie. You could see (in the reflection of the glass) that other people were there,” Stanley said. It was such a blur that Stanley doesn't remember whether Ronald had any last words.

Stanley's second brother, James, was executed in 2004. He apologized to the victim's family before he was put to death by lethal injection.

“I oppose the death penalty because I believe killing a human being is wrong, no matter the circumstances, and also because it continues the cycle of violence.” Stanley believes in life in prison without the possibility of parole rather than the death penalty.

Stanley believes that people don't think about the ripple effect that the death penalty has on families on both sides. When he hears about an upcoming execution in Texas, he feels deeply for the family of the victim and for the family of the person who will be executed. After working with numerous family members, it has been his experience that the death penalty does not give families closure.

“From the time that I watched my oldest brother executed in 1995, it totally changed my outlook on life. It made me value life itself. I have always said that I felt like I had an obligation to help others that were headed down the same path, or had already experienced a similar situation.”

*Stanley Allridge comes from a very religious family. He is a sales manager in financial services and lives in the North Dallas area, about an hour from where he grew up. He is a former board member of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty and currently serves on the board of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights.*

*This profile was originally developed by Chris Castillo for the Winter 2011-2012 Seizing the Momentum newsletter.*