

**Statement
by
Commissioner William B. Allen**

**Concerning the Passing
of
THE HONORABLE CLARENCE M. PENDLETON, JR.
5 June 1988**

Friends never part easily, whether for a brief time, or forever. Penny was first of all a friend. We had not known one another long, but we knew one another almost at once. It was that way with almost everyone who came to know and love the Chairman of the Commission on Civil Rights. I came to the Commission because he was there; I shall remain because he was there.

The Chairman's vision of our fair land and its people began from the idea of friendship. He pressed the case of civil rights for all Americans, because he honestly believed that we would thus all be friends. He articulated challenges to old saws; he set forth conceptions of new tools for repairing the injuries of centuries. Penny once said to me that he was a metaphor-machine, that he spoke for all to find themselves in the images he invoked. He succeeded, recasting the debate within our country and inaugurating an era in which candor could become the staple of concern for the oppressed or forgotten.

The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights gained a voice with its first black Chairman ever, a voice which it must never lose. He gave of himself without reserve; we now know at what cost. He asked nothing in return but the esteem of his countrymen. It is now our turn to repay the debt, and to pay not only in fair reputation, but in rededication to the task of forging a citizenship of rights which unite rather than divide Americans. Penny, I take that pledge as I reluctantly say to you, "Farewell."