

Pierce County Sheriff's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 1997 Homicide Victim

After 26 years, a homicide victim, whose remains were discovered in a remote wooded area near Wilkeson, Washington has been identified as **Laurie Krage**.

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Summary

In October 1997, the skeletal remains of a woman were found by a person walking through the woods in Wilkeson, Washington in Pierce County. Wilkeson is a small town southeast of Seattle. Her remains were located on Gale Creek Rd, approximately 9 miles from Wilkeson School, south of Buckley. It was determined that the remains were that of a woman who was about 5'5" and was between the ages of 20 and 50. She was wearing a dark blue long-sleeved sweatshirt with a Pacific Lutheran University logo along with a basketball logo and the word "LUTES." She was also found with size 7 Union Bay blue jeans. She was also found with white Reebok tennis shoes with yellow & green trim, size 4 1/2.

Despite efforts by investigators, the woman could not be identified and she became known as Pierce County Jane Doe. In August 2009, details of Pierce County Jane Doe's case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP5691.

In October 2023, the Pierce County Sheriff's Office submitted forensic evidence to Othram in The Woodlands, Texas to determine if advanced DNA testing could help identify the woman. Othram scientists successfully developed a DNA extract from the forensic evidence and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive genealogical profile for the unknown woman. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team then used this profile to conduct genetic genealogy research, ultimately providing new investigative leads to law enforcement.

Using this new information, a follow-up investigation was conducted leading investigators to potential relatives of Pierce County Jane Doe. Reference DNA samples were collected from the potential relatives and compared to the DNA profile of the unknown woman. The potential relative's DNA profile was compared to the DNA profile developed for the unknown woman using KinSNP® Rapid Relationship Testing. This investigation led to the identification of the woman as Laurie Kay (Lester) Krage, born December 17, 1959.

This case is now being investigated as a homicide and detectives are seeking any information from those that may have known Laurie Krage or her late husband Ronald Martin who passed away in 2020 from natural causes. Laurie was known to travel in all parts of Pierce County to include, Lakewood, Kent and Emerald Queen area. Detectives are seeking information about Laurie or Ronald Martin from 1995-1997. Laurie was last known to be alive in January of 1996.

Anyone with information about Laurie is asked to submit a tip to the Pierce County Sheriff's Office via their [Android app](#) or [iPhone app](#). Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Stoppers by visiting tpcrimestoppers.com or calling 1-800-222-TIPS.

The identification of Laurie Krage represents the 37th case in the State of Washington where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram. [Visit DNASolves](#) to learn about other cases in Washington.