



MEDIA RELEASE

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Knox County Regional Forensic Center ID's Another Cold Case Death

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— The Knox County Regional Forensic Center has again helped solve another cold case, this time with the help of advanced genetic testing.

“No one is forgotten or neglected at the Knox County Regional Forensic Center,” said Chris Thomas, the Center’s Chief Administrative Officer. “We work diligently every day to try to identify every decedent and connect them with their next of kin, regardless of how long they’ve been here.”

The Knoxville Police Department notified the forensic center in early September 2022 that human remains were located in a wooded area behind a house on Knott Ave. An autopsy report revealed that no foul play was involved with the death, but no one could identify the decedent.

Thomas’ crews used radiographs and dental ex-rays from missing individuals in the area but yielded no results. Working with Texas-based Othram Inc., a leader in what is called “forensic genetic genealogical (FGG)” research officials this past March were able to identify the person – 34-year-old Tony A. Brown Jr. FGG research uses a variety of techniques including tapping into ancestry registries and using investigators to look into genealogical backgrounds.

The Knox County Regional Forensic Center, in conjunction with local law enforcement, has helped identify dozens of cold case victims – including one murder case stretching back three decades – during the past couple of years through advanced identification methods, such as dental, radiograph, and DNA.

In addition, officials each year identify hundreds of decedents from mostly non-crime related deaths.

“Everyone starts moving from the moment of arrival and most of them don’t stop even after they go home,” Thomas said. “This is an amazing team that is dedicated to their work and identifying decedents is just as important as finding out why they died.”

“It’s no secret that our Regional Forensic Center is an incredible county asset,” said Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. “The staff is skilled and I’m grateful for the care they put into the job they do.”

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