

After 27 years, authorities ID teen girl's body found in Highland Park



Charles E. Ramirez

The Detroit News

A teenage girl whose remains were found in a Highland Park alley in 1996 has been identified, officials announced Thursday.

She was **Mindy Clevidence**, 17, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children said in a statement.

The group said she was identified using genetic genealogy technology.



Center officials said they worked with Highland police and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office.

"I want Mindy's family to know that our thoughts and prayers go out to them," Highland Park police Chief James McMahon said in a statement. "We recognize this is a very difficult time and although it brings some closure, it also brings forth painful memories and unanswered questions."

The girl's family issued a statement through the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children about the identification of her remains.

"We are grateful for all the efforts made by the Highland Police Department and (the center) in helping us get one step closer to finding out what happened to Mindy and ultimately finding justice for her," the statement said. "We ask for our privacy as we navigate through this difficult time. We ask that anyone who has information regarding Mindy's death to please contact authorities."

Police said Mindy's body was found in May 1996 between Cortland and Richton streets in Highland Park. She was wearing a white T-shirt with yellow and black smiley faces on it, a white skirt, white socks, white gym shoes and a teddy bear watch.

Chief McMahon said the teen's death has been classified as a homicide and the investigation is ongoing.

"Identifying Mindy is an early step in the process," he said. "Now it's time to get justice for Mindy. It's been more than 27 years since her murder, but I believe someone has information that could lead to the arrest of her killer."

"We ask if you have any information regarding Mindy's case, please contact the Highland Park Police Department."

Highland Park police with help from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children exhumed the teen's body in October 2015 to conduct forensic tests and bring the case up to investigative standards, center officials said.

They tried to identify the girl's remains through DNA, but no matches were found at the time.



Eight years later, the center and police were able to get a DNA testing laboratory to join the effort to identify the victim. They then turned to genetic genealogy databases.

This past summer, investigators developed a lead that helped them determine the victim was Mindy, they said.

Anyone with information about Mindy Clevidence's death or her whereabouts leading up to her 1996 murder in 1996 should call the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office at (313) 318-8516 or the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST.

cramirez@detroitnews.com

X: @CharlesERamirez