

## Brutal 41-year-old Benicia cold case murder finally solved

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Dolores Wulff was identified as the victim in a long-cold murder investigated by Benicia police. Wulff's torso washed up on a Benicia shoreline in 1979 and she was finally identified in Oct. 2020.

Benicia Police Department

A chilling Benicia cold case finally has a resolution 41 years later.

In 1979, a torso washed up along the Benicia shoreline, shocking the quiet community. The lack of any defining features puzzled investigators — right up until July of this year.

Three months ago, the Doe Network, a non-profit that works to discover the identities of John and Jane Does, reached out to the Solano County Coroner's Office. They had a theory for that 1979 Jane Doe but, unfortunately, it fell through.

The inquiry nonetheless renewed interest in the case, and Benicia Detective Sergeant Kenneth Hart picked up the search from there. He began looking for women who went missing in 1979 in the greater Bay Area, homing in on 11 individuals. One case in particular piqued his interest.

Dolores Wulff was 45 when she went missing from her family home in rural Woodland, Calif. Sometime on the night of July 31, the Woodland High School secretary disappeared off the face of the Earth — although investigators had a prime suspect. Wulff's brother told reporters his sister had a "rocky" relationship with her husband Carl Wulff Sr., and that she'd left him several times before. But he'd always sought her out — until this time.

"This time he made no effort," Dolores' brother Matt Rocha told the Sacramento Bee in 1985. "He didn't even get in his car and drive down to the end of the road."

In 1985, after years of surveillance and even a fake "revelation" that Dolores' body had been found, Carl Wulff was arrested for her murder. The case was later dropped due to a lack of evidence. He died in 2005.

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The case looked promising for Benicia investigators, who contacted one of Dolores' living children for a DNA sample. That sample was compared to DNA from the torso and, on Tuesday, the Department of Justice DNA lab informed Benicia PD that they had a match.

"We are so glad to be able to bring a sort of closure to the Wulff family after decades of uncertainty," Benicia's interim chief of police Mike Greene said in a statement. "I am also proud of Sgt. Hart and his team's tenacity on this case."

Dolores Wulff was survived by her four children and a community of friends who never stopped hoping they'd find out what happened to their loved one.

"This case has haunted my office and, in fact, all of Yolo County since 1979," Yolo County Sheriff Tom Lopez said in a statement. "Countless hours were spent investigating Dolores Wullf's disappearance. It is my hope that this provides some closure to the family who has suffered so much."