Woman found dead in Trinity-Bellwoods Park in 2020 identified as a result of DNA testing

By **Ryan Rocca** **Global News**
Posted February 22, 2022 12:40 pm

A woman who was found dead in Trinity-Bellwoods Park in 2020 has been identified as a result of DNA testing.

Toronto police said officers responded to the park on June 10, 2020 for reports of a woman who was unconscious.

They located a deceased woman who was later determined to have died of natural causes, police said.

She didn't have any identification with her and no connections were made using her fingerprints or through missing persons reports, police said.

Investigators appealed to the public for help in identifying her and released sketches.

Officers received tips, but none led to her identification, police said.

In early 2021, the DNA Doe Project, an organization that works to name unidentified individuals, approached police regarding the case.

Later that year, the organization received a sample of the woman's DNA.

"The DNA Doe Project developed, sequenced and compared the DNA from the deceased woman to public genealogical databases," police said.

“Two people that shared some common DNA with the deceased were identified and investigators began reviewing publicly available information (family trees, obituaries, social media posts etc.) in a further attempt to identify the woman.”

In December, the organization said they had a possible identification. Police then contacted the family of the woman, obtained dental records, and the coroner was able to confirm her identity.

Police said her family does not want her identified at this time.

“When our volunteer investigative genetic genealogists began work on the family tree for this woman they found a number of good connections in the database. In less than a week, they had zeroed in on her identity,” DNA Doe Project team leader C. Lauritsen said.

“The search to find her name was greatly aided by family genealogical projects and having that information significantly enhanced our ability to identify her.”

The organization said the case shows how beneficial it can be for people to voluntarily upload their DNA profiles from sites like Ancestry and 23andMe to a public database.