

# Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 1984 Jane Doe

**Joyce Ann Hinson** is now identified more than four decades after her body was discovered in Tarrant County, Texas.

Solved



## Summary

In January 1984, the body of an unidentified woman was discovered at a landfill in Tarrant County, Texas. Investigators determined that the woman had died before being transported to the landfill, but despite extensive investigative efforts, her identity remained unknown. For more than four decades, the woman was known only as Tarrant County Jane Doe.

Over the years, investigators pursued numerous leads in an effort to identify the woman and notify her family. Despite those efforts, no matches were made, and the case remained unresolved. Biological evidence collected during the original investigation was preserved, creating an opportunity for future forensic testing as DNA technology advanced. Details of the case were entered into NamUs as UP4526.

In 2025, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office partnered with Othram to leverage advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy in hopes of

identifying the woman. Multiple evidence items from the original investigation were submitted to Othram's laboratory in The Woodlands, Texas. Othram scientists used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to develop a comprehensive DNA profile suitable for genealogical analysis.

The profile was then used by Othram's forensic genetic genealogy team in a forensic search, which generated new leads. In February 2026, the work produced a potential family connection to individuals bearing the Hinson surname. Investigators followed up on the lead and located a man who reported that his sister, Joyce Ann Hinson, had not been seen or heard from since late 1983.

The man told investigators that Joyce had briefly returned to her parents' home in Tennessee before leaving again. According to family members, Joyce frequently hitchhiked and traveled across multiple states. Before her disappearance, she contacted her mother and reported that she was traveling through Texas, including the Austin and Dallas-Fort Worth areas. Her last known communication was a phone call indicating that she was in North Texas. After that call, her family never heard from her again.

To help confirm the potential identification, the man provided a DNA sample for comparison. In March 2026, Othram developed a DNA profile suitable for kinship analysis, and subsequent testing confirmed that the unidentified woman and the man were full siblings.

Armed with a potential identity and additional biographical information, the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office partnered with the FBI to obtain further confirmation. Investigators compared partial postmortem fingerprints recovered from the decedent with fingerprints associated with a 1981 arrest record. The comparison confirmed that the woman found in Tarrant County in 1984 was Joyce Ann Hinson.

After more than 42 years without answers, Joyce's identification restores her name and provides long-awaited resolution for her family. Funding for the forensic work was provided through the Bureau of Justice Assistance Missing and Unidentified Human Remains Program.

The investigation into the circumstances surrounding Joyce Ann Hinson's death remains active. Anyone with information is encouraged to contact the Tarrant County Sheriff's Office.

This is the 29th publicly announced case in the State of Texas where officials leveraged Othram's identity inference pipeline. Explore other cases on Othram's [website](#).