

DNA leads to identity of Rock County cold case murder victim



Louis Anthony Gattaino of Omaha, Nebraska had been missing since October 1971. He was 25 at the time. His remains were found in Rock County in March of 1981 and were only recently identified.(Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension)

By [KEYC Staff](#)

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ST. PAUL, Minn. (KEYC) - The Rock County Sheriff's Office and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension announce a break in a cold case homicide.

A murder victim whose remains were found 41 years ago in Rock County, Minn. has been identified through genetic genealogy and DNA. Louis Anthony Gattaino of Omaha, Nebraska had been missing since October 1971. He was 25 at the time.

On March 13, 1981, a highway worker found skeletal remains of a man now identified as Louis Gattaino near a culvert along Minnesota Interstate 90 near County Highway 23 in Beaver Creek Township. Despite an exhaustive investigation the man's identity remained a mystery.

BCA forensic scientists obtained DNA from the remains but it did not match to anyone in convicted offender or missing persons databases.

Then this past August, researchers from the Doe Project working with a public genealogy database identified a likely genetic connection to Gattaino's family. BCA agents and Rock County investigators travelled to Omaha to collect DNA samples from several family members. BCA forensic scientists obtained DNA results that support the familial relationship last week and Rock County investigators notified Gattaino's family members of the results.

“While it’s not news anyone wants, Louis Gattaino’s family at long last has some answers,” Rock County Sheriff Evan Verbrugge said. “And while there is still much to be learned about Mr. Gattaino’s death, knowing his identity – even decades after he died – is a critically important new clue in this case.”

The Rock County Sheriff’s Office, the BCA and the Ramsey County Medical Examiner’s Office urge anyone who recognizes or had contact with Louis Gattaino between 1971 and 1981 or who has information about his death to contact the Rock County Sheriff’s Office Tip Line at 507-283-5000.

“Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy continues to unlock mysteries and provide families with answers about their loved ones,” BCA Superintendent Drew Evans said. “Although DNA testing wasn’t possible when Louis Gattaino died, we are grateful that it brings his family some resolution today.

The BCA continues to urge families with missing loved ones to report them missing to law enforcement and to provide DNA for comparison to unidentified remains DNA in Minnesota and across the nation. Families can start the process by contacting their local law enforcement agency or the BCA.

Investigators are grateful to the Doe Network for their efforts in this case that ultimately resulted in Louis Gattaino being identified. The Doe Network works to assist in resolving missing and unidentified persons cases. Learn more about [The Doe Network](#).

I am certain that reference to the DoeNetwork is incorrect. They meant to say The DNA Doe Project as mentioned earlier in the article.

<https://dnadoeproject.org/>