

Remains found near St. Johns Bridge more than 30 years ago identified

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PORTLAND, Ore. (KPTV) - Remains that were found more than 30 years ago near the St. Johns Bridge have been identified, according to Oregon State Police.

OSP says the skeletonized remains of a man were found by workers clearing brush near the bridge in north Portland on Aug. 17, 1992.

The medical examiner's office estimated the man, who was likely white, close to 50 years old and about 5-foot-2 to 5-foot-5 in height, had been dead for about a year before the remains were found.

OSP says the medical examiner's office noted several fractures that were more pronounced on the left side of the body, suggesting the person may have fallen from the bridge or been struck by a vehicle and thrown from the bridge.

However, OSP says the cause and manner of death still remain undetermined.

There were no leads on the man's identity and the case went cold.

In 2011, DNA results were uploaded to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), but no matches were found. In February 2024, the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office partnered with the DNA Doe Project and funding was secured for advanced DNA extraction and sequencing.

Then in March 2025, OSP says a single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) profile was produced.

Three months later, the SNP profile was uploaded to the FamilyTreeDNA database to find more matches, and by August, investigators identified a potential match and possible relatives.

The DNA Doe Project said there was a connection made between two of the key families of interest - a couple who'd married in Northfield, Massachusetts in 1951. During the investigation, it was learned that one of their children, Bryant Deane, seemed to have disappeared from the public records.

The medical examiner's office reached out to a presumed brother of the deceased and he agreed to provide a DNA sample.



Bryant Edward Deane's yearbook photo and Deane family headstone (Oregon State Police)

Earlier this month, the medical examiner's office confirmed the remains as those of Bryant Edward Deane, born Aug. 2, 1952 and is believed to have been about 39 years old at the time of his death.

"This case was cold for 33 years," said Hailey Collord-Stalder, forensic anthropologist with the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office. "Bryant's parents passed in 2017 and 2019, respectively, never knowing what happened to their son. His family left a space for him on their headstone; now he can finally be laid to rest with his family."