

## The Sun Herald

# Gulfport police: Man killed 17-year-old wife, missing since 1973, day before anniversary

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AMANDA McCOY/SUN HERALD A news clipping from 1973 offers a reward for information on Deloris Gonzales, a Gulfport woman who went missing on June 23, 1973. A press conference held on Thursday,

April 23, 2015, by the Gulfport Police Department announced that remains found more than 40 years ago in Alabama were identified as Gonzales'. AMANDA MCCOY — SUN HERALD [|Buy Photo](#)



A 17-year-old who went missing in 1973 was killed by her husband, officials with Gulfport Police Department said Thursday.

The revelation was made at a press conference after remains of Delorise Diane Gonzales were identified through DNA testing.

Gonzales' body was found more than 40 years ago in Alabama. She went missing June 23, 1973, authorities said.

Gulfport police said Gonzales' husband, who died in 2007, had admitted killing his wife the day before their second wedding anniversary and hiding her body in the woods.

Gonzales's husband was granted a divorce in Sept. 1974 and moved to Florida where he later remarried, authorities said.

Spencer Walker, district attorney for Choctaw, Clarke and Washington counties, said DNA testing solved the disappearance.

"Detectives found her remains in 1974 with two gunshots to the skull," Walker said. "The murder investigation is still open, but at least we could get the family this bit of closure."

The investigation started again in 2012 when Jason Kokoszka was taking inventory before the Alabama Department of Forensic Science moved to a new building.

"He found the remains and realized DNA testing had never been done," Walker said. "After that, he sent the remains to numerous locations for every DNA test possible."

Gonzales was 17 when she was reported missing.

Cold Case Detective Frank Mazzola said he spent most of his investigation recreating the day Gonzales went missing in Gulfport.

"Going through her last few hours allowed me to find people that knew her and eventually led me to family members," Mazzola said. "Taking DNA from direct family was a major breakthrough for us."

Mazzola said Gonzales' family was relieved to know what really happened to her

"They just want the remains and to give her a proper burial," he said.

Mazzola said naming the husband as the suspect also allows the family to close the case.

"We are treating the case as just about closed," he said. "The family has closure and that's the most important thing."

Chief Deputy Chris Loposser said Gulfport police never forget about cold cases and assure their citizens that they do everything in their power to close each case.

"Murder cases get much harder to prosecute after the first 48 hours," Waker said. "After 42 years, it becomes almost impossible."

Walker said without a great team working on the case from multiple offices, Gonzales' identity may have never been found.

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