

# Oneida County John Doe identified as Chicago man missing since 1980

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RHINELANDER, Wis. (WSAW) - The body of a man found in 1980 near Rhinelanders has been identified. Advanced forensic DNA testing has allowed investigators to confirm the man's identity as Norman Grasser of Chicago.

On March 19, 1980 the man's body was found in a field Town of Pine Lake.

An autopsy was performed at the University of Wisconsin, and it was determined that the male had died from hypothermia. The man was white and between the ages of 25-45. He was 6 foot 1/2", 170 pounds and had brown hair. The man's clothing and other belongings were collected by the Sheriff's Office to assist in identification.

Fingerprints were sent to the State Crime Laboratory as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation for possible identification, with negative matches. Investigators said over time, this case continued to be investigated through missing persons report follow-ups and press releases.

In 2019, the unidentified man was entered into NamUs-- a national database for missing and unidentified and unclaimed person cases across the United States. Multiple possible matches were generated and followed up with negative matches.

In April 2021, the Oneida County Medical Examiner's Office exhumed the body of John Doe. The body was taken to the Fond du Lac Medical Examiner's Office to be processed for DNA collection. Once this was completed, the collected items were sent to the FBI Laboratory in Quantico for DNA profiling.

In January, the Oneida County Sheriff's Office enlisted the assistance of Ramapo College of New Jersey Investigative Genetic Genealogy Center, to perform forensic DNA testing and a genealogy search. As a result of the work performed by students, a new investigative lead was developed, resulting in Grasser's identification.

He was reported missing in January 1980.