

MEDICAL EXAMINER IDENTIFIES DECEASED WOMAN FROM 1997

by [Bethany Drysdale](#) | Nov 30, 2023



Lorena Mosley

Following a recent request for assistance from the community, the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office (WCRMEO) has positively identified a woman who was found dead in June 1997 in Washoe County.

Lorena Gayle Mosley (AKA Lorena Gayle Sherwood), 41 at the time of her death, was identified through an innovative partnership between WCRMEO and Othram, Inc. Othram was able to perform forensic genetic genealogy by comparing her DNA profile to profiles uploaded to consumer genealogical databases consented for law enforcement use. While this type of analysis does not yield a positive identification, it can produce investigative leads. After an extensive investigation of the lead by Medical Examiner's Office Medicolegal Death Investigator/Technician Supervisor Sarah Turner, old paper fingerprint records were positively matched to fingerprints taken from the body after death, with assistance from the FBI.

Othram's familial genetic genealogy services cost several thousand dollars and in this case were made possible by a combination of funding from the Medical Examiner's Office and financial donations to Othram from private individuals.

Ms. Mosley's body was discovered buried beneath rocks in rural Washoe County on June 9, 1997, by rock climbers. A complete autopsy was performed by a county forensic pathologist. Due to severe decompositional changes to her body, the cause of death could not be determined. Due to the circumstances, the manner of death was deemed homicide. Ms. Mosley's next of kin has been notified and is now able to claim her remains.

Washoe County Chief Medical Examiner and Coroner Dr. Laura D. Knight commented that: "This is the first lead in over 20 years on this cold case, made possible through new technology and innovation, and the generosity of donors. I am deeply gratified to be able to give Ms. Mosley the dignity of being laid to rest with her name."

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office is continuing to investigate this cold case. If anyone has information relating to this investigation, please contact the Detectives' Division at 775-328-3320.

In a continuation of this partnership with Othram, Inc., the Washoe County Regional Medical Examiner's Office is requesting the public's assistance with another unidentified decedent from 1984.

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