

YOLO COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
PRESS RELEASE

Re:	Sheriff's Department Excavates Two John Does for Identification
Date:	January 10, 2008

Contact: Michele Wallace, Public Information Officer (530) 406-5163

Two human remains were excavated from the Monument Hill Memorial Park by the Yolo County Sheriff's Department Coroner's Section last Wednesday. The remains had been found in the county years ago, but never identified. The remains buried in the Cemetery through the means of the Public Administrator.

Recent state law requires DNA to be provided from unidentified bodies for future use in determining their identity. Paul Wiggins, Funeral Director at McNary's Chapel Inc., was present at the excavation to oversee the process, as required by law. Various Coroner Deputies and Interns were there to assist with the removal of the remains and to document the process. Included were Deputy Coroners Laurel Weeks, Gina Powers, and James Andrade, and Coroner Student Interns Katie Harper and Beth Sherman. Also present was Chico State University Masters Degree student Melanie Beasley, herself a former Intern for the Yolo County Sheriff's Department Coroner's Section.

Ray and Ruth Poarch of Monument Hill Memorial Park, along with their employees, were very courteous and willing to help as needed. Yolo County Sheriff Prieto stated, "With the advance notice Chief Deputy Coroner LaBrash gave to the staff at Monument Hill Memorial Park and the well organized manner in which the cemetery staff handled the actual digging, the excavation went well in a minimal amount of time. I appreciate the assistance of all involved."

Partially decomposed remains of one man were discovered in March of 1973, just off the water's edge of the Sacramento River, six miles north of Clarksburg. With diligent work the Coroner's Office was able to determine that the approximate date of death was two to six months prior to being found. The man was Caucasian, between five feet ten inches and six feet one inch tall; He weighed over two hundred and twenty five pounds, had

short cropped black hair, and was between twenty five and thirty five years old. At the time of his death he was wearing a white turtle neck, short-sleeved sports sweater, and black denim type trousers. He was found to have died from Natural causes

The remains of the other man had been found in October of 1983, what the Coroner's Section believes to have been approximately one week after his death. The remains were floating in the Sacramento River. His nationality is uncertain. He had various tattoos, one on his left arm – a heart with "MOM" in the center. He was believed to be near fifty years in age, weighing one hundred and twenty five pounds, and five foot four inches tall. He had black hair and was slightly balding.

Robert LaBrash of the Yolo County Coroner's Office stated that they will be submitting DNA samples to the Department of Justice. He also stated that Deputy Coroner Laurel Weeks has taken the collateral duty of investigating unidentified-bodies (John/Jane Does), commonly known as "cold cases." She will attempt to learn who these men are and bring closure to their families. Recently Laurel was instrumental in the recent identification of a man who died in 1985. Through much difficulty, she was able to find and advise the family of that man twenty seven years later.

The Yolo County Sheriff's Department currently has 22 unidentified bodies dating as far back as 1960. The investigation process includes the use of dental records, DNA, finger prints, comparisons to state and federal medical, psychological, and criminal records during the deceased time frame. They look for any indication of residing location, job, family, crime, anything that would be instrumental in discovering the identity of each person. Sheriff Prieto stated, "We are making every effort to determine the identity of the unidentified bodies in our county in order to alleviate the worry and concern of their family members."

If you have any information regarding the identity of these two individuals please contact the Yolo County Sheriff's Department at 530-668-5280.

