Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 1983 John Doe

Decades after his remains were recovered from a waterway in Lake Worth, Florida, Archie Patterson Jr. is now identified.

Solved

Summary

On November 25, 1983, the remains of an unidentified man were recovered from a waterway in the 2400 block of 10th Avenue North in unincorporated Lake Worth, Florida. Officers responded and began collecting evidence and investigating. The man was found in an advanced state of decomposition, and investigators were unable to identify him at the time. His death was later ruled an accidental drowning.

Despite a lengthy investigation, the man could not be identified and became known as Palm Beach County John Doe (1983). Details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP812.

In April 2025, investigators with the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office submitted evidence to Othram's laboratory in The Woodlands, Texas. At Othram, scientists used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the man. PBSO's forensic genetic genealogy team used the profile in a genetic genealogy search to develop new investigative leads that were returned to law enforcement.

Using this new information, a follow-up investigation was conducted leading investigators to potential relatives of the man. Detectives traveled to California, where they interviewed a likely child of the unidentified man and collected a reference DNA sample. The reference DNA was compared to the DNA profile of the unknown man using KinSNP® Rapid Relationship Testing.

This investigation led to the positive identification of the man, who is now known to be Archie Patterson Jr., born on August 15, 1940. Following the identification, next of kin were notified and the investigation was closed.

We would like to thank Senator Gayle Harrell, Representative John Snyder, and their colleagues in the Florida legislature for their support and for funding law enforcement agencies so that they can solve these important cases.

This is the 67th publicly announced case in the State of Florida where investigators have used Othram's technology to identify an individual. Learn about other cases by visiting Othram's website.