



ILLINOIS STATE POLICE

NEWS RELEASE

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ILLINOIS STATE POLICE PARTNERS WITH SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE ON COLD CASES

Women in Jane Doe cases associated with a serial killer identified and first degree murder charges filed in a 14-year-old case

BELLEVILLE – A partnership between the Illinois State Police (ISP) and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) is offering real world experience for the next generation of criminal justice students and aiding ISP Division of Criminal Investigation Zone 6 special agents working to solve old homicide cases.

“The Illinois State Police investigates hundreds of new cases each year, while also following up on cold cases from years past,” said ISP Director Brendan F. Kelly. “Improvements in technology and advancements in forensic testing over the years can breathe new life into old cases. SIUE students have helped us review cold cases to prioritize them based on how close they are to solving. The partnership is not only helping with cold case review, it is providing students with experience and insight into homicide investigations.”

In 2022, ISP and SIUE partnered to provide unpaid practical experience for Criminal Justice Program students. Each semester, SIUE students review cold cases and apply a solvability matrix to help prioritize cases based on the likelihood it could be furthered.

“This project has been an incredible learning experience for all of us, myself included. The collaboration leverages talent from multiple state entities and creates a novel, hands-on learning experience that has real world implications,” said SIUE Professor of Criminal Justice Studies Dr. Trish Oberweis.

Since the program began, SIUE students have worked closely with ISP special agents to review dozens of cases. As part of that review process, students have also created what they call a “Murder Book,” which includes searchable information for cold homicide cases in the Metro East.

“Every person deserves to be identified and remembered. I’m proud to have played a part in giving two women their names back,” said Ryleigh Franklin, an SIUE graduate involved in the program. “I’m incredibly grateful to SIUE and the Illinois State Police for giving me the chance to make a real difference.”

In 2002, the bodies of three women, believed to be victims of serial killer Maury Travis, were found along Illinois roadways. Through the partnership, SIUE students were able to review two of these cases, learn about methods used to make forensic identifications, and track the continued efforts of ISP to identify these women.

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ISP reviewed and entered all three cases in the National Missing and Unidentified Person System (NamUs) in 2014 and ensured the completion of DNA analysis at the University of North Texas Center for Human Identification. This year, students were able to witness the results of ISP's continued efforts to identify each of these women. Collaboration with partner criminal justice agencies and support services, including the Columbia Police Department, the FBI, the St. Charles County Police Department (MO), NamUs, and University of North Texas Center for Human Identification, has led to the identification of all three women.

- On January 30, 2002, road workers discovered a body along I-64 on the east side of the Silver Creek overpass near Mascoutah, IL. The individual appeared to have been deceased for several months. Fingerprint information was not available at the time of discovery due to decomposition, and dental charts were not available. After review, special agents identified the victim as Kelly Johnson.
- On March 11, 2002, road workers discovered a body along I-70 just west of Illinois Route 143 near Highland, IL. Neither fingerprint nor dental charting information was available at the time. Earlier this year, ISP special agents identified the victim as Crystal Lay.
- On March 28, 2002, road workers discovered human skeletal remains in a creek bed adjacent to Illinois Route 3 in Columbia, IL. The remains appeared to be at least six months old. Again, ISP special agents were able to identify the victim in this case, Carol Jean Hemphill.

In another case, SIUE students and ISP special agents reviewed the death of Truman Smith, who was shot on February 17, 2011 while making a delivery to a business near 26th Street and McCasland Avenue in East St. Louis. Upon the arrival of officers, Smith was able to relay what had occurred and provided a description of the suspect. Smith was then transported to an area hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. After an extensive investigation, 34-year-old Alan Davis of East St. Louis, IL was ultimately charged with First Degree Murder (Class M Felony) on May 22, 2025. Davis is currently being held at the Graham Correctional Center in Hillsboro, IL on an unrelated 2012 conviction for Aggravated Battery with a Firearm.

The partnership between ISP and SIUE is providing students with practical criminal investigation experience, and providing another avenue for review of cold cases to hold those responsible for crimes accountable.

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