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Woman buried in 1998 may be from Louisiana

By ROBIN FITZGERALD— [rfitzgerald@sunherald.com](mailto:rfitzgerald@sunherald.com)

HANCOCK COUNTY -- A woman buried in Hancock County in 1998 remains unidentified, but Coroner Jim Faulk believes he can change that if a judge agrees to sign an order to exhume the body.

Faulk asked Circuit Judge Lisa Dodson on Friday for an order to disinter the remains of a young woman who was struck by a vehicle and killed on Interstate 10 on May 8, 1998.

Dodson delayed the hearing for a week, saying state law requires "sufficient cause" for an order to disturb remains.

Faulk said he will make arrangements for sworn statements or testimony from the state medical examiner and from Louisiana investigators involved in the search for two missing women.

He also hopes to contact relatives of two Louisiana women who went missing in 1993 and 1983.

Faulk believes one of those missing women is buried in Hancock County and DNA from the skeletal remains could confirm it.

Faulk said he will comply with the judge's request for sworn statements or testimony under oath.

Exhumations are rare in South Mississippi.

"It's never been done before in this county," Faulk said.

"The state medical examiner is ready to come down," Faulk said. "All I need is an exhumation order."

Faulk said he is determined to learn the unidentified woman's identity.

"If it had been 15 years and my daughter hadn't been found or identified, I wouldn't be able to sleep at night," he said.

Descriptions of Louisiana residents Nelda Louise Hardwick, from Lake Charles, and Faye Aline Self, from Armistead, resemble those of the woman who received a pauper's burial after the Hancock County crash.

Hardwick, in particular, bears a striking resemblance to the unidentified woman's appearance, Faulk said.

SunHerald.com is working on an updated news report.

Read more here: <http://www.sunherald.com>

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He says Jane Doe may be from missing woman from Louisiana

By ROBIN FITZGERALD— [rfitzgerald@sunherald.com](mailto:rfitzgerald@sunherald.com)

HANCOCK COUNTY -- A woman buried in Hancock County in 1998 remains unidentified, but Coroner Jim Faulk believes he can change that if a judge agrees to sign an order to exhume her body.

Faulk asked Circuit Judge Lisa Dodson on Friday for an order to disinter the remains of a young woman who was hit by a car and killed on Interstate 10 on May 8, 1998.

Dodson delayed the hearing for a week, saying state law requires "sufficient cause" for an order to disturb remains.

Faulk believes the body is either Nelda Louis Hardwick or Faye Aline Self, both reported missing from Louisiana.

Faulk said he will make arrangements for sworn statements or testimony from the state medical examiner and from Louisiana investigators involved in the search for two missing women.

He also hopes to contact relatives of the two missing Louisiana women, whose descriptions resemble those of the woman hit 15 years ago. Both women left behind children.

Exhumations are rare in South Mississippi.

"It's never been done before in this county," Faulk said. "The state medical examiner is ready to come down and help."

Faulk said sonar equipment in Diamondhead is available to make sure the correct body is exhumed, and a human identification lab in Texas can compile a DNA profile of the remains at no cost to the county.

"All I need is an exhumation order," Faulk said.

#### The missing women

Hardwick was 34 when she disappeared from her home in Lake Charles on Oct. 14, 1993. She had bathed her children and put them to bed and her boyfriend went to bed as well. He told authorities he woke up the next morning and found a note saying she was running to a store and would be right back. She hasn't been seen since.

Faye Aline Self, from Armistead, was 26 when she disappeared March 30, 1983, She had left her baby with her mother and was last seen at the Wagon Wheel Bar & Restaurant with another woman and two men. Authorities said friends at the bar said Self told them she was going to get her daughter because she had to be at work early the next day. She never reached her mother's house. Her car was found in the bar parking lot.

#### Serial Killer Robert Charles

Browne, once a maintenance man at Self's apartment in Red River Parish, later claimed to have killed Self and two other women from that region, as well as 47 other people around the nation from 1970 to 1995. He claimed he dumped her body in a river, but it was never found.

#### The unidentified woman

Jane Doe, the unidentified woman, was about the same height, weight and age range as Hardwick and Self. Jane Doe had no teeth. Hardwick had worn dentures.

Jane Doe was about 5-foot-3, weighed about 130 pounds and had long, wavy, reddish-brown hair. She had a vaccination scar on her left arm and a surgical scar near her naval. She was wearing Bongo blue jeans and a black Spalding Activewear hooded sweatshirt with the word "Florida" on front.

No one came forward to claim her body. She received a pauper's burial in Rotten Bayou Cemetery, now St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Most of the evidence collected that could have identified her washed away in Hurricane Katrina, Faulk said.

DNA samples are on file of Hardwick and Self. Samples from the remains could show it is one of them.

Faulk believes it's more likely to be Hardwick. He said he enlarged an autopsy picture and a picture of Hardwick, and the facial lines and bone structure appear to be identical.

### Identifying the dead

The National Institute of Justice and many forensic groups consider DNA "the gold standard" for identifying remains, especially when all that's left is bones.

State and federal laws view cemeteries as a sacred place of rest for the dead.

Courts typically don't allow a body to be exhumed unless compelling reasons are presented.

Faulk said he became interested in exhuming the body after being contacted by several missing-person groups. He wants to identify the woman for her family's sake.

"If it had been 15 years and my daughter hadn't been found or identified, I wouldn't be able to sleep at night," he said.

In a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1978, one justice wrote, "The dead are to rest where they have been lain unless reason of substance is brought forward for disturbing their repose."

Faulk believes he has sufficient reason in this case.

Read more here: <http://www.sunherald.com>

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<http://www.wlox.com/story/23119038/coroner-hopes>

### HANCOCK COUNTY, MS (WLOX) -

Hancock County's coroner is hoping DNA technology will be the key to identifying a woman whose body was found on I-10 back in 1998.

The victim is buried at St. Joseph's Cemetery near Diamondhead and is now known only as Jane Doe. Coroner Jim Faulk wants to exhume her body for DNA testing. "I get missing persons posters all the time, out of one of them there was a striking resemblance with our Jane Doe," said Faulk.

Jane Doe died on I-10 in Hancock County in 1998 near the four mile marker. Authorities said she was the victim of what was first believed to be a hit and run accident. "I read that she was knocked some 250 feet from the point of impact. The driver thought that they had hit a deer," noted the coroner as he reviewed details of the woman's death.

At the time of her death, authorities could never determine the woman's identity. Fifteen years later, the Hancock County coroner believes a missing Louisiana woman named Nelda Hardwick could possibly be Jane Doe. Hardwick disappeared from Lake Charles in October, 1993. "She left a note for her live in boyfriend that she was going to the store and would return shortly, she never returned and has never been seen since," Faulk said. "Turns out she's got four kids who haven't seen her in some 20 years. talking to them on the phone it almost brings you to tears they've been without a mother since they were three, four, and five years old. Now they are in their 20's."

Faulk says DNA evidence could put the issue to rest and provide Hardwick's children with the closure they need.

So, the coroner filed a motion in court to have the body exhumed. If the judge hearing the case signs a court order, it would be a first in recent Hancock County history. "Three of us will hand dig and take it carefully in trying to retrieve the left femur," said Faulk.

That leg bone would then be shipped to a forensic lab at the University of North Texas for testing. The results will then be entered into a national DNA data base.

"I feel sure we are going to find out who she is," said the coroner.

A Hancock County Circuit Court Judge is expected to rule on Faulk's request to exhume the body this Friday after a hearing on the issue.

While Faulk is wondering if the body is Hardwick, Louisiana State Police wonder if Jane Doe could be another missing Louisiana woman. Her name was Faye Self. Mrs. Self disappeared from Armistead, LA in March, 1983.

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HANCOCK COUNTY, MS (WLOX) -

Flowers and a note that reads, "We love you and will be bringing you home soon," sit beside the grave of a woman. For 15 years, she has been known only as Jane Doe. But one family now believes answers are buried in that Hancock County grave.

"If it's not her, I would be stunned and shocked," Lori Test said. "I would totally be stunned and shocked, because I firmly believe in my heart it's her."

Lori Test is convinced the woman is her aunt Nelda Hardwick. Lori; her father, Richard Test; and their family members want the body exhumed so DNA tests can be done. They're hoping for answers, and closure.

"I would very much like for her remains to be brought home where they can be buried and the children can have a grave site to visit her," Richard Test said.

Coroner Jim Faulk said all the information from the autopsy and case information on Jane Doe matches that of Hardwick. From the hair and eye color, to the height and weight, even measurements on the face and scars on the body. Also, Hardwick had dentures and Jane Doe did not have teeth.

"If there is one chance in 1,000 that it's not, then her DNA will go on a nationwide website and be compared to missing people from coast to coast, and we will find out who she is," Faulk said.

The Jane Doe in Hancock County was hit and killed in the middle of the night walking down Interstate 10 in 1998. That was five years after Hardwick put her four children to bed in Louisiana, and wrote a note saying she was going to the store and would be back shortly. She never returned.

"I honestly think she was abducted in Lake Charles and I think she escaped from in this area and that's the reason she was out on that interstate," Richard Test said.

The past 20 years have been torture for Hardwick's family.

"I got a call the other day from a number and you just always wonder, 'Is that Nelda?'" Lori Test said.

The family now believes a call from Nelda will never come. What the family hopes for now is that the coroner will get permission to find out once and for all if Jane Doe is Nelda Hardwick.

Friday, Coroner Faulk presented the case to the judge himself, because he could not get funding to enlist the help of an attorney. The hearing was hitting a few snags, but an attorney stepped in and volunteered to take the case for Faulk and the family at no charge.

A new court hearing on whether to allow Jane Doe's body to be exhumed is set for October 18th.

<http://www.wlox.com/story/23159410/family-...ane-doe-exhumed>

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Mississippi judge delays Jane Doe exhumation

DNA sought to test against 2 missing La. woman

Aug. 16, 2013 |

Written by

Vickie Welborn

A Mississippi judge delayed until October a request from a coroner to exhume a body for DNA testing, despite the pleas of a South Louisiana family who are convinced the unidentified woman is their missing loved one.

Hancock County, Miss., Coroner Jim Faulk said there was “not a dry eye” in the courtroom Friday when the adult children of Nelda Louise Hardwick, of Lake Charles, testified in favor of the exhumation.

Still, the judge questioned the authenticity of some of the evidence Faulk presented, including autopsy photographs of Jane Doe. Another hearing is set Oct. 18.

Shortly after taking office just more than a year ago, Faulk began revisiting the county’s cold cases, including a woman who was killed in 1998 in a hit-and-run accident on Interstate 10. She had no identification and was buried in a pauper’s cemetery.

At about the same time Faulk was doing his research, Louisiana State Police was contacted by a nonprofit missing persons organization that noticed similarities between Jane Doe and another missing Louisiana woman, Faye Aline Self, 26, of Coushatta, who was last seen March 20, 1983, leaving the Wagon Wheel on state Highway 1 in Red River Parish.

Hardwick was 24 when she went missing Oct. 14, 1993, from Calcasieu Parish. She left a note to her live-in boyfriend saying she was going to the store but never returned.

Hardwick’s relatives have compared her photograph to Jane Doe’s autopsy photographs and believe they are a match.

“They stake their life on it being Nelda Hardwick,” Faulk said Friday after the hearing.

A Calcasieu Parish sheriff’s investigator also presented information at the hearing. And Faulk provided the court with Louisiana State Police Detective Michael Allen’s affidavit filed in March in support of the exhumation to determine if the DNA is a match to Self.

Self has similar characteristics to Jane Doe, but there’s not as much resemblance as Hardwick.

“It’s all subjective and no one knows for sure so I won’t rule her out,” he said of Self. “That’s why DNA is being sought.”

Faulk thought all of the information was enough to show sufficient cause to get the exhumation order signed. An attorney intervened during the hearing and offered his services to help Faulk prepare for the October court date.

"She wants 100 percent without reasonable doubt," Faulk said of the judge. "Everybody wants these remains exhumed and tested. All it will take is one hit on CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) and we'd have a match and know who this woman is."

The University of North Texas will perform the DNA extraction and testing free of charge, Faulk said.

[http://www.shreveporttimes.com/article/201...?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.shreveporttimes.com/article/201...?nclick_check=1)

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No ruling on Jane Doe, but niece ordered to clean grave marker

Posted: Oct 18, 2013 11:31 AM CDT Updated: Oct 18, 2013 2:01 PM CDT

By Michelle Lady - bio | email

The Jane Doe in Hancock County was hit and killed in the middle of the night walking down Interstate 10 in 1998. The Jane Doe in Hancock County was hit and killed in the middle of the night walking down Interstate 10 in 1998.

In 1993, Nelda Hardwick put her four children to bed in Louisiana, and wrote a note saying she was going to the store and would be back shortly. She never returned. In 1993, Nelda Hardwick put her four children to bed in Louisiana, and wrote a note saying she was going to the store and would be back shortly. She never returned.

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GULFPORT, MS (WLOX) -

Judge Lisa Dodson did not make a final ruling Friday on whether she will allow Hancock County's Jane Doe to be exhumed.

Flowers and a note that reads, "We love you and will be bringing you home soon," sit beside the grave of a woman. For 15 years, she has been known only as Jane Doe. But one family now believes answers are buried in that Hancock County grave.

"If it's not her, I would be stunned and shocked," Lori Test said. "I would totally be stunned and shocked, because I firmly believe in my heart it's her."



Lori Test is convinced "Jane Doe" is her aunt Nelda Hardwick. In fact, the family is so sure, Test actually wrote Nelda's name on the Jane Doe grave marker, and has left flowers and mementoes at the grave site to honor her aunt.

Lori; her father, Richard Test; and their family members want the body exhumed so DNA tests can be done.

Friday, family members testified about scars Nelda Hardwick had and some of them didn't match up exactly. One such scar was said to be above her belly button, but the autopsy showed it was below the belly button. The family said they remembered a scar on her right arm from a vaccine, but the coroner report showed it was the left arm.

The family was very disappointed, but hopeful the judge may rule in their favor after reviewing the full case file on Jane Doe.

The judge promised to make a ruling in a week, but first Lori Test must erase the name she wrote on the grave. If it doesn't come off, Test must buy a new grave marker before the judge will make a ruling.

WLOX

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HANCOCK COUNTY, MS (WLOX) -

The head stone of "Jane Doe" in Hancock County has been cleaned up so Judge Lisa Dodson can now make a ruling on whether the body can be exhumed for DNA testing.

Friday, the family of a Louisiana woman who went missing 20 years ago tried to convince Judge Dodson that "Jane Doe" is their loved one, Nelda Hardwick. They want the body exhumed and identified.

After the hearing, Judge Dodson did not make a ruling because she wanted time to read through the evidence. Instead, she ordered Hardwick's niece, Lori Test, to erase the writing she made on the grave before the final decision is issued.

In August, Test went to the grave of "Jane Doe" in the St. Joseph Cemetery and wrote "Nelda Hardwick" on the head stone, along with her birth date.

"I guess having a moment of emotion, I couldn't stand the thought that she was sitting in there with out her name on there," Test said Friday of her actions.

Judge Dodson is expected to make a ruling before Friday.

WLOX

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Judge orders exhumation of 'Jane Doe' in Hancock County

Posted: Oct 25, 2013 3:15 PM CDT Updated: Oct 25, 2013 3:16 PM CDT

BAY ST. LOUIS, MS (AP) -

A judge has ordered the exhumation of the body of an unidentified woman who was hit by a vehicle and killed in Hancock County in 1998.

The woman known as Jane Doe was found dead on Interstate 10 on May 8, 1998. No charges were filed related to the accident and she was never identified.

Hancock County Circuit Judge Lisa Dodson issued the order in a ruling Friday, saying DNA may determine the woman's identity. Dodson's order said officials from at least two different Louisiana parishes have contacted the Hancock County coroner about women they believe resemble Jane Doe.

Relatives of Nelda Louise Hardwick of Lake Charles, LA believe she's the one buried as Jane Doe. Hardwick has been missing since 1993

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Coroner prepares to exhume Jane Doe

Posted: Dec 04, 2013 7:59 PM CST

Updated: Dec 05, 2013 4:46 PM CST

By Michelle Lady - bio | email

HANCOCK COUNTY, MS (WLOX) -

The family of a woman missing for more than a decade is still waiting for an unidentified body to be exhumed in Hancock County to see if those remains belong to their loved one.

Though a judge signed off on the exhumation in October, before any digging can be done, the coroner, state medical examiner and others are working to make sure they know exactly where Jane Doe was buried.

Hurricane Katrina has made the task difficult.

"The little metal signs that marked the graves were blown away and washed away," Hancock County Coroner Jim Faulk said.

Rotten Bayou Cemetery workers tried their best to put the headstones in the right place but with no records it was difficult. For Faulk to find any remains he cannot just guess, he needs an exact location so he had to start from scratch.

Luckily he stumbled upon a picture online of the grave site taken just days after the unidentified woman was buried in 1998. He tracked the photographer to the Doe Network and called the organization.

"They searched her old files at Doe Network and found the uncropped picture showing the monuments back here," Faulk said.

This was a huge break for Faulk. Instead of having to map the entire cemetery or find a way to get a ground penetrating radar done for free, Faulk was able to use the picture.

He did some calculations of his own then found a surveyor in the phone book to get professional help.

Don Ried makes a living doing land surveys but he donated his time to help with this case." I just used the graves behind us and measured how long it was between headstones and they all seemed to be 12 feet long and seven feet apart so I measured over here and down," Ried said. "I'm a Vietnam veteran and I lost a lot of friends over there and I've had non closure for 40 years and to help someone get closure meant a lot."

Bay High Math Teacher Joseph Williams also volunteered his time to help. "He wanted some confirmation mathematically that what he was doing manually was accurate," Williams said. "I used the Pythagorean theorem to figure out where the grave was."

With Williams' calculations matching Ried's, Faulk feels even more confident he will be able to find remains of Jane Doe.

The family of a Louisiana woman, Nelda Hardwick, believe Jane Doe is Hardwick. They are hoping Faulk will be able to find some remains soon and finally bring them some closure.

<http://www.wlox.com/story/24139121/coroner...exhume-jane-doe>

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Workers exhuming remains of Jane Doe in Hancock County

By ROBIN FITZGERALD

rfitzgerald@sunherald.com December 18, 2013 Updated 2 hours ago

Jane Doe's remains exhumed at St. Joseph Cemetery in Hancock County to try to identify her.  
JOHN FITZHUGH — SUN HERALD

Workers exhuming remains of Jane Doe in Hancock County

HANCOCK COUNTY -- Work has begun to exhume the skeletal remains of Jane Doe, an unidentified woman buried in Hancock County after she was struck by a vehicle in 1998.

Coroner Jim Faulk, who sought a judge's order to remove the remains in hopes of identifying the woman, said a professor and graduate students from Mississippi State University began digging Wednesday morning under the supervision of Dr. Mark LeVaughn, state medical examiner.

"It's a tedious process but I believe we will get it done today," Faulk said.

The family of missing Louisiana woman Nelda Louise Hardwick hopes DNA tests will show it is their loved one buried in a pauper's grave.

Hardwick, of Lake Charles, who was 34 when she was last seen on Oct. 14, 1993. She had left a note to her live-in boyfriend saying she was going to the store and never returned.

Her relatives testified at court hearings requesting a petition to unearth the remains for identification purposes.

Circuit Judge Lisa Dodson granted the petition after several hearings.

Authorities believe DNA from the remains can be used to compile a DNA profile to show if the woman buried in Hancock County was Hardwick or someone else whose DNA profile is on file or could be recorded at a later time.

Faulk arranged for the University of North Texas to handle the DNA analysis

Read more here: <http://www.sunherald.com/2013/12/18/520425...l#storylink=cpy>

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Jane Doe still a mystery

Medical examiner to notify judge on exhumation

By JOHN FITZHUGH

jcfitzhugh@sunherald.com December 19, 2013 Updated 9 hours ago

DIAMONDHEAD -- Just what was found in Jane Doe's grave in Diamondhead on Wednesday will remain a secret until today at the earliest, the state medical examiner said Thursday.

"I'm not going to make any comment until Judge Dodson is aware of what happened," Dr. Mark LeVaughn said.

Circuit Judge Lisa Dodson granted a petition by Hancock County Coroner Jim Faulk to exhume the body at St. Joseph Cemetery after several hearings.

Faulk believed the remains were Nelda Louise Hardwick, a Louisiana woman missing since Oct. 14, 1993. Hardwick, the mother of four children, left a note to her live-in boyfriend saying she was going to the store and she never returned home.

A team from Mississippi State University excavated the grave Wednesday, working into the night, but they did not remove any remains as was expected.

"Nothing wrong happened," during the exhumation, LeVaughn said, declining to elaborate on the event.

LaVaughn said he was drafting a letter to the county attorney who would then present it to Dodson.

Faulk declined comment, deferring to LeVaughn who oversaw the excavation.

When asked what was found in the grave, Faulk said, "I better not say anything."

LeVaughn said he felt the proper protocol was to inform Dodson before releasing any information on the matter to the public.

Read more here: <http://www.sunherald.com/2013/12/19/520665...l#storylink=cpy>

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HANCOCK COUNTY, MS (WLOX) -

The far west side of St. Joseph Cemetery looks like it does every day, nothing out of the ordinary or out of place. If you didn't know, you'd never guess Wednesday volunteers dug a three foot hole to try and uncover Jane Doe. Unfortunately, the unidentified woman was not under the tombstone marked "Jane Doe."

The dig to exhume Jane Doe's body is over. But the unanswered question is whether investigators dug up the right body.

Nobody will say on the record if the skeletal remains unearthed from a Hancock County grave were the bones investigators hoped to find.

The question is why? The Hancock County coroner and other volunteers did a lot of work to pinpoint the location of her remains from a picture taken shortly after she was buried.

Earlene Kornman has been voluntarily looking after the cemetery for ten years now and was worried that despite their efforts, it would be hard to find the mystery woman's remains.

"This is the pauper section where the families didn't have the money or didn't want to bury their people, so the county would put them in cardboard press boxes and they would bury them out here," Kornman said.

She knows the history of the cemetery better than anyone else, but she still has many questions about who is buried in the section near Jane Doe because the county did not keep any records.

"They are side by side by side. They buried about 500 to 600 people in this section," Kornman said.

Several years ago, Kornman and her friend who helps take care of the cemetery learned about Jane Doe from the Doe Network. Kornman is the one who raised money to buy Jane Doe a tombstone and she often put flowers on her grave.

"I thought of Jane Doe as like a daughter. It broke my heart to think no one knew she was there," Kornman said. "We kind of felt like someday, someone would come look for her."

When Kornman found out a judge was allowing the body to be exhumed, she was both excited and nervous.

"I was happy, if they could have found her family, I'd like to see her family have closure. I'd love to see her go home again, so I was just praying that was her yesterday."

Once the skeletal remains were uncovered, officials knew right away things were not adding up. The person buried under the Jane Doe tombstone had teeth and Jane Doe did not. Just to be sure, officials took measurements, but none of those match the autopsy of Jane Doe either.

"I think she's more over this way toward the road," Kornman said.

At this time, officials do not know if they will be allowed to try to exhume Jane Doe again

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. DIAMONDHEAD -- The state's chief medical examiner has determined remains uncovered at a pauper's grave site were not those of Jane Doe, an unidentified woman buried 15 years ago after she was struck by a vehicle in Hancock County.

The skeletal remains unearthed Wednesday at St. Joseph's Cemetery belonged to a man who was 6-foot-2, had a full set of teeth and his right thigh was intact.

Jane Doe had no teeth, had a broken right femur and was undeniably a woman.

"It's a shock," said Hancock County Coroner Jim Faulk, who obtained a court order to exhume the body for identification purposes.

Faulk believes Jane Doe was Nelda Louise Hardwick, a St. Charles, La., mother of four reported missing in 1993. Her family also believes the remains were those of Hardwick. Relatives testified at a related hearing that Hardwick was the woman photographed in Jane Doe's autopsy pictures.

Faulk has notified Hardwick's niece.

"I feel so sorry for the family that I just can't stand it," Faulk said.

Dr. Mark LeVaughn confirmed the discovery in a letter filed in circuit court Friday. A judge had appointed the medical examiner to oversee the exhumation.

An explanation

So how is it that Jane Doe isn't buried under the headstone engraved with the date of her death?

Earline Kornman, volunteer caretaker at the cemetery since 2000, has some explanations.

No one has kept up with burial records or diagrams of plots since her great-great-grandfather, Francoise Cuevas, donated his family cemetery to a church in 1823. Ownership later reverted to a different church, to the county for about a year, and to another church for years before it was donated back to Hancock County.

"Unless there's a headstone, no one knows who's buried where," Kornman said.

Kornman raised money to put a headstone in 2008 at what she believed was Jane Doe's grave. She said she looked at a picture taken at the grave site two days after the burial, and estimated its location in proximity to her own family members' plots.

"I really wanted her family to find her one day and take her home," Kornman said. "I felt in my heart somebody would come looking for her, and until they did, I would put flowers on her grave and remember her. I would care for her. I still care for her."

About 600 paupers buried

The 40-acre cemetery was known as Rotten Bayou Cemetery when Jane Doe was buried. The name later changed to St. Joseph's Cemetery. It was in the county when Doe was buried, but now is on the north side of Diamondhead.

"It's like a time capsule," Kornman said. The cemetery, encircled by woods, reflects several eras of remembering the dead with different styles of markers, white picket fences, ornate wrought iron, elaborate brick and chain-link fencing.

Kornman estimates about 4,000 people are buried there, including some 500 to 600 in the unadorned pauper section.

It's unlikely a man's body was buried on top of Jane Doe's remains, she said.

"Up until the '80s, paupers would be buried 8 feet down and others would later be buried 4 feet above them," she said. "But not in the '90s."

A funeral home years ago would mark paupers' plots with an engraved metal tag, she said. Later, the name of the deceased was typed and inserted into a metal tag, but over time, the writing became illegible, she said.

Kornman said it's sad Hardwick's family may never know if she was Jane Doe.

Shroud protected remains

Jane Doe was flung 235 feet when she was struck by a vehicle on Interstate 10 near the 4 mile-marker in 1998. Like other pauper burials at the time, Doe was buried in a partial-board coffin with tongue-and-groove pine on the bottom and sides.

Before excavation began, ground-penetrating radar was used to determine the location of the remains, the coroner said, noting paupers were buried 20 inches apart.

A forensic anthropology team from Mississippi State University on Wednesday uncovered handfuls of dirt at a time and used brushes as they found remnants of a casket at a depth of 3 feet. The casket had disintegrated but was covered by a Tyvek-type of shroud that was intact and kept the remains covered, LeVaughn's letter said.



The shroud was partially peeled back to reveal a skeleton with men's clothing and a man's body structure.

"The remains were never, at any time, disturbed or even touched," LeVaughn said.

Workers measured and documented the remains and replaced the dirt and headstone.

LeVaughn concluded any further digging would likely produce the same result.

"It is obvious that the location of her grave is unknown," he said.

It wasn't clear if Judge Lisa Dodson will rule further on the exhumation petition.

"Absent further direction from the judge, I would say my work is done," said attorney Nick Wiser, who represented Faulk on his petition for an exhumation order.

Read more here: <http://www.sunherald.com/2013/12/20/520958...l#storylink=cpy>

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Judge orders exhumations in Jane Doe case to cease

Posted: Jan 01, 2014 4:56 PM CST

Updated: Jan 01, 2014 4:56 PM CST

By WLOX Staff

HANCOCK COUNTY, MS (WLOX) -

On Monday, Circuit Court Judge Lisa Dodson ordered that no more exhumations be performed at the St. Joseph's cemetery, and declared all proceedings in the petition by Hancock County Coroner Jim Faulk related to a "Jane Doe" buried at the cemetery be closed.

Dodson's ruling comes in the wake of last week's discovery of a man's remains being located in a grave marked as Jane Doe.

Dodson had previously ruled that the coroner and other medical professionals could exhume the body to collect DNA for possible identification.

"Unfortunately, it appears that the remains at the Jane Doe headstone were not those of Jane Doe," Dodson wrote.

"Further, the chief medical examiner advises it is obvious that the location of her grave is unknown."

Last week, a team of forensic anthropologists from Mississippi State University began exhuming the grave which was marked with a headstone named Jane Doe.

Jane Doe is reportedly a woman who was killed on Interstate 10 in 1998 and was never identified.

Officials located human remains about three feet inside the grave, however, those remains were of an unknown man.

Officials said, the headstone marking her grave was moved from another location or the woman is possibly buried below the man.

Faulk said Friday that he was "disappointed" that the person buried at the grave was not Jane Doe.

Faulk and other law enforcement officers had speculated that Jane Doe could possibly be Nelda Hardwick, a woman who has been missing from the Lake Charles area since 1993.

Dodson said in her order that no more exhumations will be allowed at this time.

"It's unfortunate that the grave was not the proper one," Faulk said.

"Now, we may never be able to identify this woman."

WLOX

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WARNING:

not suitable for children or the weak..

Post mortem on Jane doe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nWDfH1Ihdw>

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