

# Victim's Assistance Program expanded for families of cold case subject

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Nearly 25 years have passed since skeletal remains were recovered from Windy Point. Without a proper name to give her, authorities have designated her Windy Point Jane Doe.

It's been even longer since Patricia Louise Erickson was found shot to death in her bed — next week marks 35 years since her murder.

And, among the long-time missing is local candy factory worker Kenneth "Tony" Chacon, who has not been seen for 14 years.

The local case are among the state's 1,300 cold case homicides; 325 long-time missing persons and 29 unidentified remains cases.

But, the missing and the dead are not the only victims. Their families are, too — so the Colorado Bureau of Investigation has expanded its Victim Assistance Program to include services for them.

"... we believe it's critical to expand our victim advocate services to offer support to families who have lost loved ones," CBI Director John Camper said, in a statement announcing the new service.

Under the Victims of Crime Act's grant program, the CBI is able to assign two victim advocates to assist families of cold case homicide victims and of people missing for three years or more.

The advocates will be able to help families find support resources, serve as liaisons with law enforcement or even just offer a listening ear.

"This is an outstanding program," 7th Judicial District Attorney Dan Hotsenpiller said.

"We in law enforcement must continue to challenge ourselves to recognize that many people are victimized by trauma and criminal acts who are not in the group of victims traditionally served by criminal justice agencies."

Hotsenpiller commended Camper and the CBI advocates for offering a helpful supplement to his office's victim advocacy program.

"Individuals and families that must cope with the unique level of uncertainty and longevity of cases involving unsolved crimes, cold cases and long-term missing person cases deserve and need the support and assistance available through the CBI's expanded Victim Advocate Program," he said.

"I think it is an excellent benefit to the victims in and around the county of Montrose," Montrose County Sheriff Gene Lillard said.

The MCSO has four open cases fitting the state's criteria for the cold-case victim advocate program.

- Windy Point Jane was discovered near the Smokehouse Campground on Divide Road in 1994.

She had extensive dental work and temporo-mandibular joint syndrome, as well as spinal curvature and scoliosis. Investigators determined she had reddish-brown hair. She likely had been dead for at least 18 months prior to her discovery and her suspected manner of death is homicide.

In all the years since, no one has been able to identify her, despite extensive efforts, including at least two forensic facial reconstructions, the last of which occurred in 2013.

- In addition to Erickson's murder, discovered on May 17, 1984, the MCSO has an open case on Gerardo Garcia-Miranda.

Garcia-Miranda, 43, was reported missing by his employer Sept. 9, 2004; his body was discovered Christmas Eve that year, in the FG Lateral Canal near Olathe.

He died of blunt force trauma to the back of the head. Two persons of interest were interviewed, but no additional information was gained, according to the CBI's cold case website.

Dr. Thomas Canfield, now Montrose County coroner, arranged for Garcia-Miranda to be buried here, after his family in Mexico was unable to reclaim his body.

- The MCSO's eligible missing persons case is that of Dale Williams, 43, who was last seen May 27, 1999 in Nucla. His vehicle was found underwater at the confluence of the Dolores and San Miguel rivers.

The MCSO is also investigating a missing persons case from last year, that of Stanley Gardner, 78, whose last known location was at his home in the 62000 block of Falcon Road on Sept. 5.

The Montrose Police Department also is investigating long-term missing persons cases.

- Benjamin “Ben” Franklin Gray disappeared June 1, 1978; he was 51 at the time and last seen at 10 S. Uncompahgre Ave., apparently on his way to a ranch in Gunnison County.
- Tracy Bastion, 33, was last seen at a home in the 700 block of South Sixth Street in October 1994. He never showed up for a planned hunting trip.
- Chacon, 49, was last seen March 5, 2005. Chacon reportedly met with a cousin for a meal, then left with a friend who said he thought Chacon next headed to Grand Junction for the day.

Chacon’s supervisor reported him missing after he did not show up for work a few days later.

His home was found secured, with his favorite jacket and checkbook inside. His vehicle was found parked at the residence.

Anyone with information about these cases can contact authorities through dispatch at 970-249-9110, or provide information anonymously through Crime Stoppers, 970-249-8500; the app P3Tips or [P3tips.com](https://www.p3tips.com).

People with information about the MCSO cases can also contact Lt. Ted Valerio at 970-252-4021.

“It is something that we are reminded of on a daily basis. We think of (the cases) all the time,” Lillard said.

Families and friends of murder victims and those who have been missing for more than three years can obtain more information about the CBI’s advocacy program by calling victim advocate Hazel Heckers at 303-239-4649 or via email at [Hazel.Heckers@state.co.us](mailto:Hazel.Heckers@state.co.us).

Spanish-speaking services are available at 303-239-4312.

The victim assistance program also offers support for victims of identity theft and fraud, 24 hours a day.

The CBI’s cold case website can be searched at <https://apps.colorado.gov/apps/coldcase/search.html>.

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