

Remembering a Flower Child

November 6, 2024



Camilla Randall was a flower child, in every sense of the word. Camilla's aunt owned a flower shop in Ashland and the precocious 18 year old would often travel from Jackson county to visit friends in Del Norte and Sonoma County. Her route meandered along the 199.

Camilla's mode of traveling often utilized the use of her right thumb; she was a hitchhiker.

October 30, 1994 marked the 30th anniversary, the Del Norte Sheriff found her remains in a gully next to The Smith, in Stout Grove. An autopsy of the body revealed the teen had been raped.

Then-DNSD Investigator Bill Steven was the lead in this terrible tragedy. Aided by then-Deputy Gene McManus, both lawmen began the search for the rapist / murderer. Steven promoted to Sergeant and retired as a Commander. McManus promoted to Sergeant. Both retired from the Department but remain active in Del Norte, to date.

The case weighed heavily on each. During the infancy of DNA, cases were oft-times difficult to solve.

The case went cold until 2001. Then Detective Steven caught a big break:

Another deputy was interviewing an individual charged in sexual assault case. The suspect was Robert Wigley. The Del Norte resident was accused of a sex crime against the daughter of Wigley's then-girlfriend but the sheriff investigator wasn't making much progress... until Steven happened along this unrelated investigation.

Steven was successful in convincing Wigley to admit to a fondling charge. 20 years ago, the fondling charge came with a modest one year sentence in the County jail. Toward the end of Wigley's brief jail visit, Sgt. Steven conducted a DNA blood on test on Wigley and filed it with the Data Entry Clearinghouse, in Sacramento.

A year past until the hit was made Wigley was the rapist / murderer of Camilla Randall. The suspect was charged, convicted and sentenced to Life without parole, and remains in custody within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Steven did not realize it was his effort which solved the DNA connection until almost a year after Wigley, served his jail sentence.

Bill Steven remembers this case vividly. Steven, McManus and District Attorney A.C. Field all contributed to solving this case and serving justice. One can only conjecture how many young folks are alive today thanks to the dedicated and stout work of Steven, McManus and Field.

Sadly, Camilla Randall is not with us today. Her family hopes you will remember this gentle kind soul and lovely flower child who never had the opportunity to live her life. The family of Camilla Randall hopes you will keep her memory in your heart. May she Rest in Peace.