



## Office of the Camden County Prosecutor

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## **Press Release**

### **DNA Confirms Identity of Missing Woman Recovered from Cooper River**

*Pennsauken, NJ* – Detectives have confirmed the identity of a woman whose remains were discovered last spring in a car in the Cooper River, announced Camden County Prosecutor Grace C. MacAulay, Pennsauken Police Chief Phil Olivo, and Camden County Police Chief Gabriel Rodriguez.

Forensic DNA testing by the University of North Texas (UNT) Center for Human Identification confirmed the decedent was Bernadine Gunner of Camden.

Ms. Gunner was reported missing by family members on July 11, 2010. Ms. Gunner – who was 52 years old at the time of her disappearance – was last seen driving her 2006 blue Hyundai Elantra after threatening to take her own life.

On May 16, 2024, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office with the assistance of the Pennsauken Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New Jersey State Police, Camden County Police Department, Camden County/Bellmawr Dive Team, Camden County Office of Emergency Management, Pennsauken Fire Department, and United Search Corps Missing Persons Unit recovered human remains in a submerged vehicle in the Cooper River in Pennsauken.

The vehicle – a 2006 blue Hyundai Elantra – was first discovered by the United Search Corps, a non-profit organization that supports law enforcement with cases involving people who may have gone missing in bodies of water.

After the vehicle was towed from the river, detectives and members of the New Jersey State Police Anthropology Unit collected the remains from inside. Next, Bode Technology, a private forensic DNA laboratory in Virginia, assisted with extracting DNA from the remains. The

extracted DNA was then sent to the UNT Center of Human Identification for comparison. The results were returned on April 16, 2025.

“We are grateful to all those who assisted with returning Bernadine to her family,” said Prosecutor MacAulay. “Missing person cases are heartbreaking because family members are left wondering what happened to their loved one. While we strongly believed the remains recovered from the Cooper River belonged to Bernadine, the confirmation through forensic DNA testing finally provides her family with a definitive answer and closure.”



Bernadine Gunner

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