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# After Forty Years, Pieces Continue To Fall Into Place In The Case Of Gina Hall’s Death

Forty years has passed since Gina Renee Hall was murdered and a year since the release of “The Miraculous Journey: A Day Made In Heaven”, authored by Gina’s sister Dlana Hall Bodmer of Lebanon.

Gina’s murderer, Stephen Epperly, was convicted in December 1980. Everett Shockley, the prosecuting attorney for the Commonwealth of Virginia tried Epperly with only circumstantial evidence —no body, no confession, no witness. He met that burden of proof. Epperly was convicted of murder in the first degree of Gina Renee Hall in Pulaski County, Virginia, and sentenced to Life in prison with parole. Like clockwork, every 1-3 years, Dlana and her family and friends relive the emotions as they focus on Epperly’s parole hearings always hoping he will be denied and remain incarcerated. Epperly has never told the family where he disposed of Gina’s body. Gina Hall’s family never had the peace of a proper Christian burial.

Gina’s body remained hidden for decades until recently. Dlana along with assistance from a forensic anthropologist out of Tennessee has recovered part of her remains. Dlana doesn’t intend to stop until she finds whatever is left and brings her sister’s remains home to the empty grave in Coeburn, Virginia.

The case began in 1980. On Saturday, June 28, 1980, Gina Hall went to a popular, upscale Blacksburg nightspot to dance after a week of midterm exams. The case file includes reports from Gina’s friends who witnessed her there, one close friend stating he last saw Gina as she left the dance floor. It was also reported to the police by two women that Gina sought refuge at their table because she was being harassed. Gina was last seen leaving approximately one hour or so after she arrived. The car Gina was driving was found abandoned on Hazel Hollow Road in Pulaski County on Monday afternoon, June 30 with physical evidence of a struggle. The driver’s side interior door pull was broken as if she had attempted to hold her car door shut. Because of that physical evidence and knowing Gina Hall’s nature and character, the Hall family and friends believed that Gina was taken against her will and that she would never have left willingly with anyone as the murderer and his best friend told. The multitude of evidence found in the Claytor Lake three-level house proved that Gina had been violently beaten to death by Stephen Epperly. The no witness, no confession, No Body conviction gained notoriety as the first successful conviction in Virginia without a body as

evidence and one of only five other convictions of this nature in the country.

In May 2016, Dlana learned from the Radford Police Department that a viable lead came in claiming witness to not only Epperly, but also a second man dismembering Gina. Dlana said, “It was 1980 all over again, but this time I had the advantage of the facts from Gina’s case file. My search for Gina’s remains began, again.”. In her book, Dlana emotionally describes this moment as the trigger point of her quest, “What emerged was an unwavering desire to know the truth. I could not calm my eastern Kentucky heritage that raged from within, the quiescent warrior awakened, fiercely erupting after having been dormant for decades. I became determined to prove the farmer dismemberment lead wrong —or if right, find the second man and seek justice. Emotions raged with an intensity just as though no time had passed. It was the summer of 1980 all over again.”

After hearing the horrific details, Dlana returned home and on her knees, praying to God for justice and to know the truth about her eighteen-year-old sister’s June 1980 disappearance and death. A few weeks later, Dlana suddenly began receiving spiritual messages she did not understand or believe. Dlana began her miraculous journey seeking truth and searching for the location of her sister’s body, but in the end, the journey brought her peace, healing and a new understanding of God and his plan for us all.

(See Gina Hall’s Death Page 5B)

# Children’s Advocacy Center Partners With VCU Health Systems And Ultra Health To Bring First Pediatric Forensic Nursing Department To Tri-County Area

The Child Abuse Reporting and Enforcement Center of Southwest Virginia or CARE Center, a children’s advocacy center located in Richlands, VA, serving Tazewell, Russell, and Buchanan counties, has announced they have entered into an agreement with Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems (VCU) and Ultra Health to develop the region’s first pediatric sexual assault forensic nursing department.

On Thursday evening, stakeholders, local law enforcement, health care providers and other officials of the tri-county area joined together for an official ribbon cutting ceremony at the facility.

Ultra Health, located at Claypool Hill, VA, will now provide trauma specialized exams to children of Tazewell, Buchanan, and Russell counties who have been victims of sexual assault or physical abuse. CARE Center Executive Director April Morefield stated, “When the CARE Center first opened, I immediately recognized there was a significant gap between law enforcement and medical services in our area for children to be able to receive specialized trauma informed care following an assault. Children who are victims of abuse require care from a health professional who is trained to assess and provide care for the trauma associated with the wrong that has been done to them. This process is crucial in the child’s ability to heal as well as to gather and collect potential biological evidence to provide to law enforcement.”

Melissa Harper, an educated forensic nurse and certified pediatric adult/adolescent SANE, will be conducting the exams for the children. SANE nurses are specially trained in the medical, psychological, and forensic examination of a sexual assault victims. They collaborate with the health care team, law enforcement and community members to provide the best response to the needs of the community concerning interpersonal violence. In addition, she will provide consultation and

testimony for civil and criminal proceedings relative to nursing practice, care given, and opinions rendered regarding findings.

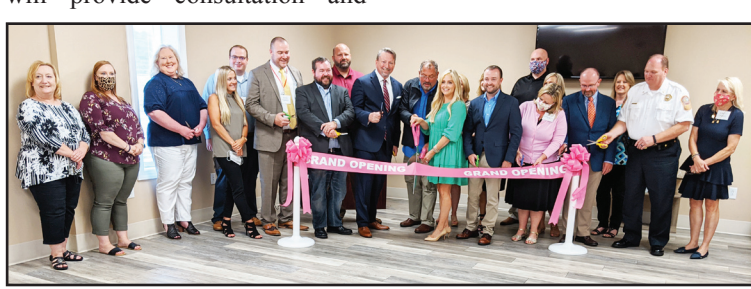
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Russell County Commonwealth’s Attorney Zack Stoots delivers remarks at opening ceremony.



Melissa Harper, an educated forensic nurse and certified pediatric adult/adolescent SANE, is seen in the exam room with the colposcope. This is a medical device that allows for the practitioners to identify and photograph sexual injury not readily visible to the unaided eye, thereby clarifying the location and extent of injury as well as providing evidence for court proceedings.



Ribbon cutting held at Ultra Health for new Pediatric Forensic Nursing Department.

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