



UNT Center for Human Identification

DNA Lab Overview

The University of North Texas Center for Human Identification (UNTHCI), a project of the National Institute of Justice, works with law enforcement officials across the country to bring an end to the term “cold case” in missing persons investigations with tools to help them submit DNA samples free of charge into a national system that continually searches itself to identify the remains of missing persons.

With more than 180 identifications made from Hawaii to New York, the UNTHCI has dedicated its work to making sure the precious individuals whose lives were cut short, have waited long enough to be identified – every John and Jane Doe has the right to reclaim their real names.

The University of North Texas Center for Human Identification (UNTCHI) is a joint effort between the UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth and UNT in Denton. The UNTCHI Laboratory for Molecular Identification, located in Fort Worth, uses cutting-edge DNA analysis techniques to help identify found human remains, while the Laboratory for Forensic Anthropology works to provide an explanation of the manner and cause of death of the remains sent to UNTCHI.

The UNTCHI-LMI is one of only three DNA labs in the United States which routinely uploads information into databases in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), which are used to solve missing person cases – the other two labs are California’s Department of Justice lab and the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s facility. UNTCHI-LMI is the only academic center devoted to this type of work.

The laboratory possesses an American Association of Blood Banks accreditation for paternity testing, the National Forensic Science Technological Center accreditation for forensic casework, and the International Standards Organization forensic accreditation.

Originally called the Texas Missing Persons DNA Database, the database at UNTCHI-LMI was established in 2001 on the UNT Health Science Center campus with funding provided by the Texas Attorney General's Crime Victims' Compensation Fund. The database began accepting samples from Texas law enforcement agencies in March 2003. Texas was the first state in the country with a Missing Persons DNA Database capable of analyzing both mitochondrial and STR systems and is the first state to participate in the federal CODIS database for missing persons.

The UNTCHI receives federal funding from the National Institute of Justice, the FBI and Department of Justice, in addition to money from the State of Texas for work on missing person cases. This funds the no-cost DNA analysis offered to law enforcement agencies or families with missing members.

The UNT Center for Human Identification has provided scientific and technical support for Texas law enforcement agencies and crime labs for more than 10 years.

For more information about the UNT Center for Human Identification's DNA lab at the UNT Health Science Center at Fort Worth, contact the media office at 817-735-2446.

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University of North Texas Health Science Center

The University of North Texas Health Science Center comprises the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, the School of Public Health, and the School of Health Professions. Key research areas include aging and Alzheimer's disease, cancer and physical medicine. This year, the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine was named a top 50 medical school in primary care by *U.S. News & World Report* for the seventh consecutive year. "Fort Worth's medical school and more" contributes \$500 million to the Tarrant County and Texas economies annually. For more information, go to <http://www.hsc.unt.edu/>