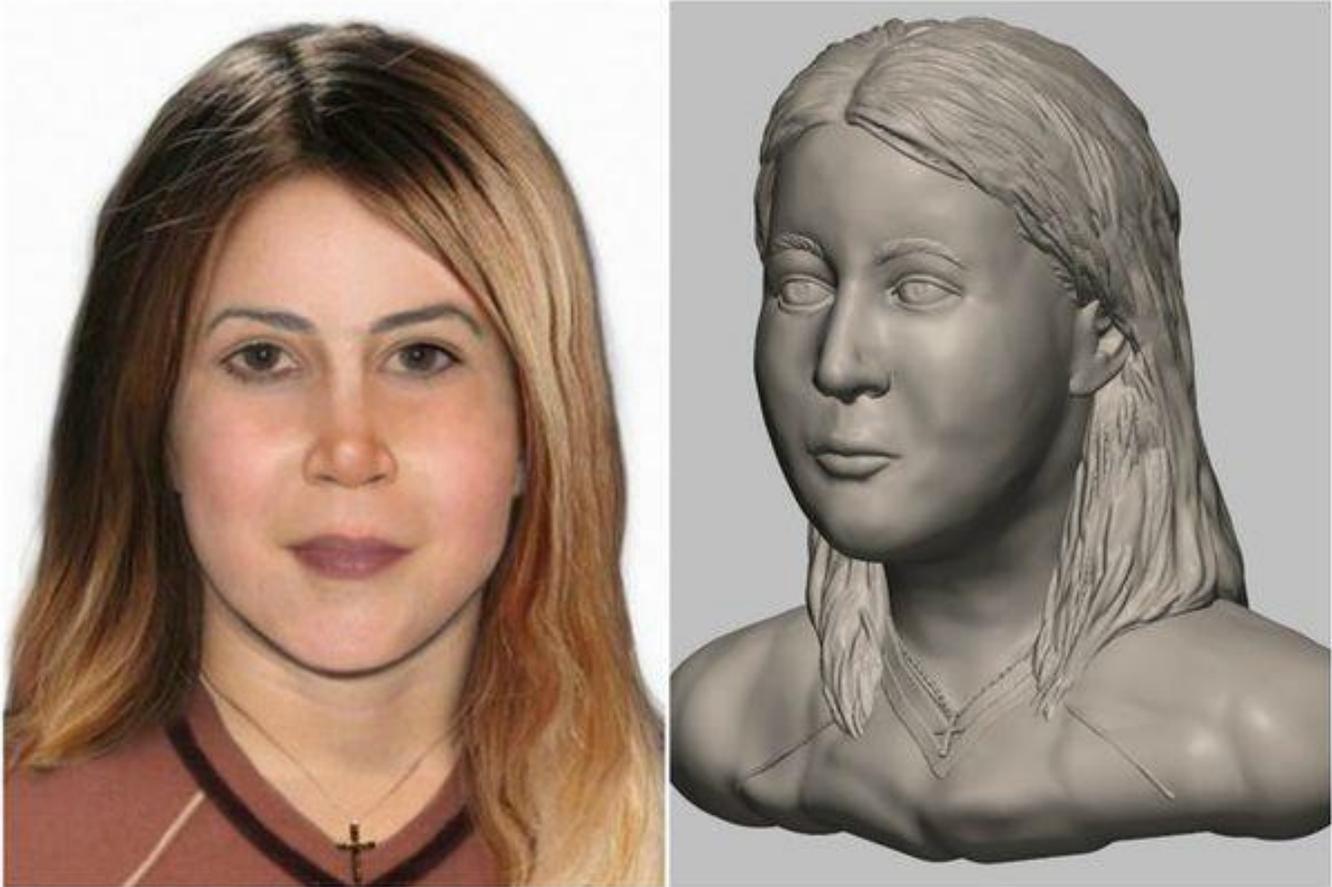


# Princess Doe memorial event rankles some in N.J. town that has adopted murdered girl as their own

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A rendering, left, and computer sketch, right, of Princess Doe. The murdered girl's remains were found July 15, 1982, at Cedar Ridge Cemetery, where she is buried today as "Princess Doe."

She doesn't have a name and any family she was a part of has not come forward, but over the years Princess Doe has become a daughter of Blairstown Township.

The unidentified teen was found bludgeoned to death July 15, 1982, in a ravine at Cedar Ridge Cemetery in northern Warren County.

The girl, who investigators estimate was between 14 and 18 years old, was laid to rest in the same cemetery where she was found.

Her identity has remained a mystery. Not content to call her a Jane Doe, Eric Krantz, the case's original lead investigator, named her Princess Doe.

While benchmark anniversaries of her death have drawn ceremonies and publicity at the 20th, 25th and 30th anniversaries, a new event set to mark the 37th anniversary this year is rankling some.

The [Blairstown Museum](#), a nonprofit on Main Street, is hosting a Princess Doe Memorial on July 15. The event was initially scheduled for June 15, but was canceled due to forecasted rainy weather.

The [\\$34.99 tickets](#) include a trolley tour to locations associated with the case, a celebration of life at Brook Hollow Winery, and a “respectful visit” to both the location of where Princess Doe’s body was found and her grave. Attendees will receive the book, “The Untold Story of Princess Doe” by Blairstown native Christie Leigh Napurano, and a bouquet of flowers to leave on Doe’s grave.

The visit will end with a free remembrance ceremony open to the public.

Jeanette Iurato, curator of the museum and president of its board of directors, said while some of the girl’s anniversaries draw notice, other years have passed by without any public acknowledgment.

With this year marking the 37th anniversary of her death, the event will “ensure a small handful of people will visit her grave that day and pay their respects,” Iurato said.

“This isn’t a sight-seeing tour, the trolley is a convenient way to transport a small group of people,” she said, adding the winery stop is a very small part of the tour and serves as a break on the way to the cemetery.

As of Thursday, there were only three seats left for the 14 spots for the ticketed event. Iurato has asked that people RSVP for the free ceremony so organizers know how many flowers to bring; as of Thursday, she had heard from 51 interested people.

Township resident Kristine Ceres started a petition to stop the tour, which she calls distasteful and disrespectful.

“It really bothers me and it weighs heavy on my heart. I wouldn’t want somebody to do that to someone I knew,” Ceres said. “I have to try at least with the petition and bring to (officials’) attention that the townspeople are not happy about this and something has to be done.”

Ceres said if the girl was identified and had family looking out for her, she believes the organizers wouldn’t think of holding a tour. People pay homage and respect to the girl on their own, she added.

“This is something that I’m standing up for because she can’t stand up for herself,” Ceres said, “I think they’re taking advantage of the situation ... I think it’s in very poor taste to make money off of someone’s horrific death. That’s not what Blairstown is about.”

The winery stop was especially galling for Ceres, even with the celebration of her life toast.

“You have to know somebody to celebrate their life,” Ceres said. “(Iurato) and I do not see eye-to-eye about anything.”

Ceres is not alone in her feelings. She has a paper petition, and an online change.org petition that had 92 signatures as of Thursday.

Iurato said the museum has a small group of detractors who become infuriated no matter what it does.

“Unfortunately, they’re now using a 37-year-old homicide case to display it,” she said. “They have the right to ask their questions, they have the right to voice their concern. We just ask them not to protest the memorial itself ... We don’t have any plans to cancel the memorial ceremony.”

Ceres said she is not planning to picket the event, but does not want it to go forward.

“We honestly don’t see anything wrong with bringing people to the gravesite, to honor her and honor her place in our history and leave a flower to honor her memory,” Iurato added. “We just don’t want her forgotten.”

Ceres said the case has made national news over the years, and with advances being made in DNA testing it is a matter of waiting for a sample to match some or all of Doe's sample.

"She's making a mockery of how she was murdered," Ceres said.

Princess Doe's headstone, cared for and surrounded by trinkets, reads: Missing From Home/ Dead Among Strangers/ Loved By All."

David Shotwell, with Cedar Ridge Cemetery, said when the tour was first announced for June 15, he was contacted by one concerned person and checked with the New Jersey Cemetery Board.

As a public cemetery, they can't prevent people from entering the cemetery.

"We've never really turned anybody down," Shotwell said of various events held there throughout the year, not just for Princess Doe. "We ask them not to walk on graves as much as possible, and not to mar or harm headstones."

There have been events over the years at Princess Doe's gravesite, which was chosen to be as close to the site where she was discovered, Shotwell said.

He said he's aware of the "great level of emotions" that have been raised around the event, and that the township mayor and police department are aware of the conflict.

Even after the event, authorities will still be looking to learn Princess Doe's name and find the person who killed her.

The website [Princessdoe.org](http://Princessdoe.org) has up-to-date information about the case, and pictures of the clothes she was wearing.