

# Rosella ('76) LOVELL, 1957-2010

## Family, church members lend to profile of late Rosella



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**Michael Lovell**, a resident of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, said he and his family, a loving, close knit group, host a reunion every two years.

But, for more than two decades now, there's been at least one family member missing from the gatherings. Rosie.

"We love Rosie," Michael said Tuesday afternoon from his hometown, with sadness interrupting his words. "You know, we're a family. That's what families do."

On Tuesday morning, Michael was notified by Det. Cpl. William Meyer, of the Albany County Sheriff's Office, that his older sister, 55-year-old Laramie resident Rosella Lovell, had been identified as a Jane Doe from a 2010 cold case.

Last week, the Sheriff's Office reported that dental records confirmed the Jane Doe as Rosella, a retired University of Wyoming janitorial staff employee. She was found dead in September 2010 near Roger Canyon Road, about eight miles north of town.

It's believed Rosella, who authorities described as a "loner," had been dead for six months to a year and a half, though the cause and circumstances of her death are unknown.

Michael said his sister was diagnosed with schizophrenia in the late 1970s and she had been estranged from her family for 25-30 years. Family members had reached out to her several times over the years, but their efforts often went without response.

"As a family, we're pretty close," he said. "We didn't forget about Rosie. ... She was always in our prayers."

Rosella was known only as Jane Doe until earlier this month.

Sandy Mays, a retired former Wyoming State Crime Laboratory director, made a facial reconstruction that allowed the Sheriff's Office to identify her.

A story published in Saturday's Laramie Boomerang about the discovery of Rosella's identity led Meyer to information about her family. Rosella has never formally been laid to rest or been given a memorial service, a fact members of First Christian Church in Laramie will remedy next month.

Rosella, who at one time lived across the street from the church on Garfield, became a member of the congregation in 2003, attending services and functions periodically. The last time she was seen at the church was April 2009.

The church will host a memorial service at 2:30 p.m. Nov. 11 for Rosella. The service is open to anyone.

Congregation members Terri Harvey and Marcia Doty had some interactions with Rosella. They described her as a quiet, vulnerable person who didn't often smile.

But, when she opened up, they found her to be kind and well-spoken.

"I guess sweet is the best adjective," Harvey said. "I don't think she had a mean bone in her body, or at least in anything she did with the church. "If you could gain her trust a little bit ... she was very articulate."

Doty, who has experience with mental illness in her family, said she knew Rosella had health issues, but she was embraced by the church's community. "I would say she was troubled and that she was a very vulnerable person," Doty said.

"She had the look that I'm familiar with. ... The look was kind of afraid of the world, kind of not fitting. Kind of alone. ... There was something that prohibited her from engaging in life, at times, from any close level."

But, Doty also said Rosella regularly expressed concern for a family member of Doty's with mental illness, reinforcing the kindness she possessed.

Both Harvey and Doty recall a time when Rosella stood before the congregation to thank members for providing for her in a time of need.

"It couldn't have been easy for her" given her reserved nature, Harvey said. "She was very grateful for our support. I think courage is the right word."

Hosting a memorial service for Rosella is the right thing for the church to do, Pastor Phillip Hayes said. "She's one of ours," he said.

Michael said he and several siblings are planning to attend the local memorial. The tentative plan is for Rosella to later be interred at a family plot in a Catholic cemetery in Coeur d'Alene.

He said he was happy to learn his sister was involved, at least at some level, in a church while separated from her family. "That made me happy, because she was seeking, as we all do," he said.

Meyer said the probe into Rosella's death continues.

The public has responded by providing information about her and he encourages more people to come forward if they know anything that could help with the investigation.

While Tuesday's news about what happened to his sister was difficult to hear, Michael said it also provided him with a chance to speak with "people who knew about her more than we did." He said he'll remember Rosella as she was in her youth. "Just a sweet, very, very kind sister," he said. "That's a very good memory I have right there."

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