

MUPC Service Award Announcement

National Criminal Justice Training Center (NCJTC) of Fox Valley Technical College congratulates **Margaret Press, Founder and CEO of the DNA Doe Project** for her outstanding contributions and as the recipient of the **2023 National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference (MUPC) Service Award**.

The MUPC Service Award recognizes the extraordinary efforts and outstanding achievements that have been made in contributing to the search, investigation, recovery, identification, and reunification/notification of those that go missing. Margaret will be honored during the National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference, May 9-11 in Orlando, Florida. She is being recognized for consistently demonstrating compassion, service, leadership, innovation, and commitment to missing and unidentified persons case issues. Her vision and leadership with the DNA Doe Project (DDP) have resulted in an organization of investigative genetic genealogists who have collectively solved nearly 100 cases, returning the names of Jane and John Does and bringing them back to their families and communities. Under her direction, the DDP is committed to doing this work with integrity and transparency establishing guidelines and standards for the field to ensure the ethical practice of Investigative Genetic Genealogy (IGG). Her continued and tireless dedication and commitment exemplifies how instrumental and invaluable she is to the DDP and all those served.



About the Awardee

Margaret grew up in Los Angeles, California where at age 15 she inherited a passion for genealogy from her grandmother. She graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in Linguistics and subsequently earned her doctorate at UCLA, specializing in Native American languages and child language development.

When DNA testing redefined the genealogy landscape, Margaret joined the impassioned group of citizen scientists who would propel this new field to where it is today. She began with setting up several Y-DNA surname projects. Once autosomal testing reached critical mass and its potential became apparent for helping in unknown parentage searches, she – like many others – became hooked on the unique challenges of building family trees forward in time, rather than backward. Extending this methodology to her current mission – returning a name to an unidentified person – brings a whole new level of reward.

Along with Dr. Colleen Fitzpatrick, Margaret founded the DNA Doe Project (DDP) in 2017 as a non-profit organization dedicated to identifying Jane and John Does. Her innovative vision of recruiting talented genetic genealogists to volunteer their time and skills on cases in partnership with law enforcement and medical examiners established the first group to attempt this work, making the very first publicly announced identification accomplished using IGG in April 2018. Since then, DDP has continued to attract the best IGG practitioners in the field, and has taken on over 200 cases from 113 agencies across the US and Canada.

Under Margaret's direction, DDP has promoted Investigative Genetic Genealogy educational experiences, offering both internships and practicum experiences. She has facilitated collaborations on a variety of projects, including the victims of the 1921 Tulsa race massacre. DNA Doe Project has become a consistent and respected voice in the field.

Margaret's pioneering spirit is also evident in her work as a founding Board member of the Investigative Genetic Genealogy Accreditation Board, which is developing standards and an accreditation pathway for the effective and ethical use of IGG techniques. She is also working with leaders in the field to establish the non-profit DNA Justice Foundation, launching a new DNA database available exclusively to law enforcement at little or no cost.

For more information about our 2023 National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference visit ncjtc.org/MUPC