

Mystery woman identified after 14 years

by UPI

WOODBIDGE, N.J. -- Police say a woman found lost and disoriented 14 years ago at a Woodbridge, N.J., mall has been identified as Elba Leonor Diaz Socarras.

Since 1994, Socarras, who suffers from advanced Alzheimer's, has been a patient known only as Jane Doe at Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital in Glen Gardner, The Star-Ledger newspaper in Newark, N.J., reported Monday.

When found, Socarras was well-dressed and clean but carried no identification and couldn't remember who she was or how she got to the mall.

Police Lt. Eduardo Ojeda spent six years trying to unravel the woman's mystery. Tips last fall led him to the Colombia consulate's office, where he learned the woman's name and found she immigrated legally to the United States in 1969 from Colombia, The Star-Ledger reported.

Police suspect the 74-year-old woman was abandoned at the mall by friends or family as she grew sicker and more difficult to manage, said Ojeda, noting Socarras will be moved to a nursing home more suited for an elderly woman than a psychiatric ward.

"Now at least she will have the dignity of dying as a human being and not as an unknown," Ojeda, noting no one ever reported her missing, told the newspaper.

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