

Miranda woman said Sonoma murder victim

SANTA ROSA — The body of a murdered woman found in a Sonoma county stream Dec. 18 has been identified as that of Thomas Diane Smith Walsh, 21, of Miranda in Humboldt County. Miranda is about 18 miles north of Carletonville.

Mr. Walsh was reported missing by his mother Cecile Smith on Dec. 11. Sonoma County Coroner Richard Adams said the body was identified through fingerprints and dental records.

The murder is the sixth involved slaying of a young woman in the county in the past year. Four of the victims have been under 18 years of age, the youngest 12.

Mrs. Walsh's nude body was discovered in a deep canyon of Mark West Springs Creek about a quarter mile upstream from the point where the creek passes under the Calneige Road, near here.

It was discovered by two kayakers who spotted it caught

in an eddy between a rock and a submerged log. The body was brought out by sheriff's deputies with ropes.

Coroner Adams said Mrs. Walsh's wrists and ankles were tied with nylon rope, with a slip-knotted seam around her neck so positioned as to strangle her if she struggled. Her thumbs were also tied together.

She was estimated to have been dead and in the water two days at the time of her discovery. Adams said the cause of death was determined to be strangulation, with a severe blow to the back of the head a possible contributory cause. She also had a bruise over the left eye.

Adams said one of the six young women who found nude had tied up. In one case the cause of death was strychnine poisoning, while in two, in which only skeletal remains were found, no cause has been determined, he said.