

**Paige Marie Renkoski**, daughter of Carl Daniel (1933-1994) and Ardis (Wait) (1933-2017) Renkoski, was born 2 February 1959 and disappeared 24 May 1990, Michigan. Paige's father was the former Chief of Enforcement Division, state of Michigan Department of Licensing and



*Renkoski, Paige*

Regulation. Her mother had a career in Human Resources for General Motors Corporation.

Paige graduated in 1978 from Okemos High School. During the 1980's Paige was employed in several fields including waitressing but had finally decided to return to school and earn a teaching degree. Sadly, on 24 May 1990 Paige disappeared. She dropped her mother off at

the Detroit airport, had several errands to run and then apparently headed back to Lansing. Her unoccupied car was located along I-96, east of the Fowlerville exit, engine still running. Paige's purse and shoes were located inside the car.

Her classmates grieve and all Okemos alumni shed tears in imaging the wretched and heart rendering grief sustained by her family all these years.

We had a very difficult emotional time putting this memory together.

Paige's mother Ardis struggled on, "She prayed. She joined support groups to help other, eventually serving as a leader of the group Parents of Murdered Children. She participated in and is a board member of the annual Missing in Michigan event and she has spoken to different groups.


Ardis was honored this year to receive recognition from the Michigan State Police's Biometrics and Identification Division for her advocacy work."

We feel that we are helping Ardis in her goal to keep her memories alive, the investigation ongoing and the closure the family needs.

*Sherrie Paty Barber '67, Okemos Alumni Association, October 2019*

[Lansing State Journal, June 1, 1990](#)

**MISSING:**  
PAIGE RENKOSKI



- Name: Paige Renkoski.
- Age: 30.
- Height: 5 feet 7 inches.
- Weight: 125 pounds.
- Last seen: May 24 on 1-96 near Fowlerville.
- To help: Call Livingston County Sheriff's Department, (517) 546-2440.

*Livingston County Daily Press and Argus (Howell, Michigan) Sunday 24 May 2015*

## **FAMILY CREATES FACEBOOK PAGE IN 25-YEAR-OLD COLD CASE**

*Lisa Roose-Church*

*Livingston Daily*

As a little girl, Paige Renkoski knew she would be a mother, and she gave her future children's names to her dolls, but that dream was not meant to be.

Renkoski vanished 25 years ago today.

The 30-year-old woman was last seen standing near a 1986 Oldsmobile Cutlass Calais that belonged to her mother's employer on the shoulder of Interstate 96, just east of the Fowlerville exit. Her shoes and her purse were found in the running car.

"After the second day, I knew she was no longer alive; in my heart, I knew. When I told people that, they'd ask, 'Don't you have any hope for her?' Of course, I have hope, but the reality - and I'm a realist..." her mother, Ardis Wait Renkoski, said, choking up as the thought went unfinished.

"I'm still hoping. No matter what little bit is left, I want her home, I want her to have a Christian burial. I want her home," she added.

## A FAMILY'S HEART

Paige, the second oldest of four daughters, is described by her family and those who knew her as a woman with a "bubbly" personality who was a leader, a tomboy and a friend.

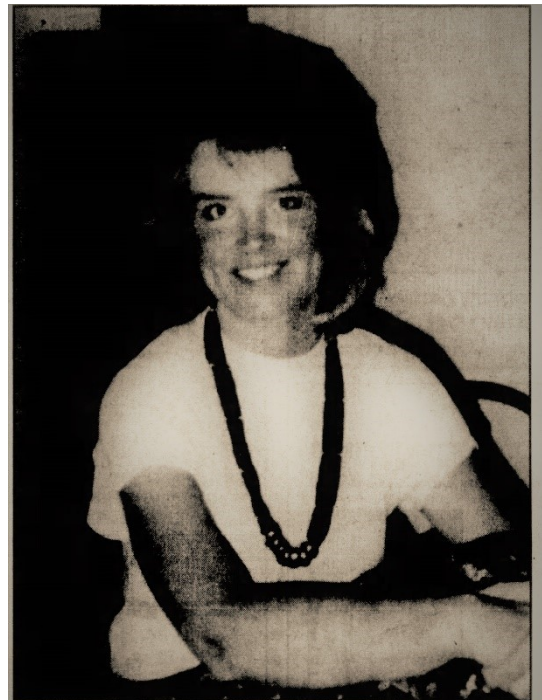
As a child, her mother said, Paige had a radiance that seemed to attract and inspire others. She recalled that at age 4, Paige spoke with a lisp and she and Paige's father, the late Carl Renkoski, worried that she might have a speech impediment. They learned it was nothing serious.

However, Ardis worried whether other children would tease her daughter until she began receiving phone calls from the parents of playmates who shared that their children did not make fun of Paige, but rather tried to copy her lisp.

"She was hysterically funny, Paige's youngest sister, Michele Renkoski-Hollis, recalled. "She had an incredible sense of humor and was very dramatic. She was involved in drama - theater, singing and music - not life drama. She was a very talented singer and not a shy person.

At Okemos High School, Paige was a cheerleader and a member of a singing group. She also modeled in local fashion shows for department stores Knapp's and Jacobson's and she danced in shows sponsored by Seventeen Magazine. The family treasures the photographs they have of Paige modeling in bridal shows.

Paige also enjoyed swimming and skateboarding. Ardis remembers having to regularly pick up her daughter at the swimming pool and taking her to



The car of Paige Marie Renkoski was discovered running alongside I-96 in Fowlerville on May 24, 1990. Despite a widespread search and investigation, no trace of the Okemos woman has been found. She will be able to be declared legally dead in three months.

the doctor because Paige went swimming despite the cast on her leg from a torn ligament she received while skateboarding. Paige, who worked as a waitress, would move out of her parents' home, but she always returned because she was a homebody who did not even like going on vacation with the family because it meant being away from home. Her sisters teased her because Paige was a "traditional woman who wanted a family" while her sisters wanted careers, Ardis said.

Paige, who grew closer to her mother since the two lived together prior to her disappearance, had decided to return to school to earn her teaching degree so she could work with deaf children. She was student-teaching when she disappeared.

### **VANISHING WITHOUT A TRACE**

At around 11:30 a.m. May 24, 1990, Paige dropped her mother off at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport so Ardis could travel to Georgia to visit another daughter and her second grandchild. While Ardis flew out, Paige stopped to visit a friend who had recently had a baby. The two went to a park before returning to the friend's home.

"She was so excited to see the new baby, but that's the day she went on back west and never made it home," Ardis said, pausing for a moment.

Hours later, Paige's 1986 Oldsmobile Cutlass Calais was found on the shoulder of Interstate 96, about one-quarter mile east of the Fowlerville exit. The car was running with the lights on, and her purse and shoes were still inside. All the doors were locked, except the driver's door, which was closed but unlocked.

While many motorists reported seeing Paige on the side of the road, sometimes, with one-man, other times with two, no one has seen her since that day.

"The minute her boyfriend called me ... at 9 o'clock at night and she was to be home by 3 (P.m.), it was like I was hit in the stomach," Ardis said.

"Paige wasn't ... one to be late for anything. I just knew that something was very, very wrong, and when they called me about midnight and said they found the car, I was numb. Absolutely numb."

The company Ardis worked for flew her and her daughter home. During the trip, Ardis' mind wandered.

What could have happened to Paige? The family knew she would not just leave, but Ardis wondered: Was it possible Paige wanted to start a new life?

"If that were so, she had every opportunity to leave from the airport and take off forever instead of going home and pulling over on I-96 15 minutes from home with traffic on a Memorial Day weekend," Ardis concluded.

## **SURVIVING THE UNTHINKABLE**

In the days following Paige's disappearance, Ardis' home filled with people talking and sharing prayers and food. She spent her time upstairs vomiting.

Eventually, Ardis functioned "on automatic."

"The only thing that makes sense is what you used to do. You get up in the morning, take a shower, brush your teeth, walk downstairs, and make coffee and water the plants." she said. "There were times all I could think of was the Lord's prayer so I would not go crazy..."

"It can devour you, just as it is as I'm talking. It can take over. And once I start, once you start crying..." Ardis paused for a moment. "I couldn't cry for quite a while. And once I started, I couldn't stop for months. That's how, like right now, my heart is pounding...You can't survive by living at that level of emotion. You learn that quickly. I was determined I was going to make it, and I have."

Ardis said she has often wondered how she managed to cope through the years. She believes it is, in part, because she understood that everyone

grieves in their own way - and she learned early on to give everyone, including herself, the space to grieve.

She prayed. She joined support groups to help other, eventually serving as a leader of the group Parents of Murdered Children. She participated in and is a board member of the annual Missing in Michigan event and she has spoken to different groups.

Ardis was honored this year to receive recognition from the Michigan State Police's Biometrics and Identification Division for her advocacy work.

"There is no magic recipe," she said about surviving. "Each person is different. What helps at one time maybe doesn't at another time. Life does slowly fill in but is always there.

"We miss our Paige very much. I hope they can bring my little girl home," Ardis said.

Ardis was involved in an auto accident in June 2017. She succumbed 13 December 2017, at age 84. A dual memorial for Paige and Ardis was held 2 February 2017, Paige's 58th birthday, 26 years, 8 months and 9 days after her disappearance. Mother and daughter at rest.

"I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories. We find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love."

*Leo Buscaglia*



**Paige Renkowski: disappeared and never found**

Paige Marie Renkowski just plain disappeared eight years ago.

In May 1990, her car was found abandoned along the side of I-96 near Fowlerville by Livingston County Sheriff's deputies. Her car was running and the lights were on.

Renkowski's purse with her identification, a partial quart bottle of beer and a pair of white shoes were found inside.

These are the last signs of Renkowski, an Okemos woman whose disappearance still baffles police.

Lt. Ivan Deering, of the Livingston County Sheriff's Department, said Renkowski had taken her mother to the airport earlier that day and was returning home. She stopped to visit a friend in Canton Township and also stopped at a party store before heading home along I-96. Police received calls from several people who saw her stopped on I-96 near Fowlerville, talking with a black male in a maroon mini-van.

"She hasn't been seen since then," Deering said.

He said the sheriff's department looked into 900 tips on this particular case. But, he said, "We're no closer to solving this case then we were the first day, unfortunately."

Deering said police have gone on local and national television programs in an attempt to gather new leads, but so far have come up empty-handed.

He said working on a case like this for so many years can "become extremely frustrating." He said it's difficult to keep "hitting the same walls that do not give."

"You get to know the family," Deering said. In Renkowski's case, he said, "We got to know Paige's mother (Ardith) extremely well."

Deering said the sheriff's department still keeps in touch with Paige's mother to give her any updates.

POLICE

THE SEARCH FOR PAIGE RENKOSKI

# Dig brings bitter yield



An earthmover approaches the dig site in Friday's search for the remains of Paige Renkoski on Sober Road in Conway Township.



Members of the FBI's evidence response team as well as Livingston County Sheriff's crime-scene investigators and the county medical examiner searched and documented the terrain of property Friday on Sober Road in Conway Township in the search for the remains of Paige Renkoski, missing since 1990. No signs of the missing Okemos resident were found at the site. PHOTOS BY GILLIS BENEDICT/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

## Hopeful search for remains in Conway comes up empty

**Online:** See a video from Friday's investigation to find the remains of Okemos resident Paige Renkoski at [livingstondaily.com](http://livingstondaily.com).

By Lisa Roose-Church  
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

A missing Okemos woman's mother said she is "stunned" that a search Friday in Livingston County yielded no results, but she has faith that the cold-case team will find her daughter.

Ardis Wait Renkoski, whose daughter Paige Renkoski was last seen along Interstate 96 near the Fowlerville exit in 1990, said the family was prepared for something to happen Friday as investigators with the Livingston County

Sheriff's Department, FBI officials and Michigan State University anthropologists searched a Conway Township property for her daughter's remains.

"Stunned is the word that applies the most. I know the detectives. I feel for them as much as I do for us," Ardis Renkoski said about the end result Friday.

"Paige is at peace," she added. "We are not, but she is. I never had any doubt about that. My niece told me, 'When they put their hand on (Paige's) elbow, as it was described one time, the



angels came down and picked her up and took her to heaven, and they did not hurt her.' That gave me comfort."

Continued on page 4

*"I made a decision a long time ago this would not destroy me ... I decided I would be no good to my family or anyone if I let it destroy me. I've turned it into a path for advocacy, and I'm not focusing on what someone did to my beautiful daughter."*

ARDIS WAIT RENKOSKI, Paige Renkoski's mother



# Search for woman's remains comes up empty

Continued from page 1

Witnesses initially reported they saw Paige Renkoski being led away from her vehicle by the elbow.

Undersheriff Michael Murphy said everyone was disappointed, but the cold-case team — which is comprised of three retired police officers volunteering to re-examine cold cases — is dedicated to continuing its investigation.

It was a investigation that Ardis Renkoski echoed. "We've been riding this roller coaster for 21 years, and the (cold-case team) has been on it two years. They've brought forth more information than any other group has all these years," she said. "If anybody ever resolves Paige's case, it would be these three detectives. This will not discourage them."

Among the new information is a tip from a Michigan woman whose family once lived in the northwestern part of the county.

Sheriff Bob Bezotte said his department received a "very encouraging" tip from the woman Nov. 12 suggesting investigators look at her stepfather as a potential suspect. The stepfather, who used to work for the state and now lives outside Michigan, had a history of violence toward his family, Bezotte said, declining to release additional information due to the ongoing investigation.

Bezotte told the media about the new tip Friday morning while investigators dug in four spots in one location in the 7700 block of Sober Road in Conway Township where cadaver dogs indicated the possible presence of human remains.

On Nov. 10, investigators used cadaver dogs from the Muir-based Michigan Search and Rescue organization to search the Conway Township property, which investigators initially said was depicted on a very detailed map left on a Michigan State Police sergeant's desk in 1990.

However, Bezotte said Friday that the map was actually delivered in a plain envelope to the Livingston County Sheriff's Department about six months after Paige Renkoski went missing. He said detectives at the time unsuccessfully searched the area with dogs that were not specifically trained to find human remains.

The sheriff said original investigators also searched the wrong area because they may have read the map incorrectly. He said the tree near where Paige Renkoski is supposed to be buried, according to the map, appeared differently on the map than in reality because the current owner relocated the driveway about 14 years ago.

Ardis Renkoski said she was angry that she had not heard about the map until media reported about it in the summer.

"I don't understand," she said. "Was it a hoax? I don't really think it was, but if it was, it's a cruel hoax."

Bezotte said the cadaver dogs are trained to find human remains, and that he'd been told they had successfully found remains as old as 100 years.

Murphy noted matter-of-factly, "Dogs can make mistakes, like humans do."

Paige Renkoski was last seen talking to a man standing between her car and a minivan between 3 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. May 24, 1990, on the shoulder of westbound I-96 about a quarter-mile east of the Fowlerville exit.

Police have ruled the case a homicide even though Paige Renkoski's body has never been found.

Ardis Renkoski said her daughter, who was 30 when she was went missing, was a loving woman who "always had a smile," even



Officials begin searching the site where cadaver dogs picked up scents of human remains in Conway Township. PHOTO BY GILLIS BENEDICT/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS



Investigators work in an area near a large tree on private property in Conway Township as cadaver dogs indicate specific locations where human remains may be underground as part of the search for Paige Renkoski. PHOTO BY ALAN WARD/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS



A map that turned up with law enforcement after Okemos resident Paige Renkoski went missing in 1990 led a cold-case team to property on Sober Road in Conway Township. Cadaver dogs pinpointed four locations where the scent of human remains was detected on the property. A dig of the locations took place Friday; however, no remains were found at the spots. PHOTO BY ALAN WARD/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

when things "weren't going the way she would like them to."

Paige Renkoski, who once modeled for Knapp's, often put on productions in her parents' basement, and she became known by family and friends as "drama queen of the basement productions," her mother said.

Paige Renkoski also made her mother treats, like cupcakes, and left her notes such as a Valentine's Day note that Ardis Renkoski treasures today in which her daughter told her to look in the freezer for a treat just because, "I love you so much."

"She was fun to be with," Ardis Renkoski said, adding that her faith, her family and her friends have helped her in the last 21 years.

"I'm blessed," she said. "I made a decision a long time ago this would not destroy me, and it's a decision I think you make because it can. I decided I would be no good to my family or anyone if I let it destroy me. I've turned it into a path for advocacy (for victims), and I'm not focusing on what someone did to my beautiful daughter."

Contact Daily Press & Argus reporter Lisa Rose-Church at (517) 552-2846 or at lrchurch@gannett.com.

## Obituaries, Memorials & Remembrances

### Passages

Call 888-999-1288 or Email [lkpobits@gannett.com](mailto:lkpobits@gannett.com)  
View Passages Online: [www.livingstondaily.com](http://www.livingstondaily.com)

#### HELEN V. GUSTINA

Age 97 of Fowlerville, died Wed. Nov. 16, 2011. Services 11AM, Nov. 22 at St. Agnes Catholic Church, Fowlerville. Arrangements by Niblack Funeral Home, Dillingham Liverance Chapel.



#### CLAYTON GALE MCDANIELS

In loving memory of Clayton Gale McDaniels "Moose", born December 4th, 1947 and died November 14th, 2011. He is survived by his beloved son, Scott McDaniels; grandchildren, Christy and Brandy McDaniels; and uncle, Richard Harvey. A memorial luncheon will be held at the American Legion Hall in Howell, December 4th, at One O'clock. Share memories at [tremrowsfamilyfuneralhome.com](http://tremrowsfamilyfuneralhome.com)

#### GERTRUDE V. FOX

Age 95, born on November 20, 1915 in Chicago, Illinois and passed away on November 16, 2011 in Brighton, Michigan. Loving wife of the late James M. Fox for 66 years; Beloved mother of Barbara A. Misch, James A. (Mary) Fox, and Roy A. (Barbara) Fox; Cherished grandmother of David Misch, Steven Misch, Roy Fox Jr., and Randolph A. (Tiffany) Fox; great-grandmother of Stephanie Levin and great-great-grandmother of Jamie and Shawn Levin; Known to her friends and customers as Busha, Gert was the matriarch of The Copper Pickle Deli and Market in Downtown Howell. Her joys were working seven days a week at "the Pickle" and fishing in the Northwoods. So Lat.

Arrangements entrusted to the Highland Chapel of the Elton Black & Son Funeral Home Highland, Michigan. [www.eltonblack&sonhighland.com](http://www.eltonblack&sonhighland.com)

#### ENUNICE D. FICK HAMBURG TWP., MI

Her Legacy... Passed away November 18, 2011 the day after her 99th birthday. She was born November 17, 1912 in Parma Twp., MI the daughter of Ernest and Flora (Burch) Hunt. On January 7, 1934 in LeGrange, IN she married her loving husband Edwin Fick. He preceded her in death in 1987. Eunice spent her life as a homemaker and mother.

Her Family... Loving grandpa of Ronald (Ann) Fick of Texas, Judy (Late Dale) Schroen of Hamburg, and Candice (Larry) Gyde of Pinckney, beloved grandmother of 8 and great-grandmother of 19.

Her Farewell... The family will gather with friends on Monday from 3 to 8 PM at Borek Jennings Funeral Home, Hamburg Chapel. A Healing Farewell will be held 11AM Tuesday, November 22, 2011 at St. Paul Lutheran Church of Hamburg. Burial will take place in Washtenaw Memorial Cemetery. Memorial contributions are suggested to St. Joseph Mercy Hospice. Please leave a Message of Comfort to Eunice's family by calling 877-231-7900 or visit her guestbook at [borekjennings.com](http://borekjennings.com)

#### THOMAS JOHN KARNES

Age 68, of Brighton passed away at his home Thursday morning November 17, 2011. He was born on December 29, 1942 in Detroit the son of Edward and Edith (Coutcher) Karnes. On November 25, 1966 he was married to Suzanne Ellis. Tom Served with the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. He retired from the Ford Motor Company in 1999 after 31 years of service. He was a member of St. Patrick Catholic Church, Brighton where he was a member of the K of C. Surviving in addition to his wife Suzanne are his children: James Edward (Kristan) Karnes, Peggy Suzanne (David) Warden and Michael Thomas Karnes. He is also survived by his grandchildren; Coral, Morgan, Dave, Tonya, Nick, Nicole, Kalli, Jessie, 1 great grandson, Terry Gwinn, 1 brother Patrick and 1 sister Lorrie Gage. Mass of the Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:30 A.M. Tuesday November 22, 2011 from St. Patrick Catholic Church, Brighton. Interment will follow at Calvary Cemetery, Brighton. The family will receive friends Monday November 21, 2011 from 4:00 - 8:00 P.M. at the Keefe Funeral Home, Brighton. Friends may visit at the church after 9:30 A.M. on Tuesday. Memorial Contributions in Tom's name are suggested to St. Joseph Mercy Hospice or to the Capuchin's. Envelopes are available from the Keefe Funeral Home, Brighton. Visit Tom's Book Of Memories at: [www.keefefuneralhome.com](http://www.keefefuneralhome.com)



#### LADONNA C. DANBOISE (NEE CONKLIN)

Died in the loving arms of her daughters on Thursday, November 17, 2011. She was 86 years old. Born on June 8, 1925, later married the love of her life, Hall Danboise (d.1979). Donna's whole life revolved around her family and friends. She was a devoted wife, dedicated and loving mom to her three daughters, Bonnie, Carol and Gail, and a fun and caring grandma to her six grand kids and thirteen great-grandchildren. Donna was well known for her phenomenal cooking which she shared with all her favorite people. Donna is resting at Lynch & Sons Funeral Home, 600 E. Main Street, Brighton, on Sunday, November 20, from 3-9PM. A Funeral Service will be held at Lynch & Sons, Monday, November 21 at 10 o'clock AM. The Rev. Brian Tweedie will officiate. Burial Fairview Cemetery, Brighton. For further information please call 810-229-2805 or visit [www.LynchFuneralDirectors.com](http://www.LynchFuneralDirectors.com)

#### OBITUARY POLICY

The first seven lines of an obituary are published free of charge. After that, there is a fee of \$3 a line. Pictures may be published for \$25.

\*Deadline for obituaries is 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday for publication in the next morning's newspaper. Obituaries received Friday or Saturday by 1 p.m. will be published in Sunday's newspaper.

For more information, call 888-999-1288, or contact your funeral home. \*Holiday deadlines are subject to change.



Cold-case team investigators Bill Lenaghan, center, and Joe Morrow, right, probe the ground where search dogs indicated the likely presence of human remains Nov. 10. Dog handler Pam Burns, left, and other members of the Muir-based Michigan Search and Rescue group searched private property on Sober Road near Fowlerville Road in Conway Township. FILE PHOTO BY ALAN WARD/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

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# Dual memorial planned for missing woman and her mother on Feb. 2

JUDY PUTNAM

LANSING STATE JOURNAL

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

**OKEMOS** – Before the end of her life, Ardis Renkoski's final wish was to learn what became of her 30-year-old daughter Paige, who went missing in broad daylight on the side of I-96 near Fowlerville in 1990.

Renkoski, 84, of Okemos, died Wednesday, Dec. 13, with Paige's disappearance still unsolved. A dual memorial service for Renkoski and her missing daughter will be held Feb. 2, on what would be Paige's 58th birthday.

"We never really had a formal service for Paige other than a family memorial on her birthday every year," said Michele "Missi" Renkoski Hollis of Okemos, one of Renkoski's four daughters. "We've never had closure. ... My mom really wanted that."

Hollis said Renkoski's family has faith that in death, she's now reunited with her daughter. They also believe she has solved the riddle that's dogged the family for nearly three decades: What happened to Paige?

"I think she knows everything now. That's my feeling. My mom knows everything that's possible to know about Paige and what happened. We're hoping she'll send us a sign," Hollis said.

On May 24, 1990, Paige Renkoski dropped her mother off at the Detroit airport in the morning, visited a friend, and stopped at a convenience store before apparently heading back to Lansing. Her car was found still running along I-96 just east of the Fowlerville exit. Her purse and



In 2015, Ardis Wait Renkoski, left, and her youngest daughter, Michele Renkoski-Hollis, share memories of Paige Renkoski. FILE PHOTOS



Paige Renkoski

shoes were still inside.

Witnesses reported seeing a burgundy minivan and one or two men speaking with her along the highway.

Theories are that she was stopped by someone impersonating an officer or stopped because of a staged accident. There was slight damage to the Cutlass Calais she was driving that belonged to her mother's employer.

Six months later, an anonymous tipster sent a map that purported to pinpoint the young woman's remains. Searchers looked in 1990 and again in 2011 without any results.

Ardis Renkoski had a career in human resources for General Motors. After her daughter's disappearance, Renkoski became known as an advocate for other victims' families and a liaison to law enforcement.

Michigan State Police Detective Sgt. Sarah Krebs, who runs the state police's missing persons unit, said Renkoski was instrumental in the success of Missing in Michigan, which holds a memorial each May for missing people.

Since 2011, families and law enforcement attend the event, and DNA is collected from family members to help locate their loved ones.

Krebs said Renkoski was on the board of Missing in Michigan.

"Ardis was one of the most gracious and classy women I've ever met. She was the person I would look to if I had a family who needed someone to talk to regarding their missing loved one," Krebs recalled. "I could always turn to Ardis."

Renkoski was given the group's first Michigan State Police Missing in Michigan Advocate of the Year in 2015. It's now renamed the Ardis Renkoski Advocate of the Year award.

Besides Michele Hollis of Okemos, Renkoski is survived by her daughters, Tami Renkoski of Allegan, and Sheril Martin of Atlanta, Georgia, five grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and two sisters.