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20 Years Later, Family Still Searching For Tiffany Sessions

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University of Florida student Tiffany Sessions put on a sweatshirt, took her Walkman and told her roommate she was going for a walk.

It was Feb. 9, 1989. Sessions was 20.

She hasn't been heard from since.

Today, her mother, step-brother and detectives from the Alachua County Sheriff's office gathered in Gainesville to mark the 20th anniversary of her disappearance. The Alachua County Sheriff's office has now moved the Sessions file to the Cold Case Unit.

Tiffany's half brother, Jason Sessions, was just 16 when she was first reported missing. Now he has helped develop a Web site tiffanysessions.com - with information to develop new leads in the case.

"Do I believe that she's out there and living a normal life somewhere, no," Jason Sessions said. "But I do believe the case can be solved and I think it will."

The Sessions family has also helped produce a deck of cards with information about Tiffany and other cold cases that are being distributed in prisons across the nation. Their hope is that an inmate with information may come forward to help solve the case.

"One of the things that I want everyone to know is that she was a living, breathing person and I know that we're talking about a cold case right now, but we're not talking about a closed case," said her mother, Hilary Sessions.

Jason Sessions says new leads have come in as a result of the deck of cards. Alachua County detectives say they are working on those leads but gave few details about the new information.

Hilary Sessions is now the executive director of Child Protection Education of America. She keeps hundreds of files on missing children cases and has made it her life's work to help other families who have missing children.

She said she believes Tiffany's case will be solved but admits the odds are against her. Hilary Sessions says there are thousands unidentified human remains around the country. Sessions says she has viewed more than 170 sets of remains with the hope of identifying her daughter but still has no answers.

Jim Eckert was a detective with the Alachua County Sheriff's Office when Tiffany Sessions was reported missing.

"I remember driving into Gainesville on the interstate, seeing helicopters all over the place," he said.

Now retired, Eckert says the small sheriff's office was technologically ill-equipped back then to deal with the case.

"None of us knew what a database was, and in fact the sheriff's office was so small, Patrick Sessions had to buy us our first two fax machines. We didn't have a fax machine in our detective office."

Tiffany Sessions had a Walkman-type music player when she went on her walk, and detectives spent hours searching the area for the music player, Eckert said.

"We were looking for triple "A" batteries and double "A" batteries on the side of the road that might have indicated there was a struggle and she dropped it, or a set of headphones and none of that ever turned up," Eckert said. "It was frustrating, a very frustrating case."

Today, young reporters from the University of Florida came to interview Hillary Sessions as she planted a tree outside of the Alachua County Sheriffs Office. The tree is a memorial to Tiffany. Three of the reporters from the University of Florida say they were not yet born when Tiffany was reported missing.

Hillary says today is especially difficult for her because it marks the day that Tiffany has now been missing for the same amount of time that she lived at home.