

Reclusive South Lake Tahoe sisters died of natural causes

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Reclusive twin sisters who were found dead in their South Lake Tahoe home in February died of natural causes, according to El Dorado County investigators.

The sheriff's office announced Aug. 30 that the determination regarding the deaths of Patricia and Joan Miller, 73, was made after a review of pathology reports and evidence from the Miller residence. A pathology report concluded that Patricia Miller died of coronary artery disease. Joan Miller, who relied heavily on her sister for care, died of probable environmental hypothermia, according to a sheriff's office news release.

The women were found dead in their home Feb. 26, and sheriff's officials sought the public's help in locating relatives.

The sisters were entertainers in the Bay Area, where they regularly appeared on a weekly television show, "The Hoffman Hayride," in the 1950s. They also entertained troops at several military bases.

Originally from Portland, neither woman married, and the two were largely dependent on one another throughout their lives, officials said.

With the public's help, authorities were able to locate two second cousins.