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Remains of Three Victims from September 11 Attacks Identified After 24 Years

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New York City authorities have confirmed the identification of three victims from the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, following advancements in DNA testing technology. The Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) announced that the remains belong to Ryan D. Fitzgerald, a 26-year-old currency trader; Barbara A. Keating, a 72-year-old retired non-profit executive; and another woman whose name is being withheld at the request of her family.

The remains of Keating and the unidentified woman were recovered in 2001, while Fitzgerald's remains were found in 2002. Their identification was made possible through refined DNA analysis techniques applied to remains recovered from the World Trade

Center site. OCME officials have continued to test and retest thousands of fragments over the past 24 years as forensic methods have improved.

Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Jason Graham stated, “Each new identification testifies to the promise of science and sustained outreach to families despite the passage of time. We continue this work as our way of honoring the lost.”

Barbara Keating was traveling home to California aboard American Airlines Flight 11 when it was hijacked by al Qaeda terrorists and crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Her son, Paul Keating, told U.S. media that genetic material from her hairbrush was used to match DNA samples provided by relatives. Prior to the latest identification, the only recovered trace of his mother was part of her ATM card found in the debris.

Ryan Fitzgerald, a young professional working in finance, was among the thousands killed when the Twin Towers collapsed. Details about the third identified woman remain private, respecting the wishes of her family.

The attacks on September 11, 2001, claimed 2,977 lives, including 2,753 in New York City, when two hijacked planes destroyed the Twin Towers. Another hijacked plane struck the Pentagon, and a fourth crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after passengers attempted to regain control from the hijackers.

Despite the passage of more than two decades, around 1,100 victims remain unidentified. The OCME has committed to ongoing efforts, re-examining remains as DNA sequencing technology becomes more advanced. This approach has allowed more families to receive long-awaited confirmation about their loved ones.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams expressed hope that the latest identifications bring comfort to the victims’ families, saying, “We hope the families receiving answers from the Office of Chief Medical Examiner can take solace in the city’s tireless dedication to this mission.”

The continued identifications serve as a reminder of both the enduring impact of the attacks and the persistence of scientific and forensic teams working to provide closure to families who lost loved ones on that day.