## **McMenamin's friends strive for closure**

## By JOSH FUNK Senior staff writer

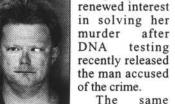
They won't let Tina's case die. Friends and family of former UNL student Tina McMenamin are



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Dewntown Lincoln 1219 'P' Street



same blond hair that led Gabel police to arrest

trying to generate

after

Gregory Gabel two years ago freed him in July when additional DNA testing done this spring showed the hair was not Gabel's.

Emotionally, McMenamin's one with no apparent end to the stabbed. ordeal in sight.

"There's no closure without a trial," Bernadette McMenamin, people." Tina's mother, said. "It's still an unsolved crime."

look at the case, and they still consid- 1996. er Gabel a viable suspect, Lincoln Police Capt. Jim Peschong said.

The police are reevaluating the conclusions that led them to Gabel and working to clear up any remaining questions from the first investigation, Peschong said.

Police again are interviewing people from the first investigation in search of new evidence in the 3-yeartesting old trail.

The case began on July 25, 1995, when McMenamin's roommate, Sarah Bognich, came home to their south Lincoln apartment to find Tina's body.

Bognich and McMenamin, friends from their days at Omaha's Gross High School, had just completed their freshman year at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Police reports said McMenamin friends and family are back at square was sexually assaulted, beaten and

Bognich described McMenamin as "a fun-loving person who loved

The police conducted a thorough investigation, but leads were few and Investigators are continuing to an arrest was not made until spring

During the past two years, court hearings have focused on the admissibility of those initial DNA tests and whether Gabel was competent to stand trial before he was released this summer.

Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacev said this was the first murder case in Lancaster County that used the mitochondrial DNA test.

The test determined that the hair found clutched in McMenamin's hand did not come from Gabel, Lacey said.

Mitochondria are in the area between a cell's nucleus and cell wall and produce energy for the cell. Mitochondrial DNA tests are used when the sample is in poor condition.

The strand of hair in the McMenamin case was damaged and included only part of the root, which was used up in the initial DNA test to arrest Gabel.

The results of the test, however, could remain an important piece of evidence in continuing the investigation.

"It is a logical assumption that the hair belonged to someone (McMenamin) was struggling with,"

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someone remember something about

"Somebody knows something," Friend said, "and if the person responsible is out there, I believe it will happen again."

Crimestoppers still is offering a \$15,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the person or persons responsible for the murder.

Remember, this could have been anybody," Friend said, "anybody's daughter, any college student."

Donations can be made to the fund to help pay for the investigation by sending donations to NBC Bank, c/o Tina McMenamin, 1248 O St., Lincoln, NE 68508.

Like

Jimmy

Walker,

we're

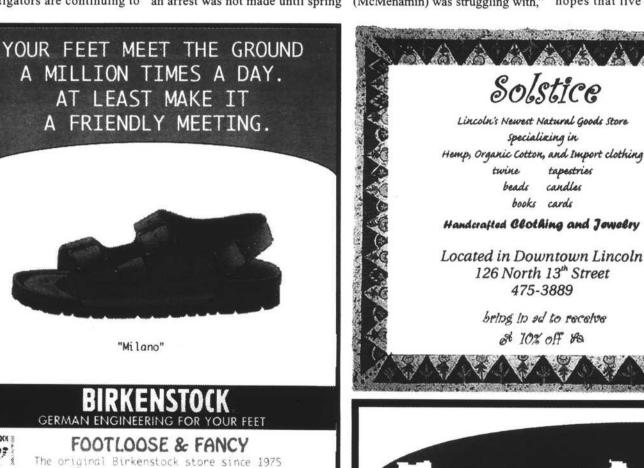
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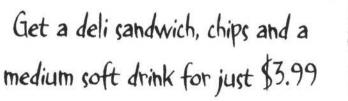
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BERNADETTE MCMENAMIN Tina McMenamin's mother To help with the cost of further that day. DNA testing and investigations,

six-month waiting list because only three places in the United States can test mitochondrial DNA. If McMenamin's case is solved, any additional money will be used for other murder investigations in Lincoln. Bognich and Friend also released to the media a video of McMenamin and friends at a football game in the hopes that live footage may help

Lacey said.

Hemp, Organic Cotton, and Import clothing Located in Downtown Lincoln

Bognich and a friend, Lou Friend,

started a trust fund in Tina's name at

cost about \$10,500. There also was a

The DNA test that freed Gabel

the National Bank of Commerce.



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