

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 25-0398

A Proclamation Honoring The Life And Service Of Susan G. (Knight) Berdine

WHEREAS, Susan Knight Berdine was born on July 2, 1979, in College Station, Pennsylvania, to Mary and Paul Knight. Susan was a good student attending local elementary and high school for her formative education. The family decided to visit Washington DC on a vacation, and during that trip her she took a tour of the FBI Crime Lab. This tour sparked Susan's interest in forensic science and sent her on a path of her lifelong calling; and

WHEREAS, Susan attended Pennsylvania State University, receiving a bachelor's degree in biochemistry, and later receiving a Master of Science degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Susan led the Forensic Biology/DNA unit at the Denver Crime Laboratory as a forensic scientist, DNA technical leader and deputy director. Her technical abilities and passion for solving cases propelled her national and international recognition; and

WHEREAS, there is not a single aspect of the Forensic Biology /DNA Unit's current methods that Susan has not influenced, either directly or indirectly through the staff she trained and the procedures she implemented; and

WHEREAS, while Susan's strengths were innumerable, her greatest professional achievements came from the grants she was awarded, the technical validations she completed, and her courtroom poise under extensive cross-examination; and

WHEREAS, her foresight and focus on data-driven decision making, led the Forensic Biology DNA Unit through complex technical issues and kept the unit on the cutting edge in an always evolving field of Forensic DNA Analysis and her leadership resulted in Denver receiving cold case grant funds that have ultimately led to the successful closing of unsolved cases and providing justice for hundreds of victims of crime in our community; and

WHEREAS, at the time of her retirement in 2021, after seventeen years of service to the victims of crime in Denver, Susan made the difficult but decision to shift her focus away from the work she loved to spend more time with her family. Her husband Mathew and three children Andrew, Ryder and Abigail became her primary focus; and

WHEREAS, sadly Susan passed away in the summer of 2022 after a resilient five-year battle with cancer. Her legacy of excellence will always be a part of the Denver Crime Laboratory. Susan the colleague, friend, mentor, scientist, mother, daughter, wife and sister will never be forgotten.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council recognize Susan Knight Berdine for her dedication to service and contributions as a pioneer of modern Forensics.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Michael Hesse.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL March 24, 2025

PRESIDENT

