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# Mother ID's body of Watertown's first black police officer

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT DECEMBER 05, 2011

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A woman found dead in her Roxbury apartment Saturday morning was identified yesterday by her mother as the first black police officer hired in Watertown.

Gail Miles, 61, who was hired in 1984, made headlines 16 years later when she sued the Watertown Police Department for racial and gender discrimination.

“She was a wonderful girl,” Marilyn Miles said yesterday of her daughter, who was retired. “She had a lot of friends and she loved to travel and socialize.”

Miles's mother said she had not been told any more details about how her daughter was found or what authorities

believe may have caused her death.

Watertown Police Lieutenant Dan Unsworth, asked about Miles's death, said: "Obviously everyone here is saddened by this situation."

Boston police did not identify the victim yesterday and said they were awaiting an autopsy to determine the cause of death. Homicide detectives were investigating, though the case had not been ruled a homicide.

Officers responding to a call for an "unknown situation" at 8 Wardman Road found an unresponsive woman in her 60s at around 10:10 a.m. Saturday, said Eddy Chrispin of the Boston Police Department. The woman was pronounced dead at the scene by emergency medical workers, according to police.

Gail Miles lived alone in the apartment in a three-story brick building, according to her mother. The oldest of four siblings, Miles was divorced and had no children, her mother said.

In a September 2000 lawsuit, Miles said she had been the victim of discrimination at the Watertown Police Department from the date she was hired. In late 2001, Miles received \$150,000 in a settlement out of court. The settlement contained a stipulation that Watertown Police complete a mandatory officer training program aimed at preventing sexual and racial harassment.

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