



OFFICE *of* GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

July 9, 2015—Sent via email

██████████
██████████

Re: Case No.: 201500689
NG: CM

NATIONAL
ARCHIVES
and RECORDS
ADMINISTRATION

8601 ADELPHI ROAD
OGIS
COLLEGE PARK, MD
20740-6001

web: www.ogis.archives.gov
e-mail: ogis@nara.gov
phone: 202-741-5770
toll-free: 1-877-684-6448
fax: 202-741-5769

Dear ██████████:

This responds to your April 28, 2015 request for assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), which we received via U.S. mail. Thank you for your interest in OGIS.

Congress created OGIS to complement existing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) practice and procedure; we strive to work in conjunction with the existing request and appeal process. The goal is for OGIS to allow, whenever practical, the requester to exhaust his or her remedies within the agency, including the appeal process. OGIS has no investigatory or enforcement power, nor can we compel an agency to release documents. OGIS serves as the Federal FOIA Ombudsman and our jurisdiction is limited to assisting with the FOIA process.

You contacted OGIS about your efforts to identify your deceased ██████████'s last known address. I understand that you requested this information from the Social Security Administration (SSA), which informed you that the information you seek is exempt from disclosure pursuant to FOIA Exemption 6, U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). The agency further informed you that because individuals are not required to report address changes to the agency, SSA has no way to verify whether address information on file is correct or timely. You seek assistance in obtaining this information, which is very important to you.

We contacted SSA to discuss the information you seek. According to the agency, SSA does not release the last known address of an individual—even with proof of death—because of the privacy interests of any survivors who may continue to live at the same address. This is the privacy interest identified in the agency's application of Exemption 6.

FOIA Exemption 6 protects information from release that would be a "clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." Courts have found that individuals have a privacy interest in their name, address, date of birth, place of birth and other personal information, and the privacy interest in protecting the information outweighs the public interest in the release of the information. Please note that although your familial relationship with ██████████ may explain your interest in the records you seek, it does not give you a special right of access—FOIA considers a release to one to be a release to all and the agency must protect personal information accordingly.



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We asked SSA where you might obtain the information you seek. According to the agency, a state's Bureau of Vital Statistics is the best place to obtain information about a deceased individual such as last known address. While SSA acknowledged that contacting Bureaus of Vital Statistics may be a time consuming process if you are unsure in which state [REDACTED] perished, the agency impressed upon OGIS that those offices have the most accurate information.

In cases such as this where an agency is firm in its position, there is little for OGIS to do beyond providing more information about the agency's actions. I hope that this information about your request is useful to you. Thank you for contacting OGIS; we will now consider this matter closed.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nikki Gramian, Acting Director
Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)

cc: Linda Frye, SSA FOIA

We appreciate your feedback. Please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OGIS> to take a brief anonymous survey on the service you received from OGIS.