

**By THOMAS CHECCHI**

A 44-year-old nurse whose body was discovered Sunday in a wooded area in Willowbrook was strangled to death, an autopsy performed yesterday revealed.

The partially decomposed body buried in a shallow grave behind the main building of the state Institute for Basic Research was identified yesterday as Shun-ae (Emma) Lee of 7 Jasper St., Sea View, a registered nurse at the Staten Island Developmental Center. She was last seen alive July 20.

The naked body was discovered Sun-

day by a group of Mrs. Lee's friends who had been searching the area for about an hour.

Further tests must be performed to determine whether the woman had been sexually abused, Dr. Michael M. Baden, the city's chief medical examiner, said yesterday.

Police said yesterday they have no suspects in the case.

Mrs. Lee was last seen July 20 walking from Building 11 of the developmental center toward her home. Police said she always walked home through the

wooded area in which her body was found after completing her 3-to-11:45 p.m. shift.

The nurse had reportedly received a death threat several months ago from a co-worker in her building who had been fired after Mrs. Lee gave her a negative work evaluation.

Police said yesterday there is no indication the fired co-worker had anything to do with Mrs. Lee's death.

During the day, police searched the area for the woman's clothes and other clues. They refused to say, however, if

her clothes or any belongings were found.

Mrs. Lee's husband, Jun-ho, and about 30 friends searched the area around the center Sunday because they were frustrated by the police's inability to find the woman in two weeks, friends said.

Police said they had searched the area extensively several times previously but did not find the body. They said heavy rain in the past few days may have loosened the dirt and helped uncover the body, which was buried on a slope.

But the police report conflicts with

that of Nicholas Lee, head of the Staten Island Korean Catholic Apostolate and not related to the nurse, who was present when the body was found. He said the body was buried under a mound of dirt in a relatively flat area.

Mrs. Lee, described by friends as "very diligent" and "very family-oriented," came to Staten Island from Seoul, Korea, in May 1971. Besides her husband, she is survived by a son, Won-ki, 13, and two daughters, Su-jong, 18, and Mi-jong, 16.

Mr. Lee and the children were in Brooklyn near his grocery store on the

night Mrs. Lee disappeared. They returned home two days later, on July 22, when they discovered and reported her disappearance.

The funeral was today with a service in the Matthew Funeral Home, Willowbrook. Burial was in Moravian Cemetery.

John Degnan and Robert Dianora, the two detectives assigned to the case, ask that anyone with information about the case contact them at 987-7935. All conversations will be kept confidential, they said.