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## Families' agony must be ended

(Editorial, [Irish News](#))

Anyone who heard Vera McVeigh speak about her son's disappearance would have been left in no doubt about the profound suffering this mother endured for more than 30 years.

Columba McVeigh was just 17 when he was abducted and murdered by the IRA in 1975 and his body hidden in a secret, as yet undiscovered, grave.

Mrs McVeigh, who died yesterday (Wednesday) aged 82, had no knowledge of what happened to her son but his sudden disappearance cast a shadow over her life and the lives of her husband and remaining children.

A moving interview with *The Irish News* in 2003 gave some insight into the torment inflicted on this Co Tyrone family.

Mrs McVeigh revealed that for years she thought Columba was still alive and would come home one day "with children as big as himself".

She even joined the tens of thousands who turned out for the Papal visit to Ireland in 1979 not to see the Pope but to search for her son among the crowds.

It was 1999 before Mrs McVeigh discovered that her son was among the Disappeared after the IRA admitted it had kidnapped and killed him almost 24 years earlier.

This mother's greatest wish was that his body would be found and given a Christian burial.

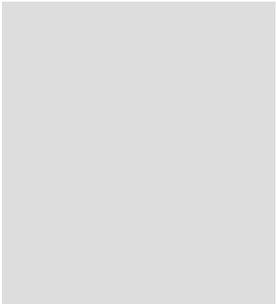
There will be widespread sadness that Mrs McVeigh died before this wish could be fulfilled.

However, her death underlines the urgent need for this issue to be finally resolved and should act as a spur to those who have not yet done so to come forward and provide information which can ease the suffering of the families of the Disappeared.

Sadly, it is too late for Mrs McVeigh but her family and

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others in a similar position deserve to have their agony ended.

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