Professor’s death being investigated

By CURT EYSINK
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Police on Saturday night were investigating the death of a Southern University associate professor of elementary education, whose body was found by a friend in his north Baton Rouge home.

The victim, longtime Southern employee William Benjamin Steward, in his mid-60s, of 2340 Jefferson Ave., was identified by police late Saturday night after relatives had been notified. "We were getting our hair done" a short distance away, said 19-year-old Southern student Jeanne Brossette, goddaughter of the dead man. Her mother, Katherine Smith Brossette, went to check on him and "just came screaming."

Brossette then went to the house and called police at 3:45 p.m., Sgt. Carl Thompson said.

The cause of death will not be known until after the autopsy Monday morning, assistant coroner Chuck Smith said. He said Steward had been dead at least 12 hours by the time he was found.

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Murder

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shortly after 3:30 p.m.

Smith said there were no wounds on Steward’s body.

Police believe Steward died during or after a burglary in the house, but would not elaborate pending conclusion of their investigation, said Det. Sgt. Robert Howle, who is in charge of the case.

Steward had been living alone for the past three years, and called the Brossettes each day to let them know how he was doing, said Keith Bernard Brossette, 14, son of the woman who found Steward.

Steward had not called by Saturday afternoon, so Keith Brossette, also Steward’s godchild, called him about 3 p.m., he said.

He said he became concerned when there was no answer.

Less than half an hour later, his mother, an assistant professor of biology at Southern, found Steward dead, Jeanne Brossette said.