



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Denise M. Moloney  
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**Re:** Detectives Investigate Drowning in Hernando Beach – 2024-00151832

**Date:** May 9, 2024

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On 05-08-24 just before 4 p.m., Hernando County Sheriff's deputies and Hernando County Fire Rescue units were dispatched to the Hernando Beach Boat Ramp, located at 4477 Calienta Street in regard to a possible drowning.

The 9-1-1 caller stated that his friend jumped into the water to retrieve a cell phone that had fallen overboard, and after several minutes, his friend failed to resurface.

Upon arrival, deputies met with two males who had been boating with one other friend. The males told deputies they (all three men) left the Hernando Beach Boat Ramp around 9 a.m., and spent the day on the water. Around 3:30 p.m., the men returned to the boat ramp and removed the boat from the water. While at the dock and in the process of removing the boat from the water, one of the men's cell phone fell into the water.

After removing the boat from the water, the victim told his friends he was going in the water to retrieve his friend's cell phone.

Taking only a pair of goggles, the victim, a 69-year-old male, returned to the dock and jumped into the water, feet first.

A few minutes later, a female who was also using the boat ramp, approached the victim's friends and advised she saw him enter the water; however, he had not resurfaced.

Several people then entered the water in hopes of locating the victim, meeting with negative results.

The victim's friend contacted 9-1-1 and initiated an emergency response.

The HCSO Marine Unit and Underwater Operations Team, and Aviation Unit, along with patrol deputies, Florida Fish and Wildlife and Conservation Commission, Hernando County Fire Rescue, and the United States Coast Guard responded to the area to search for the victim.

Investigation revealed the victim to be a resident of West Virginia with a vacation home in Pasco County. Detectives also learned the victim suffered from heart disease and had a pacemaker.

At approximately 8:36 p.m., divers located the victim's body under water, near where he originally entered the water.

The Medical Examiner responded to examine and take custody of the victim's body.

Preliminary investigation indicates no signs of foul play. The incident appears to be accidental or related to a medical episode.

Next of kin notifications were completed by West Virginia authorities.