



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Michael Terry  
Deputy PIO, 352-797-3608

**Re:** Genealogy Helps HCSO Identify 32-Year-Old Skeletal Remains Found in  
Northwestern Hernando County – 1990-15686

**Date:** May 19, 2023

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Over 30 years ago, an employee with Withlacoochee River Electric discovered the skeletal remains of an unidentified male in the area of Centralia Road and Commercial Way. These remains were not the result of a homicide, nor were they those of a reported missing person from any jurisdiction.

Information was provided to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), a national clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases throughout the United States.

The remains, which were discovered on 11-06-1990, were sent to several labs in an effort to obtain a Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) profile necessary for identification. With the assistance and cooperation of the District 5 Medical Examiner's Office, the remains were sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and University of North Texas's (UNT) respective laboratories.

On 04-04-2019, a report from UNT indicated that short tandem repeat (STR) and mitochondrial (MT) DNA profiles were developed from the skeletal remains. The DNA profiles were entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), unfortunately, there were no associations found.

The remains were sent for further genetic DNA testing through Genealogy with Parabon NanoLabs with further hopes of identifying the remains. On 01-24-2022, the evidence in this case was shipped Hudson Alpha Institute for Biotechnology, an associated company with Parabon NanoLabs.

On 07-25-2022, CeCe Moore, Chief Genealogist at Parabon NanoLabs, provided the following information:

The unidentified remains were positively identified as Robert McReynolds, born on 01-06-1927. Parabon also provided the name of a possible family member of McReynolds.

Detective G. Loydgren contacted the family member with the assistance of Eastpointe Michigan Police Department. It was confirmed, the family member identified by Parabon is the nephew of Robert McReynolds. The family member took custody of his uncle's remains.

Locally owned, Merritt Funeral Home assisted by donating cremation services to the Robert McReynolds family, and shipping the remains to a local funeral home in Michigan.

Hernando County Sheriff Al Nienhuis said although we have no evidence that foul play was involved in this particular death, this new information shows that law enforcement never forgets.

“We never stop working behind the scenes to identify remains and, if a crime can be proven, hold criminals accountable. We know that it is important to give family members answers whenever possible, even if their relative went missing decades ago,” the Sheriff said. “Although many of these cold cases hit temporary dead ends throughout the years, it is very gratifying when they finally get resolved. I am blessed to work with some very passionate, professional, and dedicated individuals who are patiently working behind the scenes to get answers on dozens of similar cases.”

*The Office of Sheriff:*

*The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.*

*Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, ran unopposed in 2016, and was re-elected in 2020. Sheriff Nienhuis remains accountable to the people of Hernando County.*