



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

Media Release

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

Re: Genealogy Helps HCSO Identify Skeletal Remains Found 31 Years Ago along
Osoaw Boulevard – 1991-13932

Date: May 19, 2023

Over three decades ago, a local hunter discovered the skeletal remains of an unidentified male in the area of Osoaw Boulevard, between Shoal Line Boulevard 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 11-03-1991, 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, and The University of South Florida Forensic Anthropology Department; the remains were sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), DNA Labs International, and University of North Texas's (UNT) respective laboratories.

A mitochondrial (MT) DNA profile only was developed from the skeletal remains. MT DNA profiles are not eligible to be entered into the CODIS database; therefore, no associations were found.

On 02-23-2022, the remains were sent for further genetic DNA testing through Genealogy with Ortram Labs with further hopes of identifying the remains. On 06-27-2022, Othram Labs C.E.O. David Mittelman and Director of Case Management Micahel Vogen provided the following information:

The unidentified remains were positively identified as Richard Paul Sargent, born on 07-12-1946. Othram Labs also provided the name of a distant family member. This led Detective G. Loydgren locating Richard Sargent family members in Massachusetts.

On 07-03-2022, Detective Loydgren made contact with Richard Paul Sargent's family with the help of the Massachusetts State Police and the Yarmouth Police Department in Massachusetts.

Sargent was a Vietnam veteran who served our country honorably; therefore, The American Red Cross arranged to have Sargent's remains shipped to a local funeral home in Massachusetts.

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.