Coroner: Keowee boater died of drowning

THE JOURNAL STAFF

SENECA — An autopsy performed Monday on a man whose body was found in Lake Keowee late Saturday night determined he died as a result of drowning, according to Oconee County Coroner Karl Addis.

Robert Bruce Graffis, 77, of 10 Lead Line Way, Salem, was discovered dead by Oconee County dive team members just after 10 p.m. Saturday night at a boat ramp located at Marina Drive within the Keowee Key development.

Addis said Graffis left his home around 2 p.m. Saturday to return his fishing boat back to a slip at the Keowee Key marina. He had his boat at his residence where he had been performing maintenance work on it.

Addis said Graffis apparently launched the boat between 4-5 p.m. When she found his car and trailer parked at the boat ramp, Graffis' wife reported her husband missing around 6:45 p.m.

The boat was found approximately 200 yards away along the shoreline at 9:25 pm. The dive team search was then initiated, with the body discovered at 10:15 pm. He was found approximately 50 feet from the boat ramp in an estimated 10-12 feet of water.

Oconee County Emergency Services responded with personnel representing Keowee Key Fire Department, Squad 21, Oconee County Special Rescue and Oconee County Dive Team, according to Grahl Haney, Oconee County deputy fire chief. Vineyards Fire Department located in Pickens County provided assistance by responding with a boat staffed with divers and rescue personnel. Anderson County also assisted by providing a helicopter to help with the search.

Approximately 25 emergency workers responded.