

Former state lawmaker dies in 3-car crash in Scottsdale; 2 drivers arrested

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A former state lawmaker who served in the House for 10 years died in a three-car accident in Scottsdale Friday afternoon.

Cal Holman, a Paradise Valley state representative from 1975-85, was killed after two vehicles crashed into his Camaro near Scottsdale Road and Eastwood Drive.

The drivers who struck Holman were arrested Friday night on one count each of second-degree murder.

Holman, 76, is survived by his wife of 51 years, Elizabeth, and two children living in Phoenix and Georgia.

He was born in Topeka, Kan., and moved to Phoenix in 1961 to work at a Valley bank, according to past news reports.

Elizabeth Holman described her husband as "a hard worker" with "a lot of integrity."

"He was very focused on the legislature when he was in it," she said.

The former GOP politician helped circulate a petition in 2004 against a developer who wanted to build a technology center at the Los Arcos Mall site.

Holman, who received his master's degree from Stanford, retired recently as president of the Scottsdale Republican Forum, his wife said.

"His integrity was exemplary," Elizabeth Holman said. "He was just a good, honest person."

Police said drivers Robert Van Brakel, 42, and Travis Aronica, 25, may have been speeding before the accident around 12:45 p.m. Friday.

Van Brakel, driving a white Mercedes sedan, and Aronica, driving a black Ford Mustang, were traveling north on Scottsdale Road when they struck Holman's vehicle facing south on Scottsdale Road and turning east onto Eastwood.

The impact ejected Holman from his car, killing him, and caused the Mercedes to come to rest about 75 feet away from the intersection, police said. The Mustang was sent over a sidewalk where it landed upside down in a ditch along Scottsdale Road.

Witnesses told investigators the two cars were traveling at high speeds, while authorities estimate they were speeding up to 70 mph. The posted speed limit in the area is 45 mph.

Phoenix resident Van Brakel was not seriously injured, and Aronica, of Michigan, suffered a broken arm, police said. A female passenger traveling with Aronica sustained minor injuries.

A Robert Van Brakel is listed as the owner of Van Brakel Electronics in Phoenix on the company's Web site. The same name was also listed at dragtimes.com for clocking in a Mercedes Benz E63 AMG at 112 mph in a 1/4 -mile drag run at Phoenix's Firebird International Raceway.

A Travis Aronica is listed as kitchen manager of an Orlando, Fla. Houston's restaurant and a 2004 graduate of Michigan State University on the Web site Linked In.

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