

2 Drown In Mississippi; Third Killed Diving In Quarry

Three people drowned in separate incidents Sunday near Alton. Two of the drownings were in the Mississippi River and a third, a diving accident, occurred in an abandoned rock quarry.

Tugboat pilot Miles Fred Farmer drowned early Sunday in the Mississippi about one mile above Locks and Dam 26, Alton police said. Farmer, 48, of Tiptonville, Tenn., disappeared about 2:30 a.m. as he was returning to his tugboat from one of two other tugs tied to it.

There were no witnesses to Farmer's drowning, authorities said. He was reported missing from his boat at 4:30 a. m. His body

was found in the river at 11:30 a.m. by the Coast Guard.

Donald E. Thomas, 32, of St. Louis, drowned at the public access area on the Missouri side of the Mississippi at Locks and Dam 26 around 4 p.m. when he jumped from a boat to swim ashore. The Missouri Water Patrol said Thomas was the second man to drown at the public access area in the last week.

Authorities said Thomas had been with friends in a boat about 30 yards from the shore when he jumped out of the boat and began swimming for the beach at the swimming area. His friends said they had

been looking elsewhere and did not see Thomas go under the water.

His body was recovered from seven feet of water at about 7 p.m. by one of his companions, the water patrol said. The drowning occurred in the same area where another St. Louis man drowned on Aug. 2 while swimming with friends.

James Crowder III, 22, of the 12800 block of Four Winds Farm Drive in Des Peres, died about 11 a.m. when he dove off a cliff into a pool in an abandoned quarry about one mile west of Alton.

Drownings at the rock quarry are a continuing problem for Southern Illinois

University, said Steve Weller, assistant director of the university news service. The quarry, known as the Blue Pool, is a popular swimming hole. It is on land owned by the university and has been the scene of several drownings in recent years, he said.

The land was donated to the university several years ago. And while it is not used by the university, it is frequented by swimmers who like to dive from the sheer cliffs above, Weller said.

The university has put up fences around the property and posted no-trespassing signs in the past. But attempts to keep people out have met with little success.

1983 Aug James Crowder drowns at quarry MO

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