



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Elderly man charged in county's first homicide of 2009 *Suspect assaulted fellow resident at assisted living home*

Howard County police have charged an 87-year-old Columbia man for the first homicide in the county this year.

Police were called to an assisted living community in the 6300 block of Cedar Lane in Columbia on Aug. 17 at approximately 4 p.m. for a reported assault. Police believe the suspect, Earl Lafayette Wilder, a resident of the home, was sitting outside the facility when, unprovoked, he began to strike a fellow resident in the head. Facility staff intervened to end the assault and called police.

The victim, James W. Brown, 91, was transported to Laurel Regional Hospital by MedEvac. He later entered hospice care, where he died on Saturday. An autopsy performed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner ruled the cause of death head trauma and the manner of death homicide.

After the incident, police transported Wilder to Howard County General Hospital for an evaluation. He was charged today with second-degree murder, first-degree assault and second-degree assault. The warrant will serve as a detainer for Wilder, who is being held at a facility pursuant to a court order.

Investigators do not believe the victim and suspect knew one another prior to the incident.

This case marks the first homicide in Howard County since October 2008. Last year, there were four homicides in the county.

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