

# Safety and Heroism



## **MAYLON WHITE**

Department of Natural  
and Cultural Resources,  
Aquariums Division

As the director of the North Carolina Aquariums, Maylon White leads the operations and management of the Fort Fisher, Pine Knoll Shores, Roanoke Island and Jennette's Pier aquariums. While overseeing four of the state's top 20 most-visited attractions is quite an undertaking, it was through his voluntary role as a member of the Southern Shores Fire Department that White demonstrated tremendous heroism.

On September 21, 2022, an ultralight glider with two individuals onboard crashed into the ocean off the coast of the Southern Shores area of Dare County. The passenger survived, but the deceased pilot's body remained trapped in the sinking aircraft. The nearest emergency dive team was several hours away as the window of opportunity to recover the pilot's body quickly narrowed. Nightfall and the threat of rough weather conditions loomed over the response team, including Southern Shores Fire Chief Edward Limbacher.

At that moment, the fire chief thought of White's unique qualifications. In his professional role, White is also the chair of North Carolina Aquariums' Dive Safety Board with certifications as a dive instructor and rescue diver. When White received the call from Limbacher, he did not hesitate; he excused himself from work, gathered his gear and headed to the crash site.



Despite increasingly dangerous conditions and with little time to prepare, Maylon White prioritized the pilot's family and the safety of the other members of the rescue team. White recovered the body, thus bringing comfort to a grieving family, allowing them the closure they needed to begin the healing process. The State of North Carolina extends its pride and admiration to White for his bravery and willingness to put himself in harm's way for the benefit of others.