

NBA superstar and expected Hall of Famer Kobe Bryant dies at 41

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The seven people who died in the helicopter crash beside Kobe Bryant, and his daughter, Gianna, were remembered this past Monday. Officials are investigating why the helicopter crashed suddenly in Calabasas, California. The crash occurred about 30 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles.

The Sikorsky S-76B departed from the John Wayne Airport and was headed for the Camarillo Airport. Since 2018, this helicopter had flown between these two airports at least two dozen times. This past Sunday, however, the helicopter took a different route due to low visibility and never made it to its final destination.

Giana Bryant's teammates Alyssa Altobelli and Payton Chester were identified in the crash along with their basketball coach, Christina Mauser. Payton's mother, Sarah Chester, and Alyssa's parents, John and Keri Altobelli were also killed in the fatal helicopter ride. The pilot, who also perished, was named Ara Zobayan.

Kobe had a twenty year legacy with the Lakers, and was only forty-one at the time of his death. His daughter, Gianna, was only thirteen. Fellow player LeBron James finally broke silence on the matter Monday, posting to Instagram a note to Kobe.

"I'm not ready but here I go," the post started. "Man I sitting here trying to write something for this post but every time I try I begin crying again just thinking about you, niece Gigi and the friendship/bond/brotherhood

we had! I literally just heard your voice Sunday morning before I left Philly to head back to LA. Didn't think for one bit in a million years that would be the last conversation we'd have." This heart-wrenching note and the untimely death of Kobe came right after LeBron beat Bryant's all-time scoring record with the NBA.

TMZ has also been criticized during this tragic time, for breaking the news that Kobe had passed along with eight other people. The police reacted harshly towards the news outlet, on account of not even being able to break the news to the families of the victims first.

According to CNN, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva dissed the news outlet at a press conference while explaining why officials didn't release the identities of the nine people killed in the crash earlier in the day.

"It would be extremely disrespectful to understand that your loved one ... perished and you learn about it from TMZ," he said. "That is just wholly inappropriate."

Los Angeles County Undersheriff Tim Murakami said later on Sunday that he was also "saddened that I was gathering facts as a media outlet reported that Kobe had passed."

"I understand getting the scoop but please allow us time to make personal notifications to their loved ones. It's very cold to hear of the loss via media," he tweeted. "Breaks my heart."

May the families who are dealing with these painful losses be uplifted during this time.



Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images

Gianna Bryant and her father, basketball great Kobe Bryant, attend the 2019 WNBA All-Star Game at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas.