

# Rumph died of heart condition, ME rules

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Danny Rumph, the Western Kentucky point guard who collapsed and died Sunday after a pickup basketball game in Mount Airy, died of cardiomyopathy, the Medical Examiner's Office said yesterday.

The condition is caused by a heart that is enlarged, thickened or stiffened, and can result in heart failure. It has been the cause of death of other basketball players around the country, including Philadelphia's Hank Gathers in 1990.

Rumph's mother, Viola "Candy" Owens, said last night that when the ME's office told her son's heart was enlarged, she was "shocked."

"He had never been sick or ever complained of any heart problems," she said.

She said her brother, Marcus Owens, 39, who played point guard for California University of Pennsylvania, recently was diagnosed with a similar heart condition and is getting examined for it.

"I just want everyone in my family to get checked out, so this doesn't happen again," Owens said.

Her son, 21, collapsed after playing a game with friends at the Mallery Recreation Center, Morton and Johnson streets, not far from his home.

Witnesses said he shook slightly and tumbled to the court as he was on his way to pick up his bag after the game at about 10:30 p.m.

Friends called 911 on their cell phones and complained that it took emergency crews an abnormally long time to arrive.

They said that when they complained to rescue workers about the delay, they told them they had to come from South Philadelphia. That couldn't be immediately confirmed.

Fire communications said the call came in at 10:36 p.m., and medics were dispatched immediately. They didn't have an arrival time.

Owens said she has a lawyer looking into it. She wouldn't comment further.

The mother arrived at the basketball court at about 11 p.m. to find her son on his back on the floor with rescue workers trying to revive him.

He was taken to the Albert Einstein Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

Gathers, the Murrell Dobbins Tech and Loyola Marymount University star, collapsed in March 1990 during a playoff game between LMU and Portland, and died later that day. He was 23.