LMU remembers Hank Gathers

Information compiled by Alex Hutton, sports editor; Nick Rossi, asst. sports editor; Ellie Kinney, asst. sports editor and Dean Anagnostopoulos, sports intern

“He dedicated his life to [LMU]. The statue is well-deserved. He earned it. [My family is] going to ride this one out for a long, long, long time … we’re Lions forever.”
- Derrick Gathers, Hank’s brother

“[30 years later], nothing has changed about Hank. He was just a dominating personality. On the court, he ran everything, he took all the big shots, he got all the rebounds, he would almost win the game single-handedly.”
- Paul Westhead, Gathers’ coach while at LMU

“I think of how he lived, not how he died. Hank Gathers was [so] full of life. His legacy will live on. I’m blessed to be able to say that I played nine years with Hank.”
- Bo Kimble, Gathers’ teammate and lifelong friend

“Being intense, being driven, and working hard towards whatever your goals may be — that’s been the legacy Hank has set for all of us over the past 30 years.”
- Tom Peabody, Gathers’ teammate

“Hank was our leader, our best player, a hell of a friend. And he was a mentor to me on a personal level.”
- Terrell Lowery, Gathers’ teammate

“The turnout was amazing … it’s a really cool idea that LMU decided to do this. I was a walk-on to the team, and he always looked out for me. He made sure I learned how to be tough.”
- Patrick Meyer, Gathers’ teammate

“It’s wonderful to see that after 30 years, Hank’s legacy still lives on.”
- Wyking Jones, former LMU player and coach

“It’s indelible … the statue, that’s going to be here as long as the University is.”
- Mike Dunlap, men’s basketball head coach

“We don’t go anywhere where the conversation ends and the memory of Hank Gathers and what he did with that team is forgotten. Most of the time we remember the bad, but when his teammate Bo Kimble shot the free throw left-handed that is something that sticks with everyone. He was the highlight of LMU athletics then and still is to this day.”
- Charity Elliott, women’s basketball head coach

“Every time I hear words about Hank, it was about his personality on the court and off the court.”
- Jordan Bell, junior men’s basketball player

“All the athletes look up to him … everybody’s trying to do their best every single time they step out on the court or the field or in the pool, whatever sport they [play] and I think everybody’s trying to live up to him.”
- Eva Marie Voracek, junior women’s tennis player

“He embodies the will to compete and represent this school. He was a person that worked at his craft, excelled at it and was not going to be stopped. For that I respect him and strive to live my life in a similar fashion.”
- Tommy Delgado, sophomore baseball player

“Hank and Bo went to school with me … great and wonderful people on campus, very approachable. I remember great, wonderful times enjoying cheering for our team.”
- Joann Ayala (’89)

“I think [the ceremony is] nice, I think it’s overdue … he’s probably the most outstanding athlete that [LMU]’s ever had.”
- Glen Tucker (’66)

“It feels special to be a part of LMU, where a legend like Hank Gathers once played. It’s cool that professors make an effort to talk about him and teach the class about an athlete who had such a promising career ahead.”
- Harshil Kaswala, sophomore finance major

“He inspires me to understand that nothing in life is guaranteed and that we have to cherish every single moment.”
- Sarah Carter, senior journalism major
Eric "Hank" Gathers was born on Feb. 11, 1967 in Philadelphia.

Gathers played one season at USC before transferring to LMU.

Gathers became the second player to lead NCAA Division I in rebounding and scoring in the same season, averaging 32.7 points and 13.7 rebounds as a junior in the 1988-89 season.

Gathers is LMU's all-time leading scorer with 2,490 points in three seasons.

Gathers led LMU to two consecutive West Coast Conference (WCC) championships where he was named tournament MVP both times.

Gathers died during a WCC Tournament game on March 4, 1990, due to a heart-muscle disorder called cardiomyopathy.

On Saturday, LMU unveiled a statue of Gathers, and the men's basketball team honored him with throwback uniforms.

Information compiled by Dean Anagnostopoulos, sports intern
Lion alumni recount memories of Gathers

Stories from those who were at Gersten 30 years ago today.

Nick Rossi and Elle Kinney
Assistant Sports Editors

Hank Gathers may have passed away in Gersten Pavilion on that fateful day in 1990, but his image will forever stand outside for every Lion who passes by. Gathers, who led the NCAA Division I in scoring and rebounding in the 1988-89 season, was dominant on the court and appeared to have a future bright in the NBA ahead of him. He and the entire 1989-90 men's basketball team drew huge crowds to Gersten Pavilion for every game with their unbelievable athleticism and determination to win.

“I don't think I ever met anyone who hated to lose more than Hank,” said Patrick Meyer, one of Gathers’ teammates. “He was a special guy.”

Exactly 30 years ago today, the LMU community witnessed the shocking death of the University's greatest athlete. Gathers collapsed on the court due to a heart condition in the first half of the game against UCLA. It was the loudest I've ever heard Gathers said Dennis Lane (’91), who was at the game the day Gathers died. “It was the loudest I’ve ever heard a basketball crowd.” The place went silent, “said Kmetty.

As Gathers ran back to take his position in the Lions’ full court press, the forward lost consciousness and fell to the floor. He briefly came to and insisted that he did not want to lay down. But this time, it was a bigger fall and the place went silent,” said Knety.

The statue of Hank Gathers is revealed outside of Gersten Pavilion. The ceremony was attended by fans and former players and staff from LMU, Paul Westhead, all of whom touched on different aspects of Gathers’ life, career and legacy. Everyone from Hank's teammates, to other former LMU players, to the最强的 fans of the University, both within and outside of the Athletics department, was in attendance. The ceremony lasted about 30 minutes.

Just from looking at who was in attendance, it was clear that this was a monumental occasion. The space was packed, with crowds extending several rows deep. Everyone from Hank's teammates, to other former LMU players, to the strongest fans of the University, both within and outside of the Athletics department, was in attendance. The ceremony lasted about 30 minutes.

The ceremony featured speeches from Athletic Director Craig Pintsens, President Timothy Law Snyder, Ph.D., and Gathers’ coach while playing at LMU, Paul Westhead, all of whom touched on different aspects of Gathers’ life, career and legacy. Pintsens spoke directly about the people who had made the day possible. Snyder discussed his own experience as a basketball fan of idolizing Gathers and the first-paced offense that defined the Lions teams that Gathers played for. Westhead brought laughter and poignancy by telling humorous anecdotes about Gathers, quoting Shakespeare and remembering him as a great athlete and a better person.

Before long, it was time for the curtain drop. The curtain drop was cinemative and inspiring, would prove to be the highlight of the entire LMU community. Memorial services are held to honor the memory of Hank Gathers. His image will now always be remembered at Gersten Pavilion as the Lions star. Hank Gathers may have passed away in Gersten Pavilion on that fateful day in 1990, but his image will forever stand outside for every Lion who passes by. Gathers, who led the NCAA Division I in scoring and rebounding in the 1988-89 season, was dominant on the court and appeared to have a future bright in the NBA ahead of him. He and the entire 1989-90 men's basketball team drew huge crowds to Gersten Pavilion for every game with their unbelievable athleticism and determination to win.

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Hank Gathers, immortalized in his No. 44 jersey, ball in his right hand, getting ready to score yet another basket. The applause from the crowd expressed awe at the finished product.

More than anything else, the ceremony left an impression of who Gathers was and what defined him. I have long heard about who he was and the story of him and his team. His legacy has been well-documented in the national media, and on the LMU campus, memorials abound. Gersten Pavilion is “Hank’s House.” He is the first name on the sculpture behind the chapel honoring students who died while attending LMU. The presence of the number 44 is hard to miss in the University's athletics. There are still a number of people working on campus who knew him and can speak about him and his character. But on Saturday, for the first time, I was able to begin to understand the impact he had. Seeing the number of people who attended the tribute made me comprehend just how many lives he touched. Listening to Pintsens, Snyder and Westhead speak allowed me to learn more about who Gathers was—a brilliant basketball player who worked harder than anybody on the court and lived every second of his life to the fullest. Shortly after that curtain came down and the full statue was revealed, a hush fell over the crowd and the only audible sound was the crying of his mother, Lucille. At that moment, I was able to feel how, even 30 years later, all those vivid and beloved memories of Hank Gathers still resonate with not only his family but the entire LMU community.

This new statue adds a visual component to his legacy, and it will be remembered as one of hard work and larger-than-life personality is captured forever.
@LMU: Remembering Hank Gathers - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVbmC71pwyk