

Latasha Roundtree shot and killed

Written by Jim Ecker

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Former Cedar Rapids Washington girls basketball player Latasha Roundtree was shot and killed in southwest Cedar Rapids Saturday night, the Cedar Rapids police department confirmed Sunday morning.

"The victim of the shooting that occurred in the 600 block of 16th Avenue SW has been identified as Latasha Roundtree (19) of Cedar Rapids," Lt. Craig Furnish of the police department announced in a news release. "The victim was pronounced dead at 0305 hours on today's date.

"The Cedar Rapids Police Department is investigating the case as a homicide," he said. "Any further information will be released by the Cedar Rapids Police Department's Public Information Officer."

Cedar Rapids police officers were dispatched to the 600 block of 16th Avenue SW at approximately 10 p.m. Saturday to investigate reports of shots being fired.

A gunshot victim was admitted to Mercy Hospital Saturday night and then transported to the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.

Dr. Ralph Plagman, the principal at Washington High School, was informed of the incident Sunday morning. Roundtree was a senior at Washington during the 2011-12 school year.

"She was a young woman who had many friends at Washington High School," Dr. Plagman said. "Many people cared a lot for her and tried to support her."

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Dr. Plagman said that Roundtree's mother was killed in a traffic accident about six years ago. "She's had a lot of challenges in her life," he said.

Roundtree, a 5-foot-7 guard, averaged 9.1 points, 5.2 assists and 3.8 rebounds for Washington last season and was the team's fourth-leading scorer. She was academically ineligible for the first five games of the season before being allowed to play.

Roundtree tore the ACL in her left knee in the Class 4A regional finals in a 65-59 loss to Iowa City High last February when she leaped for an interception and landed awkwardly in the third quarter. She had already scored 19 points in the game at that point.

"She was playing the game of her life. She was amazing," said Dr. Plagman. "She went down, and it was just so sad.

"She had a magnetic personality," he said.

"It's been a rough day," said Frank Howell, Washington's girls basketball coach. "She was a really neat kid and I will miss her a lot."

Roundtree had enrolled at William Penn University in Oskaloosa and was scheduled for a redshirt year on the women's basketball team but had dropped out of school, according to Howell.