

Remembering Former NBA Superstar's 20-year Career

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After the tragic death of NBA Superstar Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna and 7 others on Sunday, Jan.26, Mount Mercy students remember the greatness of former the NBA star's career.

In his second season for the Los Angeles Lakers, Bryant was voted a starter for the 1998 All-Star Game at the age of 19, becoming the youngest All-Star in NBA history. After teaming up with Shaquille O'Neal to win three consecutive NBA championships and was voted first team all-NBA from years 2002-04.

After O'Neal left in 2004, the Lakers struggled. Bryant, on the other hand continued to perform, scoring 81 points against the Toronto Raptors in Jan. 2006. Bryant had the second-highest single game mark in NBA history, and led the league in scoring that year and the next.

"Kobe was possibly the best scorer to ever play the game of basketball," said freshman Dylan Andreassen, business management major. "He could take over a game in a matter of minutes. Personally, he is the second best of all time, behind Michael Jordan."

In 2008, Bryant was named Most Valuable Player and carried his team to the NBA finals, where they lost to the Boston Celtics. In the 2009 NBA finals, the Lakers beat the Orlando Magic to win the championship. The following year, the Lakers won their second straight title, beating the Celtics.

In April 2013, Bryant suffered a torn Achilles tendon, and worked hard to return to the court before fracturing his knee six games into the 2013-14 season. Bryant surpassed Michael Jordan for the third all-time scorer on the NBA scoring list in Dec. 2014, but his season ended

due to injury for the third straight year when he sustained a torn rotator cuff in Jan. 2015. In November 2015 Bryant announced that he would retire at the end of the season.

“There is no doubt that Kobe was one of the greatest athletes alive and after hearing of his death, I was left in a surreal state,” said freshman Carlos Rivera, finance and management major. “I couldn’t believe that something so awful could happen to someone who inspired thousands and it was a reminder that life is really short.”

By the end of his career, Bryant had 17 NBA All-Star selections, an NBA MVP, five NBA championships with the Lakers, and a reputation for relentless work ethic.