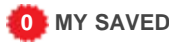




















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Mass. home of Syracuse basketball star destroyed in fire

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT MARCH 25, 2013

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ROBERT GALBRAITH/REUTERS

Syracuse's Michael Carter-Williams took a shot over California's Robert Thurman on Saturday.

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Massachusetts native Michael Carter-Williams, starting point guard for the Syracuse University basketball team, spotted his mother crying in the stands Saturday night as his team battled the University of California for a spot in the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

During a timeout, he asked why she was upset. Not wanting to distract him, she waved him off.

After his team secured a victory, Carter-Williams learned why his mother had been in tears: His family's home in the North Shore town of Hamilton was destroyed in a fire.

"It's a traumatizing time," said his aunt, Jennifer Carter. "Everyone was safe. Thank God."

Carter said she learned about the fire shortly after it engulfed the home at 261 Cutler Road. She drove there from her home in Beverly. "It just went up so fast," she said.



The two-story Colonial-style house was home for Carter-Williams; his twin stepbrothers Maxwell and Marcus, 14; stepsister Masey, 16; his mother, Mandy Carter-Zegarowski; and his stepfather, Zach Zegarowski.

It took more than 2½ hours and firefighters from eight neighboring municipalities to extinguish the three-alarm blaze, according to a statement from the Hamilton Fire Department.

While battling the inferno, firefighters had to be evacuated from the house twice, the statement said.

The 2,500 square-foot house was worth \$680,000, according to the town assessing department's website. The family moved to the home when it was built in 1998, according to family and records.

Carter said a small number of belongings were recovered, but the house and nearly everything inside are gone.

She said Carter-Williams's stepbrothers, stepfather, and two of his friends were watching Carter-Williams play in the nationally televised game when the fire started. They and the family's dog made it out quickly and safely.

She said the fire is believed to have started in the chimney.

Officials said the blaze ignited shortly after 10 p.m. Saturday, roughly a half-hour after No. 4 seed Syracuse tipped off against No. 12 seed California at the HP Pavilion in San Jose, Calif. Carter-Williams scored 12 points for the Orange, who beat the Golden Bears 66-60.

Carter said her sister flew back to Massachusetts on Sunday to assess the damage to her home.

But Carter said her nephew will not come back home before his next game in the tournament, Thursday against Indiana.

"He's a little shaken up because he can't do anything to help. He's worried, but focusing on the game," she said.

Some basketball experts predict Carter-Williams will become a first-round NBA draft pick. He played at Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School before transferring to St. Andrew's High School in Barrington, R.I.

On Sunday morning, the 6-foot, 6-inch, 21-year-old sophomore tweeted: "Thanks for the prayers everyone

all that's important to me is my family is okay”.

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