

LA mourns Kobe Bryant , activist and icon, 'We didn't just lose a basketball player'

In Los Angeles, everyone is mourning Kobe Bryant in their own way.

Within hours of his death on Sunday morning, his name was popping up on city buses and commuter trains, in **graffiti** spray-painted on random walls, and in a thousand tributes left outside the downtown Staples Center, which witnessed the peak of his glory as one of basketball's towering greats. City leaders, meanwhile, lit up public buildings and fountains in purple and gold, the colors of the Lakers, for whom Bryant played all 20 of his professional seasons.

graffiti 涂鸦

As the days pass, it has become clear that this is no ordinary grief. Kobe, as everyone knew him, was a man who touched an extraordinary number of lives in an extraordinary number of ways.

He was an advocate for victims of police violence, but he also donated money to a widows' and children's fund for cops killed in the line of duty. He was an African American role model in a city with a **dwindling** black population, but he was also adored by Latinos who appreciated his efforts to learn Spanish and called him "compa", short for "compadre", or friend.

dwindle 减少; 变小

The foundation he established with his wife, Vanessa, has promoted youth sports, of course — both soccer and basketball — and it has also worked to get LA's soaring population of homeless young African Americans off the streets.

"We didn't just lose a basketball player. This was someone who was becoming a **pillar** of the community beyond athleticism," said Isaac Bryan, who directs the Black Policy Project at the University of California, Los Angeles. "It's hard to find things for black people in LA to look up to."

pillar 柱子; 支柱