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[Pets](#)

[Fashion & Beauty](#)

[Parenting](#)

[Relationships](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Books](#)

[People](#)

[Tech & Money](#)

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Jim Carroll, poet and punk rocker, dies

'Basketball Diaries' author succumbs to heart attack at 60, paper reports

Ap Associated Press
updated 12:29 a.m. ET, Mon., Sept. 14, 2009

NEW YORK - Jim Carroll, the poet and punk rocker who wrote "[The Basketball Diaries](#)," died Friday. He was 60.

He died from a heart attack at his home in Manhattan, his ex-wife Rosemary Carroll told the [New York Times](#).

In the 1970s, Carroll was a fixture of the burgeoning downtown New York art scene, where he mixed with artists such as Andy Warhol, [Patti Smith](#), Larry Rivers and Robert Mapplethorpe. His life was shaped by drug use, which he wrote about extensively.

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Carroll also published several poetry collections, while his 1980 album, "Catholic Boy," has been hailed as a landmark punk record, and he became known for one of its songs, "People Who Died."

But it was "The Basketball Diaries," his autobiographical tale of life as a sports star at Trinity, an elite private high school in Manhattan, that brought him his widest audience. The son of a bar owner, Carroll attended the school on a basketball scholarship.

The book, which began life as a journal, was first published in 1978 and then became even more popular, particularly on college campuses, when it was issued as a mass-market paperback two years later. A 1995 movie version starred Leonardo DiCaprio.

His poetry career started even earlier. Carroll was in his teens when he first received recognition for his poems, especially "Organic Trains" in 1967 and then "4 Ups and 1 Down" in 1970. Among his other works are collections such as "The Book of Nods" (1986), "Fear of Dreaming" (1993) and "Void of course: Poems 1994-1997" (1998).

Carroll left New York in 1973 and moved to California, where he met his future wife Rosemary Klemfuss. They later divorced.

It was Smith who encouraged his music, and he formed the Jim Carroll Band. Among his other albums were the less successful "Dry Dreams" (1982) and "I Write Your Name" (1984).

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