

City youth, 17, drowns in W. Stockbridge quarry

WEST STOCKBRIDGE — A 17-year-old Pittsfield youth, swimming with dozens of others in an old marble quarry here, drowned in the deep pit Sunday afternoon.

State police said Frederick T. Pytko of 145 Cromwell Ave. may have suffered some sort of seizure while in the middle of the quarry, and sank before a friend could reach him.

The body was recovered by divers from the Berkshire Skin Divers Club from a step in the quarried sides of the pit about 80 feet below the surface.

The quarry itself, which is now owned by John Astore of this town, remains from a marble operation run by Matthew and John Freedley in the 1800s.

Currently, the water-filled quarry, which is an estimated 100 feet deep at its lowest point, is a popular informal recreation site for many young people, who drive to it along the abandoned New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad right-of-way, which runs north past the quarry from Main-to-Alford Road off Route 41 south of West Stockbridge village.

The quarry was also the site of a drowning in August 1971, when a Boston youth apparently was knocked unconscious when he hit a rock ledge while diving.

An autopsy was scheduled this morning at Hillcrest Hospital in Pittsfield by Dr. Martin Dobbelle, an associate medical examiner, to try to determine what caused the Pytko youth to sink.

State and local police, along with members of the town fire department, were called to the scene shortly after the youth disappeared from sight about 2:20 p.m.

Trooper Richard Samuelson, the investigating officer for the state police, said witnesses told him the boy was swimming across the quarry to where his companion, Daniel Bence, 17, of North Street, Pittsfield, was waiting on a ledge when "he yelled, struggled and slid under."

Dence jumped into the water to try to reach Pytko, but the youth had gone under the surface and sunk out of sight by then in the murky water, Samuelson said.

The quarry, which is reached from the railroad right-of-way by crossing logs over the Williams River, was "mobbed" at the time, but the other people there apparently did not realize what was happening, Samuelson said.

The skindivers recovered the body about 5:20 p.m.

The Pytko youth, who would have been a senior in a few weeks in the vocational program at Pittsfield High School,

was the son of Charles D. and Isabelle Germanowski Pytko.

He was born in Pittsfield, and was a communicant of Holy Family Church.

Besides his parents, he leaves a brother, Daniel C. Pytko of New York City, and two sisters, Mrs. Barbara McKenna of New York City and Miss Jane Pytko at home.

Funeral services will be at 8:15 a.m. Wednesday from the Park Funeral Home with a Liturgy of Christian Burial at 9 at Holy Family Church. Burial will follow at the Cheshire Cemetery.

Calling hours at the funeral home will be from 7 to 9 tonight and from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 Tuesday.

Felix J. Stefanski

ADAMS — Felix J. Stefanski, 64, of 5 East Hoosac St., died yesterday at the North Adams Regional Hospital following a lengthy illness.

He was born in Adams, a son of the late John and Clara Mozka Stefanski. He attended local schools and served in Company M of the Massachusetts National Guard.

He was employed at the transformer department of the General Electric Co. in Pittsfield for 31 years, retiring in 1973. He was a member of the Pensioners Club and the Quarter-Century Club.

He was a communicant of the St. Stanislaus Kostka Church and the St. Stanislaus Kostka Society. He was also a member of the Polish Roman Catholic Society.

He leaves his wife, the former Mabel Ziomek; a son, Karol J. Stefanski of Adams; a daughter, Mrs. Lorraine Z. Ziempa of Virginia Beach, Va.; two brothers, Theodore of Cheshire and Fred Dynor of Adams, and four grandchildren.

Funeral services will be at 8 a.m. tomorrow at the McBride Funeral Home with a Liturgy of Christian Burial at 8:30 at St. Stanislaus Church. Burial will be in the church cemetery. Calling hours at the funeral home will be today from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations to the St. Stanislaus Church organ fund or the church renovation fund.

Mrs. Agnes C. Drane

Mrs. Agnes C. Drane, 88, of Francis Plaza died yesterday at the Pittsfield General unit, Berkshire Medical Center, after a long illness.

Born in Hinsdale, the daughter of Michael J. and Elizabeth Coyle Dooley, she was a resident of Pittsfield for 62 years. Mrs. Drane was the widow of