



Staunton teen-ager drowns

By GARY GRAF
Leader Staff Writer

A 16-year-old Staunton youth drowned shortly after 6 o'clock Wednesday evening after jumping 175 to 200 feet into a water-filled, abandoned quarry about a quarter of a mile east of Statler Boulevard, just outside the city limits.

The youth, Richard M. Sillings Jr., 16, of 820 Springhill Road, was pronounced dead at the scene. Augusta County Medical Examiner Dr. William G. Painter confirmed drowning as the cause of death, and added there was no evidence of physical injury.

According to Trooper L.W. Ward, Sillings was swimming in the quarry, owned by Belmont Trap Rock, with seven other youths. His companions reportedly talked Sillings out of diving off the rim of the quarry once, but he went back up and jumped off feet first, landing in about 10 feet of water.

When Sillings didn't surface, three of the youths drove to King's Daughter's Hospital for help while others searched for him under water.

Ward said one of the swimmers located Sillings, dragged him partially out of the water and tried unsuccessfully to resuscitate him. He was in the water for about five minutes.

Ward said the youths had driven to the quarry on a dirt road which runs from Statler Boulevard east toward New Hope Road, and had ignored no trespassing signs. He added the youths had admitted to "drinking a few beers" before the incident.

Dr. Painter said there would be no autopsy, but that blood samples had been taken and results would be available in several days.

An investigator from the Virginia Bureau of Mines is scheduled to conduct an inquiry today, said McLynn Sharpe, chief mine inspector. Sharpe declined to comment on the investigation other than saying it was "standard procedure" and that the bureau's role was only to see if mining laws had been complied with.

BODY RECOVERED — Members of the Staunton-Augusta Resucue Squad and Augusta County Sheriff's Department help take the body of Richard M. Shillings Jr. from an abandoned quarry east of Statler Boulevard Wednesday evening. The 16-year-

old, who was swimming with companions, jumped 175 to 200 feet off the edge of the quarry into about 10 feet of water. He was pronounced dead at the scene after attempts to resuscitate him failed.

(Photo by Dennis Sutton)

1981 Jun Richard Sillings drowns at quarry

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