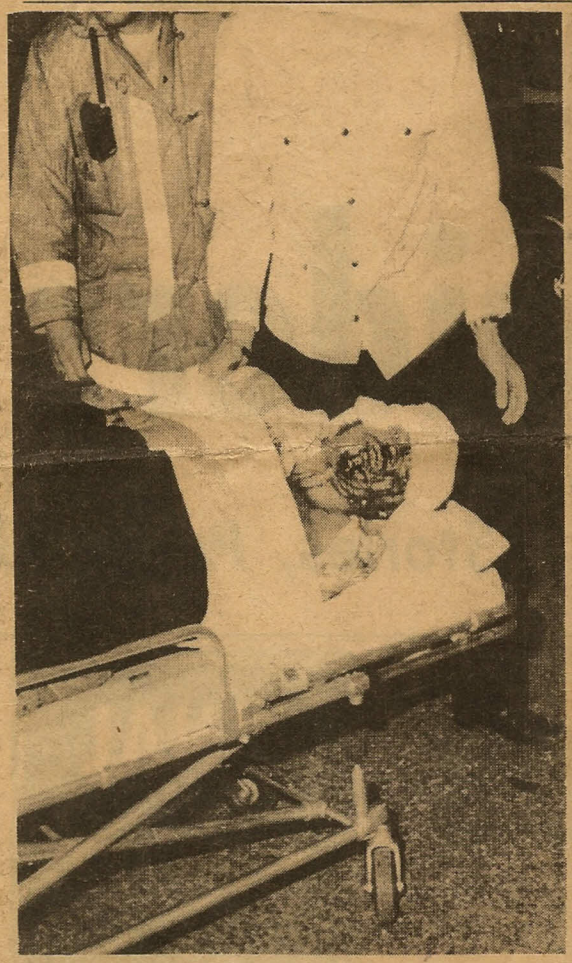

Photos by Terry Toller

Herman Houston, his face streaked with blood, is readied for a trip to the hospital and then jail after his car hit another, in right photo, killing Ben Wright, 17.

Musician Charged in Death

Herman Houston, 24, of 1227 23rd St., a musician, was charged early Sunday with manslaughter and felony drunk driving in connection with a two-car fatal accident that happened while he was being chased by officers after a hit-and-run accident.

Officers said Ben Wright, 17, of 2325 Bell St., was killed instantly when Houston's car struck another on Munroe Avenue near Fair Oaks Boulevard.

The driver of the car carrying Wright, Rick Palmer, 18, of 2520 Howe Ave., was reported to be in critical condition late Sunday in the Sutter Memorial Hospital intensive care unit.

Officers said Houston was involved, minutes before, in a rear-end collision at the intersection of Fulton and El Camino avenues and fled the scene.

His car, estimated to be going over 80 miles an hour south on Fulton, was sighted by California Highway Patrolmen Robert Francis and Robert Heaney, who began a pursuit.

The officers said they lost sight of the Houston vehicle momentarily as it passed a dip in the road and, when they caught sight of the car again, they saw it hit the Palmer car broadside.

The Palmer car was knocked about 190 feet. Officers said Palmer was making a left turn into a drive-in restaurant on Munroe just north of Fair Oaks Boulevard when his car was hit. He and Wright, both students at Encina High School, were stopping there en route home from a movie.

In the hit-and-run accident, officers said, Maurice Crosby, 45, of 6408 Rampart Drive, Carmichael, told officers he was waiting at a red light when his car was hit from the rear. The car which hit him drove over the center divider and sped south on Fulton.

Houston was booked in the Sacramento County Jail after being treated for facial cuts at the Sacramento Medical Center.

Services for Wright will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday at the East Lawn Mortuary, 5757 Greenback Lane. He is survived by his parents, Ben and Adrianne Wright, a brother, Jeffery, and grandparents, Albert and Muriel Wright of Sacramento and John and Beverley Fondren of Fairfield.

146-Day Shutdown

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