

Birth: Nov. 19, 1921  
Death: Jul. 30, 2006

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Helen G. Liston, 84, a longtime Anchorage resident, died July 30, 2006, at the Fairbanks Pioneers' Home. A gathering of family members and friends was Sept. 5 at Anchorage Memorial Park downtown. All her old friends were welcomed to attend.

Mrs. Liston was born Nov. 19, 1921, in New Brunswick. She first came to Alaska in 1952 to serve as a nurse in the hospital of the White Pass and Yukon Railroad in Skagway. When she first arrived by train in Skagway, an excited crowd of local bachelors had gathered to welcome the new French Canadian nurse from exotic Montreal. Bill Liston, formerly of Anchorage, somehow got to the front of the welcoming crowd and was the first to present a bouquet of roses to Helen. They were married two years later. She moved to Anchorage with her young family in 1957 and served as a nurse at the former Indian Health Service Hospital in Anchorage until retirement. Her family wrote: "Helen loved painting all her life. As a girl, she would often skip school to sketch or daydream. As an adult, when not working, cooking or cleaning, her remaining time was devoted to her paintings, which can be found in the homes of friends, relatives and strangers from London to Sakhalin. "She was also fortunate that the two most important men in her life, her husband, Bill, and her subsequent companion, Lu Liston, formerly of Anchorage, also shared her deep interest in art and were a constant source of encouragement and support. "After falling ill, Helen moved to Fairbanks, where she was cared for many years by the kind staff of the pioneer home and her daughter, Mary."

She is survived by her children, Mike Liston of Beijing, Mary Liston of Fairbanks and Melissa Montague of Anchorage. She is also survived by Xiao Jun Zhen of Beijing and Jeffery Montague of Anchorage; grandson, Jerome Kvamme and his wife, Dani; and great-grandchildren, Annie and Iago, all of Anchorage.