

## **Shirley Mossman Nisbet, 83**

Shirley (Mossman) Nisbet died of pancreatic cancer at her home in North Falmouth on September 26, under the care of Hope Hospice. She endured her final illness with courage, dignity, and acceptance.

She was born on September 1, 1934, in Sutton Coldfield, United Kingdom. As a young child, she experienced bombing of nearby cities during World War II and food shortages during the war and post-war periods. She contracted polio at age 5 and had to wear leg braces for several years. With limited mobility, she started to draw and paint, uncovering a talent that she expressed throughout her life.

She studied at Bath Academy of Art, graduating in 1954 with a Diploma in Visual Arts and Art Education. She taught art and art history at several schools, rising to be head of the art department at Cambridgeshire High School. At this time, she traveled widely in Europe, studying art at major museums in Spain, France, Italy and Greece.

She married Ian Nisbet in 1962 and then spent five years in Malaysia, where she raised her young children and organized an international art class. She moved to the USA in 1968 and continued raising her family in Lincoln, Massachusetts. She resumed painting professionally in the late 1970s, when she leased a floor in a mill building in Waltham and founded Artists West Studios. She started producing very large paintings and quickly established herself as an accomplished painter. She was active in the Boston Visual Artists' Union and helped to organize their first open studio event on New Year's Eve 1977, which soon evolved into the city-wide 'First Night' celebration. She spent five years in the 1980s in Falls Church, Virginia, where she had several exhibitions in the Washington, DC, area. She then started to experience the late effects of polio, and had to wear leg braces again for the last 30 years of her life, with increasingly limited mobility.

She moved to Cape Cod in 1993 and established a studio in North Falmouth. She founded a post-polio support group, which at one time had more than 200 members. She traveled very widely, visiting more than 40 countries and holding exhibitions in Ireland, the United Kingdom and Australia, as well as many in the USA. She has worked in a wide variety of styles, producing paintings, drawings, monotypes and encaustics. Much of her best work was produced at Virginia Center for Creative Arts, where she had 12 residencies between 1987 and 2013. Her work is distributed among many collections, including 13 large paintings at the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston. She had a major exhibition at Cotuit Center for the Arts in 2011, and a retrospective of 60 years of her work at Cataumet Arts Center in August, 2017. Many of her paintings can be seen on her [web site](#).

She was also a skilled gardener, with an acclaimed collection of perennials in her garden at North Falmouth. She is survived by her husband of 55 years, Ian Nisbet; her sons Ben Nisbet of Irvington, New York, and Keith Nisbet of Northborough, Massachusetts, and their wives Remy and Sherry; and three grandchildren, Kevin, Michaella and Daniel Avery. She is also survived by two brothers in the United Kingdom and their extended families, and by three cousins in Canada and their extended families.

Funeral arrangements will be private. In lieu of flowers, gifts in her memory may be sent to Hope Hospice of Cape Cod ([www.hopehealthma.org/giving](http://www.hopehealthma.org/giving)) or Post-Polio Health International ([www.post-polio.org](http://www.post-polio.org)).