

SALLY MONSERUD DIES AT 83

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Sally L. Monserud, who taught at Anchorage Community College for nearly 30 years and became the college's first full professor, died Monday at Providence Hospital. She was 83.

Monserud was hospitalized about a week ago, after suffering a stroke at home.

In her long tenure as an English teacher, beginning with the community college's birth in the mid-1950s, Monserud dedicated herself to helping others appreciate the literature she loved, but preferred solitude in her private life, most of which she lived in a small, isolated cabin on the Anchorage Hillside, according to friends and colleagues.

She was known as a woman who always sought to help the underprivileged often with anonymous donations of cash taken from her paychecks and who never uttered a bad word about anyone, said a co-worker and friend, Becky Patterson.

"She even wrote a Christmas card to Joe Hazelwood," the now-notorious Exxon Valdez ship's captain, said Patterson. "That was vintage Sally."

Yet Monserud, 5 feet tall, 90 pounds, fiercely independent, and never married, was not one to take much credit for her good works, which included volunteering at the Salvation Army, occasionally writing columns for The Anchorage Times, and tutoring Native women, Patterson said.

Monserud is remembered as having said, "I don't want to teach in this building that has my name on it," just prior to retiring in the early 1970s and just after being named the college's first full professor and having a building dedicated in her honor, Patterson said.

"I always consider Sally as one of the gentle people of this earth," said Eugene Short, who was dean of the community college for 15 years.