

Homer E. Hoogendorn

Homer Hoogendorn "Uġaigi" was born in Nome on November 15, 1946 to Lena Iutok Brown and Billy Hoogendorn. He was the big brother in a house full of siblings: Willie, Betty Ann, Randy, Janet "Dolly", Nancy "Teener" and Ruth "Babe". His brother Frank "Obbie" Greene was raised in Kotzebue. He had a typical Nome childhood of selling newspapers, camping, fishing, and hunting, until his mother Lena had to move away for treatment of tuberculosis. Through his and his father's hard work the family persevered and made it through the tough times. Homer was an excellent basketball player and helped lead Nome's team to the 1964 and 1965 State Championships. Tragedy struck the family in the form of Willie's spinal injury and the deaths of Homer's three youngest sisters, but because of their faith, strength and the community's support, Homer's family survived and thrived.

Homer knew from early on that he would be a pilot. He earned his A&P certificate and pilot's license after high school and worked for Munz briefly. He signed up with the FAA and began his 26-year career as an air traffic controller.

In the early 1980s, Homer bought and operated the air taxi Seward Peninsula Flying Service. He kept up the family gold mining tradition with his dad Billy at Buster Creek. He became a father to Peggy, Ginny, and Willy, and later Jennifer and Jack as well as Jack's sister Lindsay. He made sure they knew a childhood of being in the country and being with family, gathering food from the land, fishing, and flying all around the region.

One of Homer's most enduring commitments has been serving the region's native communities as a board member for both Sitnasuak Native Corporation and Bering Straits Native Corporation as well as their subsidiaries. For over 30 years, he has contributed his time and knowledge to multiple committees and to the overall success of these entities, living out their mission of protecting the land and culture of Sitnasuaqmiut and all indigenous people of the region.