

Hopson has long history of service, leadership

The son of Al and Maggie Hopson. Eben was born in Barrow, on November 7, 1922. He was the grandson of Alfred Henley Hopson, a whaler from Liverpool, England, who settled in Barrow in 1886. Eben's introduction to white social institutions began early; he was the first child to be born in Barrow's Mission Hospital.

Eben Hopson's formal education began and ended at the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Barrow Day School. His political career is said to have begun as a pupil in his village school. When he was 15 years of age, Eben wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. to complain about the school principal's use of unpaid student labor on small BIA public works projects. When the BIA forwarded the letter to the principal in Barrow for disposition, Eben was branded a trouble maker and was prevented from boarding ship to travel to one of the BIA's boarding high schools. Many credit his success as a political leader to the fact that he was denied a BIA school education.

Remaining in Barrow through his teens, Eben worked as a construction laborer. He married Rebecca Panigeo in 1942 when he was 20 years old. Eben was to support his family

as a construction worker until 1965. He became a member of the Operating Engineers in 1957.

An all-white Barrow draft board drafted Eben into the Army when Rebecca was 8 months pregnant with their first child. Eben was not to see his first son until he returned to Barrow in 1946 after the end of WWII.

Eben underwent recruit training in Nome, Alaska, where he was employed in the lend-lease program that delivered new war planes to Soviet crews stationed at Nome. Later, Eben served as a bosn's mate aboard an Army tug boat in the 1,000 mile war of the North Pacific along the Aleutian Chain.

Returning to Barrow in 1946, Eben began his political career as a member of the Barrow City Council. During the following two decades he worked on the construction of the DEW line and maintenance of DEW Line Sites.

Eben joined the Alaska National Guard in 1949 and, by 1953 had attained the rank of Captain commanding Company D, 1st Scout Battalion.

In 1956, Eben was elected to the Alaska Territorial Legislature and, when Alaska became a state he was elected to the State Senate. He narrowly missed serving as President of the 2nd State Senate because opponents organized tit with out him during his absence from Juneau to lead an Eskimo Scout Battalion in President Kennedy's inauguration parade in Washington, D.C. in 1960. He served in the Senate until 1965 as Chairman of the Labor Management Committee.

In 1965, Eben helped organize Alaska's first regional land claims organization which entered an aboriginal claim to all of

the traditional land of the Arctic Slope Inupiat. He became the first Executive Director of the Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) which launched the Alaska Native Land Claims Movement in 1965. In 1968, Eben moved to Anchorage to become Executive Director of the Alaska Federation of Natives. Under his direction, the AFN became a strong, well-financed federation of native regional associations from all parts of Alaska, and he launched the Washington, D.C. native land claims lobby that succeeded in securing the enactment of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971. He negotiated a \$225,000 loan to the AFN from the Yakima Indians of Washington State, and went on to secure large Federal grants to pursue strong regional community organization throughout rural Alaska.

Eben left the AFN to become Special Assistant for Native Affairs to Governor William Egan in 1970. Working with Egan, Eben helped shape a new State policy toward the native land claims which enabled State financial participation in the claims settlement enacted by Congress in 1971. Also, Eben used his position to promote the development of local government in rural Alaska, using his own Arctic Slope region to lead by example. From his desk in Governor's Office, Eben insured the State's cooperation with efforts of the Arctic Slope Native Association to organize the North Slope Borough. In 1972, Eben left the Governor's office to campaign for voter approval of the organization of the North Slope Borough, and for the office of Mayor.

Eben Hopson was re-elected to his office in 1975. Since

1972, the North Slope Borough has become an important political force in the Arctic.

The annual Budget of the NSB exceeds \$27 million. The NSB has undertaken a \$140 million capital improvements program for new village schools, utilities and homes. The NSB enjoys an "A" bond rating on the municipal bond market.

The NSB employs 525 people in nunicipal administration, education, and construction. The Borough enforces a strict local hire policy; with few exceptions, the NSB's work force is comprised of Inupiat employees.

The NSB has provided leadership in promoting the organization of an international circumpolar coastal zone management program, and has brought national attention to the danger to the Beaufort Sea environmental security posed by offshore oil and gas operations in the Canadian Beaufort.

The NSB has taken a leading role in circumpolar Inupiat community organization, and has initiated educational and cultural exchange and cooperation between the Inupiat communities of Greenland, Canada, and the Arctic Slope.

A strong Democrat, Hopson was called upon to hair the volatile 1972 State Convention of the Democratic Party, and his well-known strength as a mediator enable the Convention to join peacefully together the young, pro-McGovern activist wing of the Party with older Party regulars in a detente that resulted in a stronger Party organization in Alaska.

In 1974, Hopson declared his candidacy for the Democratic Party's gubernatorial nomination and ran against Governor Egan. He withdrew from the primary race after reaching 9-point political agreement for rural Alaska, including the development of modern communications. Most of the points of

this agreement with Governor Egan were later implemented by Governor Jay Hammond who defeated Egan in the General Election.

In 1975, Hopson responded to the personal invitation of Congressman John Melcher, then Chairman of the House Interior Subcommittee on Public Lands to send a planning team to Washington to work with Committee staff to draft legislation that transferred the Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 to the contrl of the Department of the Interior.

In 1976, Hopson won his party's Congressional nomination, and he used his Congressional campaign to draw national attention to the need for national Arctic domestic and foreign policies to facilitate environmentally safe Arctic energy and other resource development.

In 1977, Hopson opened a North Slope Borough Legislative Liaison Office in Washington, D.C. through which he hopes to influence the development of sound national Arctic policy.

Since his early days in Alaska's legislature, Eben Hopson has been an effective advocate of home rule for all the people of rural Alaska. With the North Slope Borough, home rule has come to America's Arctic Coast. Mayor Hopson plans to continue to strengthen Inupiat self-government on the Arctic Slope, and to use the North Slope Borough as a beacon for democratic self-determination for all the people of the Arctic.

KONCOR

FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Forest Management
- Consulting Services

P.O. Box 2212
Kodiak, Alaska
99615

Phone
(907) 486 - 3985

