Andrew Goussaert was born in Belgium. He immigrated to Canada in 1956 as an ordained Oblate missionary in the Arctic. During Andrew’s missionary years he worked and travelled extensively with the Inuit in Canada, learning the Inuktut language and lived the traditional nomadic way of life of the Inuit.

By the mid-1950’s he had taken an activist role in assisting the Inuit with the development of small community Co-operatives. For Andrew, this was a hands-on undertaking. He organized the communities and scoured for materials to build facilities. He was legendary in the north for his “pack rat” ways; never to waste a piece of lumber or even a nail. Andrew utilized the abandoned building from the DEW-line sites by carefully dismantling and resurrecting them into a Co-op store.

Andrew worked actively in the development of Community Co-ops in Pelly Bay (Kugaaruk NU), Spence Bay (Taloyoak, NU), and Cambridge Bay. While in Cambridge Bay, he worked as the Co-op General Manager and with his lifelong friend, Bill Lyall they championed the Co-op Movement in the Arctic.

In 1980, Andrew resigned from the priesthood and began work in Yellowknife as the Co-op Federation’s Education Officer. Then in 1981, he was appointed by the Board as Chief Executive Officer of Arctic Co-operates Limited, a position he held until he retired in 1990.

Through Andrew’s work, dedication and vision the people of the north have developed, using the Co-operative model, the strongest and most diverse group of aboriginal-owned businesses in Canada. In recognition of his work with Co-op development in the Arctic, Andrew was awarded the Order of Canada in 1980. Andrew was a forefather to the Co-operative Movement in the Arctic, his life-long work with Co-operatives in the Arctic will forever be remembered as a true testament of his vision.

Andrew is survived by his beloved wife, Bea and their daughter, Vera.