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Ohio Credit Union Leaders Recognized for Exemplary Contributions to Movement

COLUMBUS, OH (May 6, 2024) —The Ohio Credit Union League recently recognized several outstanding Ohio credit union leaders at the organization's annual conference.

Nearly 400 credit union professionals and 300 industry partners gathered at the annual inVest48 conference April 22-24 in Columbus to collaborate, learn, and explore new business solutions for credit unions. The event concluded with a main stage session where three leaders in the Ohio Credit Union Movement were honored for their outstanding contributions.

Louise McCarren Herring Movement Advancement Award

Gary Soukenik, retired President and CEO of 7 17 Credit Union, Warren, Ohio, was honored for long-term contributions to the Credit Union Movement. A 46-year credit union champion in the Mahoning Valley, Gary is a visionary leader who transformed the credit union into a thriving financial powerhouse that today serves more than 100,000 members in six counties. Under his leadership, 7 17 was one of the first financial institutions in the area to launch ATMs and ITMs. He championed diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, and helped drive legislative action that supported credit unions. Gary's commitment to fostering cooperative principles and cementing 7 17's values into its brand promise has left an indelible mark on the Credit Union Movement.

Robert Kloss Professional Achievement Award

Michael Barr, President and CEO of Commodore Perry Federal Credit Union, Oak Harbor, Ohio, was recognized for embodying the cooperative spirit of the credit union community. Under Mike's leadership, Commodore Perry Federal Credit Union has secured Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) grants totaling more than \$3.5 million, allowing them to extend outreach into underserved communities. Mike generously shares this expertise with other credit unions navigating CDFI grants and core conversions. Mike also has been a staunch supporter of credit unions becoming eligible depositories for public funds, working with the League to advance the role and influence of credit unions in the financial marketplace.

Claude Clarke Advocacy Impact Award

James Tebbutt, General Counsel of KEMBA Financial Credit Union, Gahanna, Ohio, was awarded for outstanding dedication to advocacy on behalf of the Credit Union Movement. As a member of the League's Advocacy Action Committee, Jim paved the way for credit unions to participate in Ohio's suite of linked-deposit programs including the recently-launched Ohio Homebuyer Plus Program. Jim has willingly shared KEMBA Financial's experience with other credit unions, helping more Ohio credit union members achieve a brighter financial future.

"These individuals have made lasting contributions to their credit unions, members, communities, and the advancement of the Movement," said Paul Mercer, President of Ohio Credit Union League. "Their commitment to the people-first philosophy has propelled their organizations forward, and inspired credit union leaders across Ohio to work harder, and together, to improve the lives of 3.2 million Ohioans."

[The Ohio Credit Union League](#) is a state trade organization supporting the growth and success of 211 Ohio credit unions through advocacy, expertise, collaboration, and advice. Credit unions are not-for-profit financial institutions owned and democratically controlled by their members. Ohio credit unions provide savings, loans, and other consumer-friendly financial services to more than three million members.

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