



International Women's Day 2022: Celebrating Women Leaders in the Credit Union Community

Ottawa – March 8, 2022 – This International Women's Day (IWD), Alterna Savings is proud to celebrate the achievements and contributions of three exceptional women leaders in the Credit Union community: Maria Barrados, Alterna Savings Board Chair and former President of the Public Service Commission of Canada; José Gallant, SVP & Chief Administrative Officer of Alterna Savings; and Sheila Vokey, President, and CEO of Central One Credit Union.

These three accomplished women leaders were invited to share some insights into their leadership journey. Their stories include their most influential role models and allies and detail some of the challenges they have faced throughout their careers. They also reflect on how things have changed for women in leadership and offer some words of wisdom for aspiring leaders.

All three list their parents as their earliest and most influential role models who equipped them with the mindset that contributed to their future success.

My father believed that anything boys could do, his girls could do as well. I learned to shoot, fish, change tires on cars, and anything else that needed to be done. I think that attitude – that if anyone can do it, you should be able to do it, was an essential start for me.

Maria Barrados, Alterna Savings Board Chair

They also discuss their views on leadership, with each of them stressing the importance of developing strategic relationships and listening to alternate points of view to understand all sides of an issue or opportunity.

I always want to come from a place of confidence, knowing I've done my homework, asked questions, and worked to understand all sides of an issue. For me, leadership is about learning from your experiences, giving back, listening well, and providing the opportunity for others to contribute to the dialogue.

Sheila Vokey, President and CEO, Central One Credit Union.

The Credit Union system has a long history of empowering women. We were the first Canadian Financial Institutions to provide loans to women in their own names back in the 1960s, and today women occupy many senior leadership and board positions in Credit Unions across North America.

The co-operative movement is different. If you look at Credit Unions as a whole, there are many women at the helm. Sheila Vokey is a prime example, as the first women President and CEO of Central One. She didn't get that job because she is a woman; she got it because she is capable. At Alterna, we have a significant number of women in leadership, both on our executive team and our board.

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José Gallant, Chief Administrative Officer and Senior Vice-President, Alterna Savings

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Happy International Women's Day from the entire Alterna Team!

About Alterna Savings

Alterna Savings and Credit Union Limited (Alterna) has been *the good in banking*™ for 113 years and, based on assets under management, is one of Canada's Top 10 credit unions ([CCUA, 2021](#)). Alterna is made up of Alterna Savings and Credit Union Limited and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Alterna Bank. Together, we have \$10 billion in assets under management.

As the first full-service, member-owned co-operative financial institution outside Quebec, Alterna Savings shares its expertise with more than 184,000 members through a network of 34 branches across Ontario, that includes partner Peterborough Community Savings; as well as call centre and digital channels. Members and customers also benefit from an industry-leading online brokerage, investment management services, and have access to over 43,000 surcharge-free ATMs in North America with THE EXCHANGE Network in Canada and the Allpoint Network in the US.

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