

For Immediate Release

Announcing the 2015 Gary Gillam Award winners

TORONTO, ON (April 30, 2015) –Jointly sponsored by Alterna Savings and Central 1 Credit Union, the Gary Gillam Award for corporate social responsibility is presented annually to up to two individuals who promote credit unions as socially responsible alternatives to banks. Recipients receive \$2,500 to donate to the charity or charities of their choice.

The award is open to nominees from both Ontario and B.C. and can be given to a volunteer or a credit union staff member. In 2015, the award honours two people who have demonstrated, each in their own unique way, their commitment to promoting credit unions and their role in building thriving communities.

The first recipient is **Wayne Lee** who has served 43 years on the Board of Community First Credit Union from which he just recently retired.

Described by his colleagues as “always dedicated to the advancement of the co-operative system, not only locally but also internationally” Wayne has led many initiatives that have improved the lives of people in the community of Sault Ste. Marie including:

- developing a bursary program for medical students studying at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine which has resulted in more doctors remaining in “The Soo”;
- initiating the provision of funds for the building of a new hospital of which two units bear the name of the credit union; and
- developing a program along with other credit unions that had CUETS provide a percentage of the Exchange fees to local credit unions in the North to donate to their local health organizations.

Wayne also served on the Board of Credit Union Central of Ontario for many years, and all of its committees at one time or another, and served as Chair of that Board as well. In addition, he served the system as a Board member of the Co-operators, and the Canadian Co-operative Association. Wayne also was a founding Board member of the first Labour Sponsored Investment Fund in Ontario working in co-operation with both the Ontario Worker Co-op Federation and United Steelworkers. He served as Chair of that organization until it merged with the Growthworks Fund in 2006.

Wayne is dividing his \$2,500 in award money between the Ontario Credit Union Charitable Foundation (of which he is a lifetime member) and the Algoma Residential Community Hospice.

The second recipient is **Susan Henry** who has proven to be a leading champion for micro-finance in Canada through her role as Manager, Community Investments at Alterna Savings.

Over the past 15 years, Susan has grown Alterna’s Micro-Finance program to be one of the largest of its kind in Canada. Since the program’s inception, it has provided loans to over 500 entrepreneurs – and in 2014 alone the program provided 85 micro-borrowers with over \$480,000 in loan financing.

“Susan goes above and beyond just the financing – she educates borrowers on financial literacy and provides them access to business training support,” says Rob Paterson, President & CEO, Alterna Savings. “She truly wants every micro-entrepreneur to succeed and supports them every step of the way.”

Susan also spearheaded the creation of “Networking Cafe & Tele-Class” sessions to help small business owners network and expand their businesses. She truly elevates the micro-finance program to a “life-changer” for these entrepreneurs.

Susan is now considered as a micro-finance expert and is sought out by other credit unions and micro-lending organizations from across Canada, and internationally, for her expertise in structuring and supporting the growth of micro-finance programs.

Susan has asked that her award of \$2,500 be split equally between “Business in the Streets” a program for the Regent Park neighbourhood of Toronto and “Microskills” programs for women – both of which assist those marginalized by society to attain the skills they need to succeed in their lives.

The awards were announced at the Central 1 Credit Union AGM on Friday, April 24 in Vancouver.

Who was Gary Gillam?

This Award was established to honour the memory and work of Gary H. Gillam. Gary was the Director, Legal, Governmental Affairs and Administration, at Credit Union Central of Ontario (now Central 1) from 1982 to 1988.

In 1988, he became CEO of Unicoll Credit Union (now Alterna Savings), where he worked until illness forced his resignation in 1993.

Gary Gillam was one of the leading advocates for social responsibility in the credit union system long before it became popular within organizations. He vigorously promoted the concept of social investment, calling on credit unions and their centrals to use social as well as financial criteria for their investment portfolios. He supported the development of community loan funds to provide assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. At CUCO and his own credit union, he initiated social audits to measure the social performance of the organization, as a complementary process to the financial audit.

The Gary Gillam Award was established in 1996 and is awarded annually.

About Alterna Savings

As Canada's first co-operative financial institution outside of Quebec, Alterna Savings and Credit Union Limited has operated as a full-service, member-owned credit union for over 100 years. Alterna Savings is committed to helping our more than 100,000 members achieve their financial dreams, while at the same time supporting vibrant, local communities. Alterna Savings offers a full suite of financial services online, by phone, by mobile and through a network of 24 branches. Alterna members also have access to THE EXCHANGE® Network, with thousands of surcharge-free ABMs across Canada and 360,000 ABMs in the United States. For more information please visit alterna.ca

About Central 1

With offices in Vancouver, Mississauga and Toronto, Central 1 – which holds approximately \$13.1 billion in balance sheet assets – provides wholesale financial products, trust services, investment banking services, payment processing solutions and direct banking services to more than 300 credit unions and institutional clients from coast to coast.

In addition, Central 1 is the primary liquidity manager, payments provider and trade association for our member/owner credit unions in B.C. and Ontario. Our members represent a consumer-oriented, full-service retail financial system that collectively serves 3.3 million members and holds more than \$97.7 billion in assets. For more information, visit www.central1.com.



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