

## Newsroom // News Releases

August 3, 2008

July 16, 2008

### **WOCCU Awards Distinguished Service and Young Credit Union People Honors Supporters Reception Generates Additional Honors for Top Contributors; WOCCU Board Recognizes "Mother" of Russian CU Movement**

HONG KONG—World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) awarded its highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, to two individuals and a foundation during the closing ceremonies of the World Credit Union Conference at the Hong Kong Convention & Exposition Centre. In addition, WOCCU recognized the achievements of five young credit unions leaders participating in the WOCCU Young Credit Union People (WYCUP) program.

This year's individual Distinguished Service Awards were presented to Chris Baker, former president and CEO of WOCCU, and Karen Schwartz, former executive director for Americas Association of Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Societies. Both Baker and Schwartz were recognized for their lifetime commitment to global cooperative development. Schwartz, grateful for the honor, stressed the importance of cultivating more effective relationships among cooperative organizations.



Dr. Chris Baker accepts his award.



Peter Mason accepts the award for CUFA.

"Cooperation among cooperatives can be very difficult if you've ever taken any major steps in that direction," said Schwartz. "But we need to reach out together to give a helping hand to a lot more poor people."

WOCCU also presented a Distinguished Service Award to the Credit Union Foundation of Australia (CUFA) for its leadership in domestic and international credit union development activities. CUFA's programs in Sri Lanka, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Fiji, Timor, Tuvalu and Cambodia have helped create access to financial services for disadvantaged communities. CUFA's executive director Peter Mason, who accepted the award, acknowledged the efforts of everyone working in the projects in his remarks.

"It's the volunteers involved and the energy they commit that leads to success," said Mason. "In many cases, they build the credit unions with nothing but determination, and I gratefully accept this award on their behalf."

Also honored at the ceremony were 19 WYCUP program participants from eight countries. Of those nominees, five were selected as the 2008 WYCUP awardees: Joe Agro, Credit Union Central of Ontario, Canada; Anna Corona, AEA Federal Credit Union, United States; Nicholas May, Community CPS Australia, Australia; Rachel Milan, Credit Union Central of Ontario, sponsored by The Co-operators, Canada; and Rafal Sokolowski, Copernicus Credit Union, Poland. The award winners earned an all-expense-paid trip to the 2009 World Credit Union Conference in Barcelona, Spain.



The 2008 WYCUP winners signal celebrate their success with WOCCU Chairman Melvin Edwards and President/CEO Pete Crear.

At the WOCCU Supporters reception earlier in the week, two participants were honored for their outstanding contributions. The WOCCU Ambassador Award was presented to Richard "Dick" Ensweiler, president & CEO of the Texas Credit Union League and a long-time WOCCU Supporter who played a major role in WOCCU's recent "Keep China Mutual" campaign. In addition, CUDA, an Irish credit union trade association, was honored for its \$75,000 Supporter contribution.

At WOCCU's Annual General Meeting during the conference, the board of directors presented an award to Russian delegates on behalf of Dina Plakhotnaya, considered the "mother" of the Russian credit union movement. Plakhotnaya reportedly is ailing and was unable to attend the conference to accept her award.

The World Credit Union Conference, an annual event organized by WOCCU and its host member countries, concluded July 16.

*World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) is the global trade association and development agency for credit unions. WOCCU promotes the sustainable development of credit unions and other financial cooperatives around the world to empower people through access to high quality and affordable financial services. WOCCU advocates on behalf of the global credit union system before international organizations and works with national governments to improve legislation and regulation. Its technical assistance programs introduce new tools and technologies to strengthen credit unions' financial performance and increase their outreach.*

*Worldwide, 49,000 credit unions in 96 countries serve more than 177 million people. In 2007, World Council's technical assistance programs reached nearly 6 million people in 17 countries. Learn more about WOCCU's impact around the world at [www.woccu.org](http://www.woccu.org).*

**NOTE: Click on photos to view/download in high resolution.**

Contact: **Mike Muckian**  
Organization: **World Council of Credit Unions**  
E-mail: [mmuckian@woccu.org](mailto:mmuckian@woccu.org)  
Phone: **(608) 395-2080**

[Board Intranet](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

© 2008 World Council of Credit Unions, Inc