

Honouring Kathy Chartier – A True Friend of CaribDE and a Global Leader



By: David Marquez, ICUDE

The Herb Wegner Memorial Awards, known as the highest USA credit union awards, are held annually and honour individuals who embody the credit union philosophy and whose leadership has shaped the Movement for the better, reminding us that progress happens because dedicated people choose to make a difference. This year's award centered on a powerful idea: ***“where purpose meets energy”***. The purpose is our shared belief that everyone deserves an opportunity to achieve financial well-being. And energy is what turns that belief into action!

One of this year's recipients is a true friend to the Caribbean Development Education Programme – **Kathy Chartier, President & CEO - Members Credit Union**, Connecticut. For more than three (3) decades, Kathy has led Members CU, headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut with a bold vision: **to ensure that everyone, especially those historically excluded from the financial system, has access to opportunity.**

Kathy Chartier

President & CEO
Members Credit Union

OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT
2026 Herb Wegner Memorial Award Winner

The National
Credit Union
Foundation
gala
Presenting The Herb Wegner
Memorial Awards 2026





Click to watch a collection of inspiring testimonials from Kathy's colleagues, family, and those whose lives she has impacted:



I met Kathy in 2004 through a mutual friend at the WOCCU Conference in The Bahamas and we immediately hit it off. We shared our credit union experiences, and it became obvious that we both carried the same passion for this Movement. At the end of our 4-hour long conversation, Kathy told me “you would be ideal for DE.”. I had no clue what she was talking about but over the week, we continued to meet and she explained what the DE program was about. Of course, she made it clear that I needed to trust the process. **It was Kathy Chartier who enrolled me into DE in 2007 in Madison, Wisconsin!**



Kathy became a Credit Union Development Educator (CUDE) in 1994 and always wanted to forge an international partnership as her project. So, in 2005 as the President of the Connecticut League together with our growing friendship and network, under the WOCCU’s International Partnership Program, her league partnered with the Co-operative Credit Union League Trinidad & Tobago.

From this relationship sprouted the **CU-to-CU partnership** between COPOS CU of Trinidad & Tobago and Seasons Federal CU of Connecticut in 2006.

This saw an exchange of CU directors and staff attending each other's Leadership Conferences and many internships.

This networking saw Kathy being adopted by her Trinidadian CU family and in true Caribbean fashion, being renamed 'Katy'. Over the next few years, she visited credit unions in Trinidad and other Caribbean islands, sometimes 3 times a year! So, it was no surprise that when CaribDE was born, she was **one of our first mentors**. In fact, she mentored at 6 regional classes - in Trinidad, St. Lucia and Jamaica - bringing a wealth of information and experience that gave early momentum of the fledgling program!

I have travelled all over the world with Kathy and helped spread the word about DE. In our travels, she introduced me to many CU professionals, one of the most special being our very own Curriculum Director **Carla Decker**, in Ireland. Carla mentored at my DE class in Madison and then became CaribDE's first facilitator. She also mentored at the inaugural African Development Education Program in Kenya. **This is the power of servant leadership and networking!**

At the helm of Members CU for over 30 years, Kathy has consistently championed greater access to financial services for those often left out. Under her leadership, this credit union has opened doors for entrepreneurs, first-time car buyers, and families working to build credit and achieve homeownership. Kathy's work reflects a deep commitment to meeting people where they are and ensuring they feel welcomed and valued.

I had the opportunity to visit Members CU and experienced first-hand Kathy's relationship with her staff, volunteers but more so, her members!

A true example of people helping people! A true stalwart and role model of the global movement and an untiring advocate for DE, she has contributed immensely to the Caribbean movement through partnering and CaribDE leadership training. According to Vanessa Kuduk ICUDE, VP of Lending, Members CU (CaribDE 34):



“Kathy didn’t just build a financial institution-she built a community catalyst.”

Kathy continues to leverage the power and her passion for the CU movement to create social equity and financial well-being for her members. Her vision, leadership and impact on the global movement made her a deserving choice for Outstanding Individual Achievement.

Congratulations, my friend! Thank you for your passion, everlasting friendship and our countless adventures! I am forever grateful for all you have done and the many sparks you ignited!

To learn more about the Herb Wegner Memorial Awards and this year’s awardees, visit:

<https://www.ncuf.coop/events-engagements/foundation-dinner>



The 2026 Herb Wegner Honorees: Kathy Chartier (Members CU), Gigi Hyland (NCUF) and Steve Stapp (WOCCU)