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Suncoast Credit Union Honors Former Leader and Credit Union Pioneer

TAMPA, Fla. (August 16, 2023) — With respect and gratitude, Suncoast Credit Union announces the loss of Perry Dawson, beloved former President and CEO of Suncoast Credit Union from 1967 to 1996. Mr. Dawson was 95 years old and leaves behind his wife Ruth, four daughters and nine grandchildren.

Mr. Dawson built a 40-year legacy in the credit union industry. He served Suncoast Credit Union for 29 years, beginning with 4,500 members and 18 employees, growing Suncoast to be the 12th largest credit union in the country at the time of his retirement. His door was always open, and he was the leader who shared knowledge and tools to enable others to prosper and achieve financial well-being. To employees, he was known to be a caring leader who valued listening, took a personal interest in the individual, and loved the credit union and staff with his whole heart.

“It hurts to lose this industry pioneer, but we honor his life of caring and serving others through his impressive career,” said Kevin Johnson, President and CEO, Suncoast Credit Union. “I, along with our many colleagues who worked with him or under his tutelage, appreciate his steady, calm guidance and leadership and we will miss him.”

Mr. Dawson was a pioneer within the credit union movement. He exuded the people helping people philosophy, maximizing return to the member and being mindful of those who lived in the margins. Many of our industry’s foundational principles of financial democracy are a direct reflection of his leadership, guidance, and moral compass as he was involved at the state and federal level in the early stages of growth of credit unions around the country. He was also devoted to his family, the Presbyterian Church and was an avid golfer. Notable accolades include:

- President of CUNA, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award
- President of CUES, the Credit Union Executive Society
- Charter member of CUES Hall of Fame, 1988
- CUES Executive of the year, 1994
- Founder and Board Member of the Education Credit Union Council
- Voted Most Admired Credit Union CEO in the United States in 1989
- Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Jacksonville Branch, 6 years
- Past President of the Tampa Chapter of the Florida Credit Union League

Mr. Dawson will be missed, and we will remember his life with deep fondness.

The following information relates to his memorial service, with a link for current and former colleagues to leave condolences or tributes.

[Perry Max Dawson Obituary](#)

Memorial Service:

August 18, 2023, 2:00 PM ET
Lafayette Presbyterian Church
4420 Mahan Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32308

About Suncoast Credit Union

Suncoast Credit Union is the largest credit union in the state of Florida, the 10th largest in the United States based on membership, and the 10th largest in the United States based on its \$17 billion in assets. Chartered in 1934 as Hillsborough County Teachers Credit Union, Suncoast Credit Union currently operates 76 full-service branches and serves more than one million members across Florida. As a community credit union, anyone who lives, works, attends school, or worships in Suncoast Credit Union's service area is eligible for membership. In 2021, Suncoast Credit Union's field of membership was expanded to include public K-12 teachers, college educators, and educational support staff from all of Florida's 67 counties. Suncoast is passionate about community support. Since its founding in 1990, the Suncoast Credit Union Foundation has raised and donated more than \$40 million to organizations and initiatives that support the health, education, and emotional well-being of children in the communities that the credit union serves. For more information, visit suncoastcreditunion.com or follow us on social media: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram.

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