



Name of Nominee: Claude Clarke

Home Address: Deceased, May 1, 1975 City: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Telephone #: _____

Nominating Credit Union: Ohio Credit Union League

Address: 10 W. Broad Street, Suite 1100

Telephone #: 800-486-2917 Contact Person: _____

Nominations may be made only by a League-affiliated credit union. An individual can be nominated posthumously.

Please explain on a separate sheet(s) your nominee's experience, service, achievements, and benefit to the credit union community, using the following questions as guidelines. Additional information such as letters and résumés are encouraged.

1. Describe the nominee's background in the credit union movement, including practical experience in the organization, development, and/or operation of credit unions.

Cleveland attorney Claude Clarke was recruited by Roy Bergengren for a campaign to pass credit union legislation in Ohio. Prior to joining Bergengren in the campaign for a state credit union law, Clarke worked with the Cleveland Legal Aid Society, which under his leadership increased its revenue and diversity of cases, as well as created beneficial relationships with the city's social welfare agencies. "[Bergengren] asked me to represent the [Credit Union National] Extension Bureau in preparing and promoting a credit union bill in the coming session of the [Ohio] legislature. I did not know anything about credit unions, but would try to learn and would accept the assignment," said Clarke in a chronology of the Ohio Movement.

Clarke and Bergengren drafted and presented a bill in 1929, which failed. However, for the first time, the bill had been given a hearing, during which those objecting to the legislation made themselves known. According to Clarke, the major arguments were that the legislation would "permit a large group of persons to organize with large assets," it would perpetuate a situation where "irresponsible" people would be in control, it was a "scheme" to embezzle funds, and provided insiders the chance to make money. Clarke and Bergengren regrouped and prepared a new plan.

During the 1931-1932 session, a revised bill, chiefly written by Clarke, was introduced in the Ohio General Assembly and was supported by numerous Ohio credit union leaders. On Aug. 11, 1931, Governor George White signed the Ohio Credit Union Act.

Afterward, Clarke agreed to continue representing the Extension Bureau in Ohio and worked to spread the word about credit unions. Clarke, Bergengren, and Thomas Doig spent the next few years meeting with several groups throughout the state who were interested in forming credit unions.

Once the Federal Credit Union Act was passed, which allowed credit unions to be organized anywhere, regardless of the lack or ineffectiveness of state laws, Bergengren and Edward Filene invited credit union leaders from throughout the country, including Clarke and Louise McCarren Herring, to meet in Estes Park, CO, to plan the future of the Movement. The August 1934 meeting began as a gathering of the Credit Union National Extension Bureau and ended with the creation of the Credit Union National Association. Clarke participated in the 10-day meeting that produced a constitution and suggested code of regulations, and returned to Ohio energized to organize a state league and to offer assistance to neighboring states.

In September 1934, the Ohio Credit Union League was formed and Clarke was tapped to be the part-time managing director of the League and first national director for Ohio. He served from September 1934 to September 1936. Under his leadership, the League took shape and established a dues structure, started a monthly newsletter, and incorporated as a not-for-profit entity. By 1936, Clarke felt, and the board agreed, that the League needed the attention of a full-time manager. Fellow Estes Park delegate Louise McCarren Herring was chosen.

2. How has the nominee demonstrated leadership and guidance in maintaining the credit union philosophy, "*People Helping People*"?

Clarke's work to draft and pass the Ohio Credit Union Act is easily one of the most important actions of the Ohio Credit Union Movement's decades-long history. Clarke's expertise and tireless efforts resulted in the legislation that allowed credit unions to fulfill their "*People Helping People*" mission in Ohio.

Once credit union state legislation was in place, Clarke, Bergengren, and Thomas Doig, an assistant to Bergengren, spent years traveling throughout Ohio meeting with potential credit union groups.

Clarke's experiences at Estes Park, where he played a role in the formation of the Credit Union National Association, invigorated his and Louise McCarren Herring's commitment to organize the Ohio Credit Union League, as well as offer assistance to neighboring states.

As managing director of the newly-created Ohio Credit Union League, Clarke provided literal leadership to the Ohio Credit Union Movement. The leadership and guidance he provided to the League's first board of directors cast the die for what the League was to become.

In his national-level leadership positions (see additional information in answer to question #3), Clarke continued to help shape the Credit Union Movement and guide its adherence to the *People Helping People* philosophical mission.

"There is no doubt," Clarke wrote, "that my experiences with the Legal Aid Society aroused my interest in the economic problems of the wage earner and the hardships to which he is subjected due to the over-extension of credit by installment houses and his inability to secure credit for a fair charge. It afforded me an excellent opportunity to study first-hand the vicious evils of 'loan sharkery.'" The Cleveland Legal Aid Society attributes his passion for credit unions as a means for people saving and borrowing money at fair rates to these experiences.

3. List the leadership roles the nominee has held in the state and national credit union movements.

After his work to author and pass credit union legislation in Ohio, Clarke was invited to Estes Park, CO, where credit union leaders from around the nation gathered in 1934 with the goal of creating an organization that would establish purpose and precedent for the national Credit Union Movement. During the 10-day summit, the delegation created the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), and produced a constitution and suggested code of regulations.

At the state level, Clarke was the first managing director, part time, of the Ohio Credit Union League from Sept. 29, 1934, to Sept. 12, 1936, during the last nine months of which he served without pay. After the hiring of Louise McCarren Herring as full-time managing director of the League, Clarke continued his involvement with the League and can be found in many photos from the state trade association's historical archives.

In 1936, Clarke was elected president of CUNA and served for two years. While Clarke served as CUNA President, the Federal Credit Union Act was amended in 1937 to exempt credit unions from taxation on real and tangible property. The Credit Union Omnibus Bill (S. 2675) also provided for government examination of books, permitted loans to other credit unions, and the investment of shares in federal savings and loan associations.

Claude Clarke was a member of the first CUNA Mutual Insurance Society board of directors.

Historical archives suggest he may also have served on the board of directors for Ohio Central.

According to a March 26, 1937, article in Cleveland's *The Plain Dealer*, "[Credit unions'] progress here is proof of their value, as well as testimony to the organizing zeal of Claude E. Clarke, counsel of the Legal Aid Society, who has long been an effective leader of the credit union movement in both state and nation."

4. Explain the nominee's lasting, identifiable contribution which has resulted in a substantial change to the credit union movement. Evidence of a continuing or permanent effect or impact must be shown.

Clarke was a key party in the development and successful passage of the Ohio Credit Union Act of 1934. Prior to Clarke's assistance, Roy Bergengren had been unsuccessful in passing credit union legislation in Ohio. Of significance was Clarke's ability to take the unsuccessful legislation the two introduced in 1929 and re-craft it into the version presented to the 1931-1932 Ohio General Assembly and successfully passed.

To date, the Ohio Credit Union Act is still in place and serves as the anchor for credit union powers in Ohio. It continues to be modified in order to allow credit unions to best serve their members. In 2006, the Credit Union Member Service Powers Bill modernized the Act for the first time in 18 years. Presently, legislation is being considered that would include credit unions as a choice of eligible depositories for the state, communities, schools, and other public entities.

Clarke's service as the first director of the Ohio Credit Union League helped define its original purpose and mission. Under his leadership as managing director, the League adopted a dues structure of one-half of one percent of the gross assets of a credit union and dropped its voluntary association status in order to incorporate as a not-for-profit. Another significant development was the League's commitment to communicating with its member credit unions. Thus, it began publishing a monthly newsletter despite its limited budget. In 76 years, the League has evolved into an industry-leading organization focused on public, political, and regulatory advocacy for Ohio's credit unions. Communication to its members, the public, the media, and lawmakers remains a critical responsibility of the League.

In honor of his contributions to Ohio's credit unions, the Ohio Credit Union League created the Claude Clarke Political Inspiration Award in 2006, which recognizes outstanding efforts to increase awareness of credit unions and their issues

among public policymakers and lawmakers. The award recognizes the leadership of an individual, a credit union, and/or a chapter for state and national political activism and involvement on behalf of the credit union movement.

5. Describe the nominee's ability and willingness to speak forthrightly on credit union challenges and opportunities. Please list examples.

The previous extensively described actions and activities of Clarke all illustrate his dedication to openly and consistently promoting credit unions. Rather than restate the above, please consider the following key involvements described previously and how they required constant ability and willingness to speak forthrightly on, and more importantly act on, the challenges and opportunities facing credit unions:

- Worked with the Ohio General Assembly to pass the Ohio Credit Union Act
- Spent three years traveling throughout the state to help interested groups organize credit unions
- One of two Ohio delegates chosen to attend the Estes Park summit to create the Credit Union National Association because of his work as a credit union advocate
- Helped create the Ohio Credit Union League, and offered assistance to neighboring states
- Served as Managing Director of the Ohio Credit Union League for two years
- President of the Credit Union National Association board of directors, 1936-1937
- Member of the first Credit Union CUNA Mutual Insurance Society board of directors
- Member of Ohio Central board of directors (unconfirmed)

Some examples of Lifetime Achievement-like contributions:

- **Claude E. Clarke**, former Cleveland attorney, OCUL managing director (September 29, 1934, to September 12, 1936) OCUL general counsel, and CUNA President, helped to write and advocated on behalf of legislation which would become the Ohio Credit Union Act, which was signed into law in 1931.
- **Louise McCarren Herring**, a member of OCUL's first Board of Directors, and the League's managing director from 1936 to 1945 (the League's first full-time managing director), participated in and served as secretary for the August 1934 Estes Park, Colorado, meeting where CUNA was formed. During her tenure as managing director, nearly 600 credit unions and eight Chapters were organized in Ohio. In 1983, Herring joined ranks with Edward Filene and Roy Bergengren when she became the third individual named to membership in the exclusive Cooperative League Hall of Fame. She received the Lifetime Achievement Award posthumously in 1998.
- **Robert A. Kloss**, League Executive Secretary (the position formerly known as Managing Director and now known as President) from 1945 to 1979, who counted among his accomplishments creation of Ohio Central, League Litho, and OCUL Data Processing Services; legislation that allowed the development of Ohio Central and that almost completely revamped the Ohio Credit Union Act; tripled League membership; increased the budget more than tenfold; grew the state's credit union membership from 188,000 to 1.2 million; driving force behind initial construction of the 1201 Dublin Road complex and the subsequent additions; initiation of the departments of education, field services, public relations, and technical services.